



Mark - Lesson 1A

Chapter 1:1-4

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- Tonight, we begin our study through the Gospel of Mark.
 - This study will present us with a full picture of Jesus' deity, humanity, and ministry.
 - I mention this because our founding Principal teacher has completed all of the Gospels with the exception of this book we are diving into, tonight.
 - So it is my prayer that you will join us weekly as we discover a full scope of Jesus' life in harmony with the other Gospel accounts.
 - With that being said, pick me up in Chapter 1 of Mark as we read verses 1-4. Here's what the text reads:

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

Mark 1:2 just as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "Behold, I am sending My messenger before You, Who will prepare Your way;

Mark 1:3 The voice of one calling out in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!'"

Mark 1:4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

- Let's Pray.
- If you have ever witnessed or listened to the beauty of a symphony, it is a harmonious complexity of varying symphonic compositions from various instruments.
 - All of this is brought together to provide what Webster's dictionary records as a symphony of flavors.
 - Different instruments with varied musical tones, keys, and notes, all accomplishing the same task, a beautiful sound.
 - Each instrument and their unique sounds are woven together in this beautiful tapestry that is put together by the conductor.
 - In a similar way, we find within the scriptures, all 4 gospel accounts penned by different writers in their own unique voices, personalities, and settings.
 - While at different times within human history, all 4 gospels have been superseded and instigated by God, the Divine author.
 - Through the Holy Spirit's supervision and leading, all 4 gospel accounts speak to, and about, a single person and His work.
 - The Father in His Divine authorship leaves no detail left out as it pertains to His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - The conductor, God the Father has made known through all 4 gospel accounts who Jesus Christ is, the authority and power of His work, and His Deity.
 - Again, today, begins our start through the Gospel of Mark.
 - As a ministry, VBVMI has gone through three of the four Gospels in the past, and we encourage everyone to check out those teachings on our app.
 - We will approach this last Gospel account as we have done so in the past with the others and that is to analyze the claims and see Christ in all of His beauty, grace, and truth.

- We will dive deep into the Gospel of Mark as the Holy Spirit illuminates our hearts and minds and teaches us even more of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
 - Within this study we will not only see the demonstration of Jesus' work and power.
 - But we will witness Jesus as our suffering King!
- We will see God's redemptive and salvific plan unfold and be fulfilled through His Son, Jesus.
 - We will witness as one, scholar has documented:

“Mark's gospel is a book on discipleship with an emphasis on servant leadership”

- However, before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let us first do some background into our study through the Gospel of Mark.
 - So with that being said, let's begin with the introduction of this book beginning with its author.
 - The author of this Gospel account can literally be found within the title of the book.
 - John Mark is the proper name of the author of this Gospel.
 - We can see Mark's presence in ministry work as he joins Paul and Barnabas early on in their missionary journey.
 - There came a point, however, within their time together that a “sharp disagreement” arose regarding Mark's participation in revisiting previous cities.
 - We see evidence of this disagreement in Acts 15:37-39, check out the text with me. This is what it reads:

Acts 15:37 Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also.

Acts 15:38 But Paul was of the opinion that they should not take along with them this man who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

Acts 15:39 Now it turned into such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.

- Later down the line the Apostle Paul and John Mark would eventually reconcile the issues of their previous parted past and would come back together as ministry partners.
 - This request to connect with Mark in ministry work came about through Paul's request to young Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:11, where Paul writes from a prison cell in Rome.
 - What I find most profound, but not by chance, is that the very place that Paul writes from a prison cell is the very city that Mark is writing to.

- Mark writes the first Gospel account in and around AD 65.
 - This date might not be significant to many, but it plays a vital role in our understanding of setting and time in history.
- July 18, 64AD, Rome experienced what was known as “The Great Fire of Rome”.
 - During this time in Rome’s history Nero was emperor.
 - It is said that AD 64 is the year that changed for Nero’s rule in the land especially his actions towards Christians.
- According to some of the earliest surviving detailed accounts provided by Roman historian, Tacitus, it is said that the fire began at the shops at Circus Maximus, the chariot racing stadium. (Slide 1A)
 - The damage that this fire brought upon the city of Rome was said to be so catastrophic that 80 percent of the city was destroyed.
 - You might be asking, what could have been the cause of the destruction of 80 percent of Rome?
 - It is said by many scholars that Nero was the cause of this fire being set in order to rebuild the city to his liking.
 - Check out what Tacitus wrote in the Annals XV. (Slide 2A)

“A disaster followed, whether accidental or treacherously contrived by the emperor, is uncertain, as authors have given both accounts, worse however, and more dreadful than any which have ever happened to this city by the violence of fire.”

- If word was to get out that Nero started the fire it would have caused much of an uproar and a complete political disaster for his reign.
 - He could not let that happen, so what better way to protect himself than to find a scape goat and what better group to blame than Christians.
 - As you could imagine, word from the Emperor that the Christians caused such devastation to Rome spread like wildfire – no pun intended.
 - This eventually led to Nero sending the military to round up and collect all Christians in the city.
 - It is said that once the Christians in Rome were arrested, Nero had them clothed in animal hide.
 - If that was not humiliating enough, Nero would place Christians in public areas for all to see as vicious dogs were let loose to eat what they thought were animals, who were human beings dressed as animals.
 - Other Christians were crucified, fed to the lions during gladiator matches, and their bodies used as tiki torches to light the way for Nero’s Garden parties.
 - So, for a moment, friends, just imagine the conditions and times in which these Roman Christians are reading this Gospel account.
 - They are hiding for their lives, seeking refuge from the gruesome deeds of the emperor while all the while seeking to lift the name of Christ.
 - They could most definitely identify with Christ as it related to being

persecuted in public for a crime you did not commit.

- It is in Mark's Gospel, that these persecuted Roman believers can be encouraged as they read about their crucified savior.
 - It will be in this Gospel account that they will see the need for Christ having to suffer for the sake of the saints.
 - It will be through this Gospel account, that these persecuted Christians will have the wherewithal to stand firmly on what they believe amid suffering.
 - Why can they do this? Why do they still gather in worship and read scripture about their savior?
 - Because they have read that their Savior did not relent in His suffering.
 - So why should they?
- One could imagine the loneliness and helplessness that these Roman believers were facing during this time.
 - What would seem like a short period of silence, presented a "witness document" of hope!
- This Gospel, being the first one recorded, carries much significance in many ways, but one way was the Apostle that this witness account is based on.
 - Because this Gospel is not written by an Apostle, one could wonder how it gains canonicity or approval to be accepted as scripture.
 - The answer to that can be found through several of the early church fathers in the first half of the second century.
 - Papias, Eusebius, and Irenaeus provide consistent testimony concerning the work of the Gospel of Mark with Peter's unanimous approval being that Mark was Peter's secretary.
 - And these accounts are personal testament accounts from Peter himself.
- As we walk through this Gospel account together you will notice that this Gospel account is different from that of Matthew and Luke.
 - For instance, Matthew's account begins with a genealogical account of Jesus as the son of David, the son of Abraham.
 - It could be evident to a reader in that day and some Bible students today that the Gospel of Matthew is written to a primarily Jewish audience.
 - Luke's account speaks to the Gentile Christian.
 - Luke's primary aim is to relate to the reader that this promised Messiah is not just Messiah for the Jews, but also for the Gentile.
 - Luke's Gospel is also unique in that it traces the genealogy of Jesus before Abraham and goes to Adam.
 - In short it demonstrates that Jesus is in fact the second Adam, the perfect human, the promised One.
 - Mark's account, however, begins differently. His account is not focused on Jewish lineage or customs.
 - R.C. Sproul expresses in his commentary of Mark, that Mark's Gospel:

“might be called a “witness document,” something like a tract that someone would hand out to give a summary of the significant work of Jesus.”

- As we journey through this short Gospel account together, one distinct difference in Mark’s gospel is his use of the word, “immediately”.
 - This word will appear 42 times within Mark.
 - The use of this word demonstrates Mark’s urgency in showing what he deems as the major facts that point to Jesus being the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.
 - As we read through Mark, you will sense this cadence of rapid fire almost as if this account were cliff notes of all 3 synoptic gospels.
- My prayer is that as we go through this gospel account, verse-by-verse, that we will see Mark’s focus on the very person of Jesus both in his humanity and deity.
 - Mark is going to draw us into knowing what it means to truly be a disciple of Christ by ultimately looking at the originator and greatest disciple maker.
 - The claims that we will see will demand a verdict. That verdict will point us to the reality that Jesus is who He claimed to be, The Messiah.
 - With this background and context in mind, pick me up at verse one of Mark Chapter 1.

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

- This Gospel begins with a thematic statement and begins unlike the other gospels.
 - Mark opens up this Gospel account with a new literary style of that day, regarding New testament writings – beginning with a grand announcement.
 - This very announcement that Mark starts with will set the tone for the rest of his gospel.
 - He starts his account by saying: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”
 - You may notice that the very first two words of this book might seem a bit familiar.
 - He uses the words “The beginning”. The word beginning here in the text is the Greek word *arche*.
 - It simply means the origins or the start to something.
 - In fact, when you go back to the Old Testament starting in the book of beginnings, Genesis, the very first words of that book are “In the beginning”.
 - Similarly, John begins his gospel account in a similar way, “In the beginning”.
 - There is no surprise here then that Mark would use this statement of origin in attesting to who this gospel and its message is truly about.
 - Within the synoptic accounts, Matthew begins his account with a genealogical record of Jesus’ birth.
 - Luke begins his account with the birth of John the Baptist.
 - However, Mark begins his account much differently, in a way.

- The question may arise, why does Mark feel the need to begin with Jesus right off the bat.
- The answer lies in who Mark is writing to. When we consider our background knowledge from earlier, we know that Mark is talking to a predominantly Roman audience.
 - Mark's focus is not to appeal to the Roman Gentiles through means of Jewish ancestry or customs.
 - But rather to appeal to why Jesus must be the starting point of this introduction.
- This topic sentence, here in verse 1, is filled with the headline news of one man.
 - This start of Jesus being the focal point all centers on the fact that Jesus' very announcement is "good news"
- This word "gospel" in the Greek is *euangelion* which, transliterated, simply means "good news".
 - In both the Old Testament and New Testament, within Greek literature, the term *euangelion* was commonly used of victory from the battlefield.
 - This report of victory was always sent by a messenger proclaiming such victory to the people.
- Good news was always preceded by someone from the battlefield who would make their way to the city ahead of the king in order to announce the news.
 - The messenger would grab the attention of the people by saying such phrases as "Hear ye, Hear ye"
 - This is what Graham Stanton said regarding the word *euangelion* in a lecture he gave:

"In the Greco-Roman world the word euangelion always appears in the plural, meaning one good tidings among others, but in the New Testament, euangelion appears only in the singular: The good news of God in Jesus Christ, beside which there is no other news."

- This idea of good news or good tidings was not a New Testament concept, as a matter of fact, good news has always been biblically connected to God's redemptive plan regarding Messiah's coming and rule.
 - Isaiah the prophet speaks to this "good news" regarding God's final saving act of peace, good news, and release from oppression for God's people.
 - Check out what the prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 52:7:

**Isaiah 52:7 How delightful on the mountains
Are the feet of one who brings good news,
Who announces peace
And brings good news of happiness,
Who announces salvation,
And says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"**

- Mark makes a clear point at the beginning of his account and that is, the gospel, more specifically, the person and work of Jesus is where it all begins.
 - The very life of Jesus speaks to the fulfilment of God's rule, reign, and redemptive plan in human history, fully realized all in a person.
 - This good news was not wrapped up in a political overhaul or economic takeover.
 - This good news is wrapped up in a person, and His name is Jesus Christ.
 - To some a question could arise, what is the big deal regarding Jesus Christ and what victory is there in Him.
 - Briefly, but not full unpacked is a very succinct reality found in the person of Jesus and Paul mentions why Jesus in His person and work is good news in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.
 - Here's what Paul states:

1 Corinthians 15:1 Now I make known to you, brothers and sisters, the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, **1 Corinthians 15:2** by which you also are saved, if you hold firmly to the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.
1 Corinthians 15:3 For I handed down to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
1 Corinthians 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

- Jesus Christ is the vicarious substitute who takes our place and in exchange for His righteousness takes on our filthiness so that we may be in right standing with God.
 - We will discuss this reality more in detail in a later session.
 - Let's now dig into the very name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus and these two specific titles, Christ and Son of God.
- Jesus' name is Hebrew and is a variation of the name Yehoshua which transliterated means "Joshua"
 - The name Joshua means "God is salvation"
 - People tend to think that the name Christ is Jesus' last name, however that is far from the truth and I would like to bring insight into this particular title.
 - The word Christ is a Messianic title whereas the title, Son of God is his Divine position.
 - Some of you may be familiar with this title as it is most noted as the Caesarea Philippi confession by Peter from Matthew 16.
 - Peter's confession is prompted by a question that Jesus asks His disciples, and that question was "Who do men say that I am?"
 - Jesus' disciples proceed by saying "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the prophets."
 - It is then where Jesus asks the pointed question that ultimately revealed His role, title, and purpose.

- Peter, by the power of the Holy Spirit says out loud “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”
 - It is at this appointed moment that the Father reveals to Peter the truth of who Jesus is regarding His Messianic title and Divine position.
- But what I don’t want us to miss what Jesus says to Peter after his confession. Check out verse 17 of Chapter 16.

Matthew 16:17 And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

- I mention Peter’s confession, because it ultimately gives light to the reality of men and women coming to the truth of who Jesus is.
 - No one can come to the realization of who Christ is unless it is given to them to see and know by the will of the Father.
 - This could potentially be a reason as to why Mark begins his account in this manner.
 - To assume that a relationship with Jesus is based upon our familial following of Him versus being called out by Him are polar opposites.
 - Being that Mark’s gospel account is provided by the personal eye witness account of Peter, it is clear that Mark’s focus to his audience is knowing the proper person of Jesus.
 - Jesus is not merely a good teacher.
 - Jesus is much more than a prophet.
 - Jesus is God who has descended, wrapped Himself in human flesh to reveal the Kingdom of God by showing us the way through and by His Life.
 - With Jesus Christ as being the beginning of this good news, the question comes into play, who is the one that ushers in this Messianic King?
 - As with any great announcement, especially of this caliber, it would beg the need of someone to herald this news and prepare the way for victory in the person of Jesus, to come onto the scene.
 - With all things within God’s salvific plan, there is no detail that is left out or unaddressed.
 - Let’s keep moving on. Check out verse 2 through 4.

Mark 1:2 just as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “Behold, I am sending My messenger before You, Who will prepare Your way;

Mark 1:3 The voice of one calling out in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!’”

Mark 1:4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

- Verse 2 begins with the words, “As it is written in the prophet Isaiah”.

- Mark moves the reader to what is said to be Old Testament scripture written by Isaiah the prophet.
 - This Old Testament prophecy would focus on the way in which Messiah would enter His ministry as a means to prepare the Kingdom.
- As mentioned previously, Mark is not prone to using many Old Testament scriptures or references due to his audience.
 - However, what is interesting in his use of it here is to prove a very clear point from the previous verse.
 - The point being that a Messiah being mentioned to come into the world to save his people was not a new message or idea.
 - If anything, Mark further reassures his readers as to why the first verse is so declarative, this promised Messiah of old is Jesus Christ.
- Mark's word usage for his audience is nothing short of brilliant.
 - Like any good writer or communicator who wants to communicate important details to a particular audience, you want to write in a way that connects to your audience.
 - For instance, if I am trying to clearly communicate to a six-year-old a very complex topic.
 - The aim is to use vernacular that properly articulates the point without compromising the content.
- In the same way, Mark's use of the phrase "As it is written" in the beginning of verse 2 as an authoritative formula that was well known to his audience.
 - The phrase Mark uses at the beginning of verse 2 is the Greek word *kathōs gegraptai*.
 - This word was often used in introductions to laws or deploying legal force to its hearers.
 - In other words, this word carried authoritative weight which was announced by a messenger.
 - So, what was Mark doing here?
- Mark gives reference to Isaiah's prophecy to give authoritative weight to the message that the messenger would come to carry.
 - That message is the reality that there will be a Messiah who will come to save His people.
 - And the role of the messenger will be to prepare His way.
- But before we move too quickly, it would be wise for us to spend a bit of time in verses 2 and 3 to understand and examine the prophecy more closely.
 - If you were familiar with Isaiah's prophecies, you would come to the realization that what Mark records as Isaiah's words are not fully his.
- What we see in verses 2-3 is that Mark is using 3 Old Testament scriptures as a combined quotation.
 - Mark uses Exodus 23, Malachi 3:1, and Isaiah 40:3.
- It was not uncommon for New Testament writers to combine scripture together to

emphasize their point.

- If you have ever taken graduate courses at the university and have been blessed to write a thesis of some sort, you are required to prove your position.
- You are graded on your position by providing accurate primary, secondary, and at times, tertiary resources.
- In a similar way, Mark uses the authoritative weight of these Old Testament prophets to make the point that a messenger would come before Messiah appears onto the public stage.
- To see this tapestry of the text a bit closely, I want to show a graphic.
 - Here is how the text is broken down according to Mark's use of these combined texts. [Slide 3A]
 - A question that arises from this text is why does Mark place such heavy emphasis on this messenger or herald for the Messiah?
 - Why does it carry such prophetic weight?
- The reason being is that this prophecy was the very last thing that the Jewish people were told regarding how Messiah would come.
 - After the book of Malachi was written there would be over 400 years of silence.
 - This period known as the intertestamental period, as you can imagine looked bleak for many Jewish men and women regarding this hope.
 - Imagine not having heard a single word prophetically uttered from the mouth of God's prophets.
- So, the fact that in verse 4, John the Baptist arrives on the scene preaching and baptizing, one could image that his presence stirred national interest.
 - It stirred national interest because the Jewish people had a different messenger in mind.
 - The messenger they had in mind looked like the Old Testament prophet, Elijah in his garments and his diet, ie. Being clothed in camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, according to Mark 1:6.
 - However, the name of the messenger was not what Malachi mentioned which was documented as the last prophetic utterance of God's prophet before the 400 years of silence.
- According to the prophet Malachi in Malachi 4:5, the scripture reads that Elijah the Prophet would return.
 - Check out what the text reads:

Malachi 4:5 “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

- So, Malachi mentions that this messenger, Elijah the prophet, would return before the Great and Terrible day of the Lord
 - It also mentions that with Elijah returning, he would turn the hearts of the children to their fathers.

- However, to understand when Elijah would physically return to the earth, we must first know what the phrase “The great and terrible day of the Lord” refers to.
 - This phrase is in reference to the seven years of tribulation.
 - Which means that prior to the start of the tribulation, Elijah will return to earth for the purpose of restoring the hearts of Israel.
 - In other words, Israel will be brought back to true obedience to the word of God – more specifically their Law, nationally.
- So it becomes clear to see why the Jewish men and women of that day were experiencing a sort of cognitive dissonance between Elijah and John the Baptist.
 - John the Baptist confessed that his ministry was not a fulfillment of Malachi 4 which is recorded in John’s Gospel, more specifically John 1:19-23.
 - As a side note, we will explore these verses in next week’s teaching in more detail, but for the sake of clarity tonight, here is what the text reads:

John 1:19 This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites to him from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”

John 1:20 And he confessed and did not deny; and this is what he confessed: “I am not the Christ.”

John 1:21 And so they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he *said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”

John 1:22 Then they said to him, “Who are you? Tell us, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

John 1:23 He said, “I am the voice of one calling out in the wilderness, ‘Make the way of the Lord straight,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”

- John makes it evidently clear that his ministry and mission is the fulfillment of Isaiah 40 as we reviewed earlier tonight.
 - This fulfillment of prophecy speaks specifically to that of the Messiah’s first coming.
 - It was the Jewish teaching of that day that emphasized Elijah’s return before Messiah arrives on the scene.
 - Herein lies the cause of all the confusion and speculation in one sense.
 - The Jewish people had overlooked Isaiah’s prophecy in Isaiah 40 which foretold an unnamed forerunner who would come before Messiah.
 - This misunderstanding and overlooking of scripture could explain why at the Jewish Passover Seder an empty chair remains at the table.
 - The empty chair is prepared for Elijah the Prophet prompting the assumption that Messiah has yet come.
 - This confusion led folks to question the legitimacy of Jesus as Messiah as well as John the Baptist as a messenger, himself.
 - If we were to be honest for a moment, the concerns of these men were not any different than how you or I would have responded back then.
 - Most importantly, John wanted to make sure that he got it right and so would

you and I.

- What was anticipated by many, including John, was that this Messiah, in His coming, would come bringing justice, peace, freedom, and judgement in hand.
 - However, before judgement can come, opportunity is given to turn.
 - In other words, arguably, repercussion does not precede opportunities of steadfast patience leading to repentance.
- John and others could not wrap their minds around the reason why Jesus was showing mercy to the sinner rather than immediate judgement.
 - Once again, another misinterpretation of what the text was saying regarding John's message and mission in Isaiah 40:4-5 where Isaiah says:

Isaiah 40:4 Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the uneven ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley;

Isaiah 40:5 Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together;

- ◦ I believe this is the beauty of understanding the steadfast love of God. God's love is merciful and patient.
 - Peter says it best in 2 Peter 3:9:

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

- God, through His Son, Jesus Christ will come face to face with men and women and through His life, death, burial, and resurrection, and ascension, will turn dead hearts to life by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - And all of this will be accomplished by Jesus showing humanity through His life what it looks like to truly be human.
 - What a grace that is to know that the Father would allow His Son to endure the pain of the cross so that we may endure the joys of sonship!
 - That's love!
- So like any great writer, God the Father provides redemptive clarity through Jesus, explaining to the crowd in Matthew 11, who John is and why His message is true.
 - Jesus mentions in Matthew 11:14 a clarifying statement that again draws to how men receive the truth of God's message.
 - Here is what Matthew 11:14 says:

Matthew 11:14 And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come.

Matthew 11:15 The one who has ears to hear, let him hear.

- ○ Jesus explains in Matthew 11 that John the Baptist was in fact a type of Elijah.
 - To put it plainly, the one who was willing to accept Jesus as the Messiah was also willing to accept John as their Elijah.
- The reality of accepting this message is solely based upon the Father revealing this truth by His Spirit to those in whom He has called.
 - And those in whom the Lord calls received that message by responding to John's message and baptism unto repentance.
- The role that John the Baptist would play as the herald for the Messiah would require a preparation of hearts to receive Israel's Messiah.
 - Whenever a royal dignitary or delegate is coming to town, the security intel is there a day or so ahead of the dignitary.
 - They arrive early in order to make sure that all accommodations and things are in order for the arrival of that leader.
- In this same way, John the Baptist, preaching a baptism of repentance is to prepare the hearts of the people for their King.
 - Again, be here at next week's teaching to understand this baptism and message a bit more.
 - Before we wrap up on our teaching tonight on Mark, I would like to revisit a very important piece of Isaiah's prophecy regarding the wilderness.
- If you have been a student of scripture for some time, the wilderness should be a familiar setting for you.
 - The wilderness was typically the meeting place between God and His prophets.
 - For instance, Moses saw the burning bush in the Midianite wilderness.
 - God called a nation to Himself after He delivered them from Egypt.
 - Even Elijah was ministered to by ravens in the wilderness.
 - But what else bears the significance of the wilderness as a setting?
 - The wilderness is where God preserved His people for 40 years.
 - It is in the wilderness where God provided food for His people.
 - And the children of Israel saw the mighty provision of God time and time again in the wilderness.
 - Throughout scripture, the wilderness is a place where the people of God encountered Yahweh, mightily.
 - So it is not by chance that after 400 years of silence, that God would choose to introduce His Son on the scene in a place of familiarity.
 - Isn't it interesting that our Great God and King meets us in the most unlikely places?
 - For some they would expect the Messiah to make Himself known in the courts, however, God sees fit to meet in an unlikely place.
 - This Messianic Kingdom that was to come would arrive in a way people least expected it.
 - The Kingdom that would come would defy the odds of what was expected of many people.

- The Messiah who many expected to be ushered in with pomp and circumstances in the courts would be announced in the far corners of the wilderness.
- The Messiah who would be expected to reign down justice and righteousness would be introduced by an unfamiliar character.
- But most importantly, the Messiah that was to reign in victory would have to be tried, mocked, and crucified to “Fulfill all righteousness” according to the will of the Father.
- We will dive more into the messenger, the messenger’s mission, and the Messiah next week. Let’s pray.



Mark - Lesson 1B

Chapter 1:4-8

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- Tonight, we will pick up where we left off last week.
 - In last week's session we discussed how Mark thematically begins what we now know as the first gospel record recorded.
 - And it begins in a very peculiar way.
 - He does not begin with a genealogy or traditional Jewish customary greeting, but rather he begins with a bold, and unapologetic statement.
 - He begins by saying in few short words, "The Gospel, this gospel, begins with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
 - It begins with Peter's well-known confession at Caesarea Philippi.
 - It is the Holy Spirit that reveals to Peter, by the will of the Father at the appointed time, that Jesus was not just a man, but was in fact the Son of the Living God.
 - This is how Mark chooses to begin his gospel, and rightfully so.
 - Mark then moved the reader to a section of scripture that to many Jews was a familiar passage of scripture that was misunderstood regarding a messenger who would prepare the way for God and His Kingdom.
 - We discovered that the quote Mark mentions is from Isaiah in verses 2-3 of Mark 1, is actually a combination of 3 Old Testament texts.
 - Those texts come from Exodus, Malachi, and Isaiah.
 - Mark's ultimate concern is to connect the reader to know that this Messiah and this coming Kingdom has always been a part of God's redemptive plan.
 - This is good news for us because it one, points to God's sovereignty, but two it shows us that God's design and plan is without error.
 - Isaiah 40:3 pointed to the reality that before the promised Messiah would come, there would be an unnamed messenger that would prepare the way for Him.
 - This preparation for Messiah would begin through the ministry given to John the Baptist in the message that would be preached.
 - This is where we will pick up tonight, so with that being said, pick me up at verse 4.
 - Here's what the text reads:

Mark 1:4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 1:5 And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

Mark 1:6 John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and his diet was locusts and wild honey.

Mark 1:7 And he was preaching, saying, "After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to bend down and untie the straps of His sandals.

Mark 1:8 I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

- Let's pray.
- One of the most interesting conversations you will typically hear from two men in conversation after they have met for the first time in passing is the “conversation starter”.
 - The conversation will begin with a tight gripped handshake to feel out the gentleman and who they are as a person.
 - From there it then moves to introduction of names, “Hello, my name is such and such.”
 - Which will then be followed up with the name of the other gentleman.
 - But right after the brief introduction of names is complete, in comes the irresistible question, “So what do you do for a living?”
 - I find this typical introduction to be humorous because it shows something quite telling about men and our conversations, but more than that it is quite telling of where we place our value, worth, and identity.
 - As human beings, we tend to place our values and significance in the things that we do and the places we work rather than in who we are.
 - It is as if what we do identifies us as who we are rather than who’s we are.
 - Pastor Timothy Keller in his book “The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism” says this regarding identity:

“Our need for worth is so powerful that whatever we base our identity and value on we essentially ‘deify’. We will look to it with the passion and intensity of worship and devotion, even if we think ourselves highly irreligious.”

- As believers in Christ, we must recognize that our identity is found in only one person.
 - Not a thing, not a place, but a person, and that person is Jesus Christ.
 - As followers of Christ, we must be willing to identify ourselves in and with of our crucified Christ.
 - We must be willing to embrace the fullness of our Savior even if it means we lose favor amongst men.
 - Or even if it means that we miss out on the opportunity to brag about your promotion to others.
 - Christ must be the fundamental motivation and identification of who we are.
 - Tonight, as we walk through verses 4-8, we will see that the message that John preached, is a message that is fixed on identifying with a person and his work.
 - We will see how the identity and power of Christ fundamentally transforms the hearts and minds of those who receive this message.
 - And how it moves us into full commitment of His Person and power.
 - With that being said, pick me up in verse 4 and 5, once again.

Mark 1:4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of

repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 1:5 And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

- Mark makes it evidently clear from the use of the combined scripture references from Exodus, Malachi, and Isaiah, that the messenger mentioned from old was John the Baptist.
 - We see this evidently at the start of verse 4 with the following words: “John the Baptist appeared.”
 - In other words, this is the messenger that Isaiah and the prophets have spoken about who will make way for the coming Messiah.
 - Not only does John appear on the scene, but his appearance comes with a profound message.
 - The question becomes, what was John’s message and why would it have been so profound?
 - Mark’s gospel doesn’t mention what John is preaching, only what John is doing.
 - To refresh us on the purpose of the message that the messenger would bear, we must go back to verse 3.
 - Here’s what the prophet Isaiah mentions regarding the messenger, who we now know is John the Baptist:

Isaiah 40:3 A voice of one calling:

**“In the wilderness prepare
the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.**

- The message that the messenger would give would be to “prepare the way for the Lord.”
 - How, is the question, right? How would this be done or better yet what would be the results of this message and how would it impact the hearer?
 - Notice after the semicolon it says “make straight in the desert a highway for the Lord.
 - In our last session of Mark, toward the end, I mentioned the latter half of Isaiah’s prophecy, Isaiah 40:4-5.
 - These last two verses dealt with how this highway for the Lord would be made for the people to receive their Messiah.
 - But more specifically how this message would impact the hearers.
 - To see what I am talking about let’s read Isaiah 40:4-5 together:

Isaiah 40:4 Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

**Isaiah 40:5 And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”**

- Isaiah’s prophecy mentions several instances of natural geographical changes being made.
 - However, it is important to note that these changes that would be made are only metaphorical.
 - We know that there were no terrain changes in Israel, geographically speaking.
 - So, this further solidifies the suggestion that these changes that Isaiah uses metaphorically are meant to point the reader to spiritual matters.
 - Notice the breakdown of these metaphors:
 - Every valley shall be lifted up
 - Every mountain and hill made low
 - Uneven ground become level
 - Rough places a plain (made smooth)
 - The messenger would prepare the way of the Lord by a message that would change the very rocky and callused hearts of the people.
 - And all of this would be accomplished by the Power of the Holy Spirit working in the message turning the hearts of the people back to the Father.
 - The way by which this plan would be accomplished is by God Himself, actively at work within redemptive history using a messenger and a message to point the way to the Messiah.
 - Again, notice the language that Isaiah uses regarding these metaphorical changes of men and women’s hearts.
 - Every valley shall be raised.
 - Every mountain and hill made low.
 - Rough ground shall become level
 - Rugged places a plain.
 - It is an undeniable reality that what God is going to do, will be done because he is actively at work making these things happen.
 - Unwilling hearts that the Lord has called will come, why, because God is in them making them alive.
 - He chooses those in whom He chooses and there is no getting around God’s working through His creation.
 - It’s evident that this message that John is preaching in the wilderness is moving many people’s hearts to respond and to confess their sins.
 - Really quick, verse 5 mentions this about the impact John’s message is having at the Jordan River:

Mark 1:5 And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people

of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

- Clearly, there are many people from Judea and Jerusalem who are making their way to the Jordan river to hear John’s message.
 - Now, it’s important to note when Mark says “all the country” of Judea and Jerusalem, it is not literally all.
 - When the word “all” is used here it is speaking about many people.
 - “All” would be an exaggeration however it makes the point that a lot of people came to hear this message.
 - And we will see who is included in this group of “all”.
 - What we see throughout the gospel accounts is that the message that John was preaching was a three-part message.
 - John’s message consisted of:
 - A call to action - Repent
 - A call to act - Respond
 - A message to believe - Receive
 - We will carefully examine each part of this message that John preached and understand its significance.
 - We will first begin with the first two parts of John’s message which are: A call to action (Repent) and a call to act (Respond).
 - Matthew 3:1-2 records verbatim what the exact message is that John is preaching.
 - Check out the text.

Matthew 3:1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea

Matthew 3:2 and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”

- John’s message was simple; “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
 - What a simple message: Repent and prepare to respond.
 - As a matter of fact, John preaches this exact message for approximately 6 months prior to Jesus coming to the Judean wilderness.
 - One message. One consistent message is changing the lives and behaviors of men and women who were all motivated and bent towards sin.
 - However, this one message is preached and yet hearts are moving from unrepentant hearts to repentant hearts.
 - Friends, we too have a message that we are to share, it is a consistent message, called the Gospel.
 - And when this message is preached, by God’s Spirit and Power it makes dead men and women come alive in Christ.
 - John’s call to action and call to act for the people who are coming to hear this

message begins with two things:

- Repent and turn from your old ways to receive your King and His Kingdom.
- The word “repent” in Greek is *metanoeō*.
 - It means to change one’s mind or to change one’s life based upon a complete change of attitude and thought concerning sin and righteousness.
- Notice what repentance is not. Repentance is not feeling sorry for what you have done only to go back to it as if nothing happened.
 - In other words, repentance is not giving crocodile tears.
 - Repentance is literally a turn from what you once did and moving in a new direction.
- A person literally abandons their former dispositions and displays their genuine regret by change in behavior.
 - Our view on what is right in our own eyes changes because we move from what pleases us to what pleases God.
 - Our concerns now become, “Does what I do please God and if not what must I do to please Him in my thoughts and my actions?”
- The reality of a changed mind bears the weight of the truth that prior to moving into truth, one was foreign to righteousness and headed towards a fiery judgement.
 - This is John’s message of repentance! It is calling God’s people to get right with their Savior!
- It is clear that repentance first demonstrates that there is a recognition or acknowledgement of sin.
 - Once that sin has been acknowledged you are then moved to change your direction and your behavior.
 - How do we know this process to be true?
- We see evidence of this “change of mind” in Luke’s gospel, more specifically Luke 3:10-14.
 - Within Luke’s gospel, John the Baptist is speaking to a crowd of men and women who were coming out to be baptized.
- What is fascinating to read is that Luke’s account provides great detail concerning the repentant hearts of the men and women in the crowd.
 - It will be seen from the text that we will read that these men and women have clearly seen within their lives that they have sinned.
 - And are now wanting to know what repentance looks like lived out.
- This shows just how seriously committed to this message, the Messiah, and coming Kingdom they were.
 - Imagine at one point in your life, all you knew was wickedness and sinful desires, but then all of a sudden you come to the realization of your ways.
 - It’s a sobering reality!
- These men and women want to know how they are to live and respond now. This was the disposition of those who were repentant in the crowd.

- Check out how John responds to them in the crowd.

Luke 3:10 And the crowds were questioning him, saying, “Then what are we to do?”

Luke 3:11 And he would answer and say to them, “The one who has two tunics is to share with the one who has none; and the one who has food is to do likewise.”

Luke 3:12 Now even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what are we to do?”

Luke 3:13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.”

Luke 3:14 And soldiers also were questioning him, saying, “What are we to do, we as well?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone, nor harass anyone, and be content with your wages.”

- John provides practical examples of what it looks like to live a life contrary to our old sin nature.
 - John mentions that our selfish and self-centered nature now moves towards things such as sharing our possessions and respecting others.
 - John sees some tax collectors in the group as well as soldiers and he provides personalized examples to their situation.
 - In a few short words, John shows the crowd that their actions and affections must be right before a just and Holy God.
 - Friends, it really boils down to the matters of one’s heart.
 - It is apparent what is going on within the hearts of those coming to hear the message and responding to it.
 - Their hearts are being moved to change!
 - I bring this to the forefront because of what the prophet Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 17:9-10. Check out the text.

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

Jeremiah 17:10 I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, To give to each person according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

- If the heart is naturally deceitful and sick and only the Lord can understand it, then it is only the Lord that can change it – not us.
 - This was the first two points of John’s 3-part message in proclaiming men to repent and respond.
 - We will now move to part 3 of John’s message: A Message to Receive.
 - If one was to enter into this coming Kingdom that would be physically here on earth, the only way to enter was through receiving this message.
 - Once there was a recognition of repentance and a change of mind, Mark

mentions that there would be a “baptism of repentance”.

- For us to best understand the connection of this message to this method of baptism, we need to have a clearer understanding of Baptism.
- John’s baptism was unique in that it was not connected to the traditional sense of the word or its purpose.
 - Jews were well acquainted with the term baptism.
 - As a matter of fact, baptism was the idea of ceremonial cleansing within Jewish practice. (Slide 4)
- One scholar recorded this about baptism as it relates to the Old Testament:

“Baptism began as a ritual to initiate new believers into the Jewish faith and continued as a means to purify individuals.”

- “Jewish baptism always required total immersion.” (Taylor, *The Immerser*, pp.58-60, *Yeshua Life of the Jewish Messiah* Fruchtenbaum, pg.488)
 - The initial root of the English word, “baptism”, in the Greek is *bapto*.
 - It simply means “to dip” or “to dye”.
 - This term is best illustrated by imagining a piece of white cloth being dipped into a bucket of dye.
 - Once that cloth has been fully immersed in the dye and is pulled back up that cloth is no longer white.
 - It has now taken on the very identity in which it has been immersed in.
 - So what was happening in the Judean wilderness with John’s message is people were hearing this message to repent being preached.
 - Their hearts are convicted of their sin which causes them to turn from their old ways.
 - Therefore, they have this change of mind and change of heart and make this commitment that they would accept whomever John identified as Messiah.
 - As Dr. Fruchtenbaum mentions in “Yeshua: The Life of Messiah from a Messianic Jewish Perspective”, John’s baptism is a prophetic eschatological washing which points to the greater baptism of the Spirit.
 - Repentance, here, not only causes one to turn from sin, moving from untruth to truth, it ultimately “opens the eyes” for those being baptized by John to commit to the promised Messiah as the Messianic King.
 - This prepares the way for Messiah to be received and for His people to receive the Kingdom.
 - Friends, this baptism became a matter of insult amongst the religious leaders of that day, but most importantly, it created this line in the sand for those who heard the message.
 - For example, in both Matthew and Luke’s account, John is preaching to the crowds and within the crowds John notices a group of Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - As John recognizes them he says to the whole group, specifically addressing these religious men, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the

wrath to come?”

- Directly after that the text, both gospel accounts, mention this powerful line, “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.”
- If there is no fruit to show of a repentant heart, there was no true repentance to begin with.
- The Gospel writers are pointing to a very unique thing that is going on and John was making this prominently known in the crowd.
- The time is up where you think that a simple ceremonial cleansing is somehow going to suffice for the wickedness of the hearts of men and women.
 - These ceremonial cleansings were instructed by God to bring to the forefront of the children of Israel that they must be clean before God.
 - However, what the religious leaders did was use the cleansing as an outward appeal to obedience rather than an inward commitment to obedience in the heart.
- Friends don’t miss this, the exterior cleansing was only a means to express what was going to be done inwardly.
 - God wasn’t focused on clean hands per se, He was focused on clean hearts.
 - This is why John was so forward with the religious leaders, because their lives bore no fruit.
- One thing my wife and I do with our kids at bath time is we do what’s called “the under-arm check”.
 - The underarm check is important in our household because it ensures my kids really washed for shower time.
- What typically happens is the kids get in the shower and think that just because the water hits them that somehow it makes them clean.
 - So the first time we gave our kids the opportunity to wash themselves, we followed up with the armpit check – clearly they failed.
- After that my wife and I come in and give a more thorough wash.
 - This ensures that they are fully clean and not wanting to give us an appearance of being clean without the evidence of being clean.
 - You can’t fake the funk. It will come to light and in the case of our text, it will be evident with your life and living.
- So as John is proclaiming this baptism of repentance, he is letting the Jewish people know, you need a bath because your bath is lacking.
 - The religious leaders were also making the assumption that their ancestry or Jewish lineage made them clean or made them acceptable in the sight of God and exempt from judgement. (Matthew 3:9)
- In pharisaic theology, there was a concept known as the *zekhut avot* which means “the merit of the fathers” (citation from pg.478 of Life of Messiah)
 - What this taught was that any descendant of the patriarchs, Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, was protected from divine punishment simply on merit of the fathers. (citation from pg.478 of Life of Messiah)
 - It’s like assuming that just because your mother and father are saved that you

somehow are “automatically” saved.

- Unfortunately, that’s not how it works and John clarifies that for them – everyone must be washed whom the Lord has called.
- Only God Himself is able to apply this spiritual washing within the hearts of men and women in whom He calls.
- Ezekiel speaks to this washing and cleansing in Ezekiel 36:25-26. Check out what it reads.

Ezekiel 36:25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

Ezekiel 36:26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

- One detail that we can’t afford to overlook is located, again, in Matthew and Luke’s account.
 - It will further expound upon what I mean by a line in the sand.
 - John mentions this in Matthew 3:10, right after he speaks on bearing fruit:

Matthew 3:10 And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is being cut down and thrown into the fire.

- John’s point to the religious leaders at this moment seems quite crystalized based upon his previous statement in Matthew about using heritage as a means of inheritance.
 - John’s point is that there is no amount of appearing to be holy that will keep them and anyone who is unrepentant from the judgement to come.
 - The message that John is proclaiming is a message that shows how men and women are saved from the promised coming judgement and wrath of God.
 - The axe that is used here in Matthew is a picture of the reality that one more blow to this tree and judgement is coming.
 - The judgment is imminent.
 - This message of repentance would show those who would be of the remnant and those who would not.
 - We will speak more about this idea of separation via judgement as we get closer to the close of our teaching tonight.
 - Let’s keep moving forward, check out verse 6.

Mark 1:6 John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and his diet was locusts and wild honey.

- Mark mentions the attire and diet of John the Baptist here.
 - And if you were to be honest, the appearance would be a bit questionable.

- Here we have the forerunner of the Messiah, the Promised One, and yet the forerunner's attire is that of camel's hair with a leather belt.
- To make matters worse, his diet is that of locust and wild honey. The Keto diet had nothing on this!
- I could see it now, as John is preaching around the desert areas, locust and honey drippings within his beard.
- This is the picture that people are seeing as John is preaching.
 - Maybe some are there for the entertainment of the view whereas others are there to hear and receive the message.
 - Whatever the case may be, it's clear from verse 5 that the message that the Lord had given John was a message that was changing and preparing hearts.
 - And most assuredly, people were able to look past his physical features and hear his famous message.
- What I find most interesting is how God can use the most unlikely people to give a most profound message.
 - Recognize that this messianic message is being announced by a wild looking man in the middle of a desert.
 - This message is not being presented to the people by a religious leader.
- God chooses to give the message of His Son's entrance into His ministry through the mouthpiece of a man who looks like a maniac.
 - When I think about that, I think about how God can take the most unqualified, unlikely men, like myself, to speak about His Holiness and goodness.
 - 1 Corinthians 1:27, I think says it best:

1 Corinthians 1:27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

- It could be assumed by some that this message of Messiah and the Kingdom arriving would be announced by those who were in the religious circles.
 - Maybe a Pharisee or a Sadducee would have been most suitable for the announcement of the one they taught about?
 - No! God instead uses an unlikely man named John the Baptist to go out to the wilderness to live and prepare for a time, for this messianic announcement.
 - God uses John and gives him the attire that the prophets of old, more specifically, the attire that the prophet Elijah wore, to grasp the attention of the people.
 - Hear me when I say this, God can use whoever, however He wants. He always qualifies and equips those in whom He calls.
 - Moses thought that because he was a stutterer that he was incapable of delivering a message to Pharaoh.
 - The bible is filled with inadequate, unqualified men and women, who are used mightily by God.

- Do not discount who God uses for His purposes!
- We arrive now to our last two verses for tonight, verses 7 and 8. Check out the text.

Mark 1:7 And he was preaching, saying, “After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to bend down and untie the straps of His sandals.

Mark 1:8 I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

- Notice that in verse 7, John’s preaching had a shift in conversation.
 - I mention this because prior to verse 7, we are told that John is simply preaching for people to repent in preparation for the promised Messiah and His Kingdom.
 - However, we notice there is a sudden change or pivot in John’s communication.
 - What begins with Him preaching “Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand”, now shifts to him saying:
 - “After me, One is coming who is mightier than I.”
 - Why does John feel the need to make a distinction between himself and Jesus? Isn’t that the gist of the message?
 - What or who seems to be causing the confusion?
 - John has made it clear from the start that He is the forerunner who is preparing the people for the coming of their God and King.
 - Clearly, there is confusion stirring in the camp.
 - Luke 3:15-16 expresses what the confusion is whereas John 1:19-28 expresses who the instigators of the confusion are.
 - Let’s look at Luke 3:15-16 quickly:

Luke 3:15 Now while the people were in a state of expectation and they all were thinking carefully in their hearts about John, whether he himself perhaps was the Christ,

Luke 3:16 John responded to them all, saying, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but He is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the straps of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

- John either sees curiosity in the eyes of the people he is baptizing as they contemplate on if John is the Christ or not
 - Or the Holy Spirit reveals to John what the people are thinking in their hearts.
 - I personally believe that the Holy Spirit gives insight to John as to what is going on within the people’s hearts.
 - However the chips may fall, John wants no confusion regarding who the promised Messiah is.
 - John is adamant with the fact that his message points to Messiah and his

baptism acknowledges the people's commitment to this Messiah and His message which provides forgiveness of sins.

- So, if John is clear in his messaging, then who or what is causing speculation or issue as to who Messiah is?
 - Well, we don't have to look too far to know who is causing the confusion whether in whisper or in presence.
 - If you recall last week, I mentioned that we would come back to revisit a particular piece of scripture today, well here we go.
 - Turn with me to John 1:19-28.

John 1:19 This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites to him from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

John 1:20 And he confessed and did not deny; and this is what he confessed: "I am not the Christ."

John 1:21 And so they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he *said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

John 1:22 Then they said to him, "Who are you? Tell us, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

John 1:23 He said, "I am the voice of one calling out in the wilderness, 'Make the way of the Lord straight,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

John 1:24 And the messengers had been sent from the Pharisees.

John 1:25 They asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

John 1:26 John answered them, saying, "I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know.

John 1:27 It is He who comes after me, of whom I am not worthy even to untie the strap of His sandal."

John 1:28 These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing people.

- There is a group of priests and Levites that have been sent to John's baptism to investigate this Messianic movement.
 - This explains the confusion amongst the crowd.
 - The religious leaders have arrived on the scene observing and witnessing what can only be explained as a move of God in the midst of His people.
 - With all these people coming to hear the message and being baptized unto repentance, it makes sense that it would spark controversy.
 - As a matter of fact, over that 6 month period of John preaching this message to prepare for the Messiah and His Kingdom many people were being drawn and confessing their sins and being baptized unto repentance.
 - Why do I mention this?
 - I mention this because John the Baptist and this large crowd began to gather the attention of many people, but more especially the religious leaders.

- As you can imagine jealousy, envy, and pride are beginning to bubble up.
 - The religious leaders see this as competing interest – this cannot be so.
- It's like when you see a Chick Fil A right across the street from a McDonalds, you are going to have some competition, per se.
 - And in the case of Chick Fil A, they are getting all the customers.
- In a similar way, John's message is impacting the hearts and minds of people which is causing an allegiance issue.
 - Are the people going to be committed to the religious/political structures and power structure of that day or will their allegiance move to this coming King and His Kingdom?
- These competing Kingdoms would soon be face to face and the religious leaders did not like it, so they sent in some spies to interrogate.
 - This would begin what would be known as the Sanhedrin Investigation.
 - Whenever there would be noise of a Messianic movement of some sort, the religious leaders would conduct an investigation into the claims.
- This investigation would be a two step process:
 - First step consisted of simply observing what you see, what is said and done.
 - No questions could be raised during this first phase.
- If the findings from the first half of the investigation had grounds for concern, it would move to the second stage – Interrogation.
 - In this phase those who would be sent out by the religious leaders would be able to raise questions, objections, etc for the confirmation or rejection of 'said' Messiah.
- It becomes evidently clear that within John's account, the religious leaders were already at step two of their investigation due to the series of questions asked.
 - John, his message, and the coming Messiah officially became a threat to the religious leaders of that day.
 - Jesus hadn't even stepped foot into His ministry yet and He will be held under a microscope having not yet even uttered a word.
- Isn't it profound how the message of the Gospel to this day is a message that is consistently under investigation by men and women who don't want to hear the truth.
 - This is the result of depravity and wickedness at its best. The enemy does not want the truth to be made known and will stir confusion wherever he can.
 - The enemy's plan from the garden to now has not and will not change.
 - The enemy seeks to silence the message; however the message will continue to be proclaimed.
- The religious leaders are seeing with their own eyes and some by way of the investigation that their gig of false relationship is coming to a close.
 - The King is coming on the scene to usher in a new way of life preparing the people for what this new Kingdom will be and look like.
- John mentions that the Messiah that is coming, whom he will point out, is "mightier

than John”

- John even goes a step further to articulate the reality of how much greater Jesus, the Messiah is than he.
 - He gives this illustration that he is not even worthy to stoop down and untie the sandals of Christ.
- David Daube mentions in the book ‘The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism’ that the use of stooping down to remove the sandals off the Messiah’s feet was a traditional custom for slaves and their Masters.
 - The Talmud makes mention of this customary service of a slave during that day.
 - However, John mentions that he is not even worthy to do the typical task of that of a slave as it pertains to serving Jesus.
- What we must also recognize in John’s humility is that he continually points the people back to Christ.
 - John has no confusion as to who he is and his role.
 - As followers and servants of Christ, even within our leading people to Jesus, you are leading them to Christ – not us.
 - If I may even be so frank as to say, you are leading people to a person and not a church.
 - The reality is the good news is not about your church or your pastor, the good news is about Jesus Christ and what He did!
- The text continues in verse 8 with John further explaining why Christ is so much mightier than he.
 - John mentions that the baptism that I am giving you is simply with water, but the baptism that Messiah will give you is with the Holy Spirit.
- Interesting to note, Mark’s Gospel does not mention the phrase “and fire” regarding Jesus’ means of baptizing.
 - Why does Mark not include “and fire” to his account?
 - Could it be that the use of that phrase was too soon from the event that his audience would have just endured with the “great fire of Rome”?
 - Some could speculate to that extent however John is simply trying to reinforce for the people two things:
 - 1. John is not the Messiah
 - 2. He is not even worthy to be compared to Messiah, more specifically their methods of baptism are not even worthy to be compared.
- Within Matthew and Luke’s account the authors describe John’s dialogue in detail regarding the difference between John’s baptism and Jesus’ baptism.
 - What is clear from looking at both baptisms is that everyone will experience a baptism of some sort.
 - To further explain this, I would like for us to turn to Matthew 3:11-12. Here is what the text reads:

Matthew 3:11 “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Matthew 3:12 His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

- So how does Jesus’ baptism directly differ from that of John’s?
 - Clearly it differs in many ways but the key to understand how specifically is found in verse 12.
 - Verse 12 mentions that Jesus’ winnowing fork is in His hand.
 - There may be some who are asking the question, what is a winnowing fork and what does this have to do with a baptism?
 - To best answer that question I would like to first explain what a winnowing fork is.
 - A winnowing fork was an agricultural tool used to toss threshing grain or barley into the air.
 - In tossing the wheat into the air the wind would separate the lighter straw from the heavier grain.
 - This process literally aided in separating the wheat from the chaff.
 - Once the winnowing had been done, the chaff would be removed with a winnowing shovel and discarded.
 - Within the Old testament, the mention of winnowing is figuratively connected to God’s divine wrath.
 - It is rarely mentioned as a means of scattering as is done in Ruth 3:2.
 - Within this context in the New Testament this term of the winnowing fork is directly connected to God separating and judging.
 - The question is what or who, for that matter, is being separated?
 - The answer goes back to verse 12 of Matthew 3. The text says “ He will gather wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”
 - The text makes mention that the wheat will be separated from the chaff.
 - The wheat will be placed in the barn and the chaff will be burned up.
 - All of this sounds great, but what are the true implications of this biblical truth. In other words who is the wheat and who is the chaff.
 - Within this context, the wheat are those who believe and will therefore be baptized by the Holy Spirit.
 - Whereas the chaff are the non-believers, those who do not accept Messiah and reject His claims, they will be baptized by fire.
 - This particular fire is not a mere campfire situation. This fire is that of the Lake of fire as the text mentions in Revelation 20:11-15.
 - Check out the text for direct clarity on this separation.

Revelation 20:15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- John's explanation of the differences in the baptisms is showing the hearer that Jesus is unlike any other.
 - Jesus' baptism will reveal two important aspects of His ministry:
 - It will reveal that Jesus is both the Gatherer and Divider.
 - Check out what the text says in Luke 12:49-53

Luke 12:49 "I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!

Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!

Luke 12:51 Do you think that I came to provide peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division;

Luke 12:52 for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three.

Luke 12:53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

- The Holy Spirit, through His illuminating the hearts and minds of men and women will draw those in whom are Christ to Christ.
 - Those whose eyes are opened by the Spirit are receivers of His grace whereas those whose eyes are not open are rejected.
 - Those who are not called by the Spirit are then separated and cast aside.
 - Scholar and Theologian Darrell Bock mentions in his commentary on Luke that John gives the reader 3 points that point to Jesus' superiority.
 - 1. John mentioning the illustration of a slave to a master: John saying he is not even worthy to be a slave to Christ indicates Christ's Superiority.
 - This speaks to an important aspect of regard to Christ as Lord and King. Jesus is not your "best friend" or your equal, He is your King.
 - 2. Jesus' baptism with the Spirit brings blessing, discernment, enablement, and His divine presence.
 - 3. Jesus is superior because He is the Judge who makes distinctions between people (citation from Darrell L. Bock)
 - Recognizing that Jesus is Gatherer and Divider, Judge and Prophet, King and God is an admission to His splendor, greatness, but above all His Deity.
 - Only God has the power to raise up and tear down!
 - Only God has the authority to Judge!
 - Only God has the Power to save and to set the captive free.
 - Only God has the ability to cast one to hell.

- It is evident that within John's detailed statement in Luke's account that this Jesus is more than just a teacher. Jesus is God wrapped in flesh amongst men.
- As Mark continues to unfold this gospel, it becomes clear that the One in whom John will point out as Messiah is not worthy to be compared to any man.
 - This coming Messiah and King is both distinct and divine in His Person.
 - There will be some who will accept Him and some that will reject Him, but what we will see is that the Father is the determining factor by who will receive His Son and who will reject Him.
 - In next week's teaching, we will see why this coming figure that John will introduce us to, Jesus the Christ, is so great!
 - I hope you join us next week as we travel through verses 9-13.
 - Let's Pray.

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Mark - Lesson 1C

Chapter 1:9-13

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- Last week towards the end of our time together, we discussed the significance of Jesus' arrival on the scene.
 - John the Baptizer mentioned that Christ was mightier than he so much so that he went on to say that he is "not even worthy to untie the sandals of Jesus' feet."
 - This was significant because it alluded to the majesty and supremacy of our great King, Jesus Christ.
 - He mentioned that the Messiah's baptism would reveal two important aspects of His ministry.
 - **It would reveal that Jesus would be both the gatherer and divider.**
 - We will witness throughout this study how Jesus' ministry draws men and women to Himself, His message, and to service.
 - While at the same time, His life will reveal those who will reject His message and mission.
 - Tonight, we will witness:
 - 1. Jesus being confirmed and affirmed by the Father,
 - 2. Jesus anointed for His ministry and missional work with Power from the Holy Spirit.
 - 3. Identify with humanity in order to save those in whom the Father called.
 - With that being said, let's read verses 9-13 of Mark Chapter 1, together.

Mark 1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

Mark 1:10 And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Him;

Mark 1:11 and a voice came from the heavens: "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Mark 1:12 And immediately the Spirit *brought Him out into the wilderness.

Mark 1:13 And He was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild animals, and the angels were serving Him.

- Let's Pray
- One of the greatest affirming honors that a father could bestow upon his child is his confirmation of love and approval.
 - The profound confidence a child has regarding their father stems from the father's unyielded commitment to the growth and development of his child.
 - Just the mentioning of a father approving his child especially amongst others is quite reassuring.
 - What we find in tonight's study is Jesus arriving on the scene to be baptized.
 - We will witness God the Father both confirming and approving His Son.
 - This announcement will be both a verbal and visual announcement.
 - It will be verbal in the sense of John the Baptist hearing the affirming and confirming voice of God acknowledging Jesus as His Son.

- And it will be visual to the effect that the heavens will open, and the Holy Spirit will appear in a unique form.
- This announcement will then lead to the preparation and testing of Jesus who will show Himself to be victorious over the schemes of Satan.
- With that outline, pick me up at verse 9.

Mark 1:9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

- Verse 9 starts with the arrival of Jesus coming from Nazareth to be baptized by John.
 - However, before we move forward, we don't want to miss Mark's choice of words.
 - Mark begins the sentence with the phrase "In those days".
 - **Why does Mark begin with the phrase "In those days".**
 - Why doesn't he begin with "And Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee" or something to that effect?
 - The answer to that question is found in Luke's account. Check out Luke 3:1-2.

Luke 3:1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene,

Luke 3:2 in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness.

- What we find in Luke's account are important historical markers.
 - I mention this briefly because it is important to note that our Christian faith is grounded in actual history.
 - These are real people, in real places, at specific times.
 - So what we witness is God in eternity's past was interweaving his redemptive story through human history and time.
 - For example, we know that:
 - Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea from AD 26 to late 36.
 - Herod Antipas ruled as tetrarch of Galilee from 4BC to AD39
 - His brother Herod Philip ruled northern Palestine from 4BC to AD34
 - Not much information is available regarding Lysanias
 - We also see that Luke mentions two high priest: Annas and Caiaphas
 - What we see from these figures is real dates and a year that Jesus is headed to be baptized.
 - There are two things we are to note here:
 - 1. The significance of the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar

- 2. The other figures mentioned in Luke 3:1-2
- The significance of the 15th year of Tiberius Cesar directly connects to Jesus' age at the time of His baptism.
 - Secondly, it connects to the reality that some of these figures will have some interaction, in word or deed, with Christ.
 - **It should never escape us to see just how detailed God is regarding His redemptive plan in bringing about salvation.**
- What is most profound regarding the 15th year of Tiberius' reign is we can pinpoint Jesus' age.
 - Tiberius' 15th year is probably around AD 29, which is considered the most popular view by scholars.
 - Which would put Jesus about the age of 30 years old.
- Scripture confirms the age of Jesus in Luke 3:23. Check out the text

Luke 3:23 When He began *His ministry*, Jesus Himself was about thirty years old, being, as was commonly held, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli,

- Jesus' age gives us significant insight into Him being baptized.
 - Why do I mention this? The age qualification of being a priest according to the Hebrew scriptures was at minimum of 30 years of age.
 - Check out Numbers 4:1-3.

Numbers 4:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

Numbers 4:2 "Take a census of the descendants of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, by their families, by their fathers' households,

Numbers 4:3 from thirty years old and upward, even to fifty years old, everyone who can enter the service of ministry to do work in the tent of meeting.

- So, it becomes clear that Jesus is at the right age, according to rabbinic law, to take on this prophetic ministry as both a prophet and priest.
 - This explains why the writer of Hebrews mentions this about Jesus being our Great High priest. Check out Hebrews 4:14.

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let's hold firmly to our confession.

- We will also see another title used in the text regarding Jesus and His Divine position later on.
 - Verse 9 continues by mentioning the location Jesus is coming from to be baptized.
 - The text mentions he is coming from Nazareth of Galilee.
 - Mark mentioning this exact location and particular region is yet another

significant detail.

- One could assume that this detail could have been left out knowing Mark's brevity.
- However, Mark sees fit to include the location of where Jesus is coming from – and might I add for great reason.
- In order for us to understand Mark's need to include the detail of where Jesus was coming from we have to ask the question **"What's in a name?"**
- Nazareth was a village in lower Galilee which was Jesus' childhood home.
 - Nazareth was settled on a ridge 500 miles above sea level.
 - It was not considered a well-known city in that day.
 - Not much of anything or anyone prominent came from this city.
- The lowliness and obscurity of this town was so unimpressive that John's gospel records the very words of Nathanael addressing where Christ came from.
 - Check out John 1:46

John 1:46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good be from Nazareth?" Philip *said to him, "Come and see."

- Nazareth was such a small, unknown town that Mark includes "in Galilee" to give the reader a location marker as to the whereabouts of this place.
 - It is clear, yet again that. God has picked the perfect place for His Son to come from in preparation to begin His ministry.
 - A lowly, obscure, unattractive, no man's land is where Messiah will come from – what an unlikely place. This is a constant theme of God.
 - He chooses a hairy bearded man who lives in the wilderness to make this heralding announcement of Messiah and His Kingdom.
 - The location of this announcement is not in the courtyards of Jerusalem nor amongst the elite, but in the wilderness in the outskirts of the city.
 - And don't forget, the Messiah is coming from a poor, lowly town, population 500 with the one stop sign.
 - Friends this is God's redemptive salvific plan unfolding before the world to see and it looks nothing like what was anticipated.
 - God uses the most ordinary things to reveal His extraordinary plans.
 - **How often do we rush to look for God in the miraculous things instead of seeing Him most clearly in the mundane?**
 - **Could you potentially be overlooking what God may be showing you or wanting to tell you or even lead you because you're looking for the most attractive thing?**
 - The prophet Isaiah was screaming, in a sense, the reality that Messiah was not going to come the way most expected.
 - Matthew's gospel mentions this in Chapter 2 verse 23.

Matthew 2:23 and came and settled in a city called Nazareth. This happened so that what was spoken through the prophets would be fulfilled: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

- Understand, Jesus coming from Nazareth was not a flop in the storyline, it was a fulfillment of scripture.
 - God is so detailed in His design that some scholars have suggested Matthew’s statement regarding the name Nazareth connected to this fulfillment.
 - The word Nazareth is the Greek word *Nazoraïos*, which according to some scholars is the transliterated Greek form of the Hebrew word “*netzer*”.
 - The Hebrew word “*netzer*” means a shoot or a branch.
 - They suggest that the particular etymology of the name of the town of “Nazareth” could potentially explain Matthew’s connection that Messiah would come out of Nazareth.
 - Isaiah 11:1-2 speaks to this “shoot” or offspring. Check out the text.

Isaiah 11:1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch from his roots will bear fruit.

Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

- It is also mentioned by other scholars that Matthew mentioning that Messiah would come from Nazareth meant that Christ would be despised and disregarded as Isaiah mentioned in Isaiah 53:3.

Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and abandoned by men,
A man of great pain and familiar with sickness;
And like one from whom people hide their faces,
He was despised, and we had no regard for Him.

- To add the cherry on top, Mark’s account mentions that Jesus is coming to be baptized by this crazy looking bearded man, John the Baptist.
 - The baptism we now know as the baptism of repentance.
 - Stop the press! This Jesus is supposed to be the Messiah, the Promised One. In Him there can be no sin found, and yet He is coming to be baptized?
 - This makes no sense!
 - Friends this becomes a profound moment that even John the Baptist is a bit perplexed, to the point that he tells Jesus, “You should be baptizing me!”
 - However, Jesus makes it known to John that he is to permit Him to be baptized to “fulfill all righteousness”
 - **Why would Messiah need to be baptized unto repentance if He has done no wrong?**

- It makes sense why Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21:

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be [a]sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- Dr. Fruchtenbaum in his book, *Yeshua: Life of the Messiah* documents 5 theological reasons as to why Jesus was to be baptized.
 - 1. Jesus identified Himself with the righteousness of the Mosaic Law showing He would fulfill all of its demands. In other words, Jesus was pointing to the fact that He is the absolute standard of righteousness.
 - 2. Jesus being baptized identified Him with John's message.
 - 3. Jesus' baptism would be made known to Israel.
 - 4. Jesus is baptized to identify with the believing remnant. Those who would accept him as Messiah.
 - 5. Jesus' baptism identifies Himself with sinners.
 - **Jesus was not identifying Himself as a sinner but rather was being identified with sinners to accomplish what we never could.**
 - Jesus will take the place of sinful humanity and exchange His righteousness for our wickedness as prophet, priest, and King.
 - Check out verse 10-11.

Mark 1:10 And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Him;
Mark 1:11 and a voice came from the heavens: "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

- We now arrive to the moment that Jesus is being baptized.
 - Notice that Mark doesn't waste time in the dialogue exchange between John and Jesus regarding the baptism.
 - Mark is focused on getting to the entrée and not getting caught up with the appetizers.
 - Mark writes that the moment that Jesus comes from out of the water, a very powerful, and unforgettable moment happens.
 - The text describes this moment in three distinct phases that begin once Jesus comes out of the water from having been fully immersed in the water.
 - The first thing is the heavens open.
 - The word here for opening in the text is *schizo* which means "to tear apart or to split."
 - Its Hebrew word transliterated is *qara* which means "to tear".
 - This theme of things splitting mark dynamic moments in history regarding a mighty move of God amongst his people.
 - One instance you may be familiar with is the parting of the Red Sea.

- Or the splitting of the Mount of Olives at the Day of the Lord according to Zechariah 14:4.
- Once the heavens open, Mark says “and the Spirit descended upon Jesus “like a dove”.
- The question many may have is why in the form of a dove?
- Within Jewish literature, the symbol of the Holy Spirit metaphorically is a dove.
 - We see a similar picture in Genesis 1.
 - It mentions that the “Spirit moved over the face of the deep.”
 - The Hebrew word for “moved over” is *merachephet* which is a word typically used to describe a mother bird hovering over her eggs before they hatch.
- So, it is no surprise that God provides this imagery for John to connect this moment and the figure of a bird descending upon Jesus to draw a point.
 - Lastly, verse 11 mentions a voice from heaven saying, “You are my beloved Son; In you I am well pleased.”
- This voice that comes from Heaven is in fact the very voice of God the Father, affirming and confirming His Son.
 - This voice from heaven was what is known in Rabbinical literature as the *Bat Kol* which means “daughter of a voice”.
 - Simply meaning a voice from heaven.
- **The Father’s audible voice confirmed for John that Jesus was in fact the very Son of God.**
 - In John 1:33-34, John the Baptist mentions this:

John 1:33 And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’

John 1:34 And I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

- This marked for John that the one in whom He preached would come, was the Christ. Jesus would be the suffering servant and the promised King.
 - Let’s continue on to verses 12 and 13.

Mark 1:12 And immediately the Spirit *brought Him out into the wilderness.

Mark 1:13 And He was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild animals, and the angels were serving Him.

- As we can see within Mark’s gospel, Mark is not focused on the details, necessarily. He wants you to see the big picture – the snapshots of Jesus’ life.
 - Mark would have been the inventor of cliff notes for that day because his focus is to provide quick, concise pictures of Jesus and who He is.
 - I mention this because Mark’s gospel completely skips over the details of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness.

- However, Matthew and Luke contain information that we can use to better understand what's going on. (Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-12)
- What we can see from Mark's gospel is why Jesus goes out to the wilderness.
 - The text tells us that the Spirit "brought Him out" to this place.
 - The Greek word for "brought Him out" could best be described as Jesus being impelled or driven out to the wilderness.
- **In other words, this move of the Spirit to go where Jesus was being led to go was the Father's willing and by the Spirit's prompting.**
 - And the text explains that as Jesus is being sent out to the wilderness, He is being sent out and is tempted by Satan.
 - We will briefly analyze this encounter that Jesus has with Satan in the wilderness by looking at the other 2 synoptic gospels.
- The synoptic gospels, with the exception of Mark, mention Jesus being led into the wilderness for 40 days while fasting.
 - One could only imagine being led out to the wilderness while having to fast for 40 days, on top of being tempted by the devil, had to be difficult.
 - You try to fast for 40 days and nights and try to maintain your sanity.
 - We must remember that although Jesus is 100 percent God, He is also 100 percent human, so His physical frame is quite weakened.
- Before we get to the three ways in which Satan tempts Jesus, notice the other name that is used for Satan – "tempter" found in Matthew 4:3.
 - The word "tempt" or "tempted" in the Greek is *peirazo*.
 - It means to put to the test in order to ascertain the nature of something, including imperfections, faults, or other qualities.
- **One question that tends to be asked from many people is, if God does not tempt, why is Jesus sent into the wilderness?**
- This question reveals a clear distinction between God's character and nature versus that of Satan.
 - **God does not tempt, only the devil does.**
 - James 1:13 tells us this truth.

James 1:13 No one is to say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

- This reveals a theological reality for us as believers in Jesus. **Our temptations are simply the reality of our struggle and propensity to sin.**
 - God cannot tempt because He is Holy and there is no darkness in Him.
 - **External circumstances or trials that come our way in life are sovereignly allowed by God to expose where we are in our maturity, spiritually.**
 - In other words, our temptation is activated by our own personal lusts which leads to sin.

- **The means to overcome temptation can only be accomplished in, by, and through Jesus Christ.**
- God's primary aim in allowing these temptations was to demonstrate that Jesus is without sin, righteous, and the Holy One.
 - **The testing we encounter as believers is the gauge by which we measure the spiritual condition and temperature of our hearts.**
- In construction, in order to test the performance of a particular concrete mix for optimal performance, the concrete must go through a Compressive strength test.
 - This test is primarily used to determine if the concrete mixture that was delivered to the site meets the required strength for the job.
 - The average test that is done on a particular mix is 3 tests to identify and evaluate the mix and its effectiveness before it will be poured.
- The cylinders are not allowed to be dried out as the average curing time is close to about 28 days
 - In other words the cylinders are not at their most optimal state.
- The cylinders are then placed on a platform between two circular metal pieces that will eventually apply pressure to both the top and bottom of the cylinders.
 - In a similar way, what we will witness within Jesus being tempted in the wilderness is a similar experience.
- Jesus will be sent to the wilderness, depleted of physical strength, and deprived of nutrition.
 - And in spite of the trial, we will see Christ overcome.
- This truth brings to life what Romans 8:28 says:

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

- Let's examine the 3 ways in which Satan tries to tempt Jesus.
 - In order to do this, we will read Luke 4:1-12 together as this account provides us the chronological order of the temptations.
 - We will also see a chart, later on, connecting to some interesting details relating how Jesus identifies with both Israel and believers alike.
 - But before we get there, pick me up at Luke 4:1-12:

Luke 4:1 Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness

Luke 4:2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He was hungry.

Luke 4:3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

Luke 4:4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

Luke 4:5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Luke 4:6 And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this domain and its glory, for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I want.

Luke 4:7 Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.”

Luke 4:8 Jesus replied to him, “It is written: ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’”

Luke 4:9 And he brought Him into Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here;

Luke 4:10 for it is written: ‘He will give His angels orders concerning You, to protect You,’

Luke 4:11 and, ‘On their hands they will lift You up, So that You do not strike Your foot against a stone.’”

Luke 4:12 And Jesus answered and said to him, “It has been stated, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

- So what we witness from these 12 verses are 3 encounters that Jesus has being tempted by Satan in the wilderness.
 - Let’s look at the first one, found in Luke 4:3-4
 - The devil begins by first appealing to the extreme hunger and need of food that Jesus is experiencing at this time.
 - Notice, he starts with the phrase “If you are the Son of God”.
 - He begins by trying to cause Jesus to question His Father’s words.
 - Isn’t it funny that in Mark’s gospel, we just witnessed this theophany where the Triune Godhead is present at the baptism where the Father audibly mentions that Jesus is the Father’s beloved Son in whom He is well pleased?
 - But not too long after that moment, the enemy comes in trying to discredit what God has just said to the Son?
 - Does this situation sound familiar? You might recall a similar discrediting moment in Genesis 3 where Satan tries to discredit the very word of God.
 - Check out what the text reads in Genesis 3:1.

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any animal of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’”

- Satan’s biggest trick is to cause believers to doubt and discredit God’s authority and what He has said.
 - And Satan will do this by appealing to our wants and desires that are naturally contrary to God’s ways and will.
 - So we see that Satan uses the same trick in Genesis 3:1 to appeal to Jesus’ physical need to eat, here.

- However, Jesus, who is full of the Spirit responds to Satan in this way:

Luke 4:4 And Jesus answered him, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”

- Jesus responds with scripture saying “It is written”.
 - This should ring loudly in our hearing because Christ puts emphasis on the text and not His title!
 - Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3. Here’s what the text reads:

Deuteronomy 8:3 And He humbled you and let you go hungry, and fed you with the manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, in order to make you understand that man shall not live on bread alone, but man shall live on everything that comes out of the mouth of the Lord.

- Jesus makes it clear to Satan that “Although my physical frame is in need of food, I am well-nourished and provided for by my Father”
 - Oh that we would be ever so dependent upon the very word of God that it satisfies both our physical and spiritual needs.
 - After the devil fails at his first attempt, he then proceeds to the next.
 - Luke 4:5-7 reads:

Luke 4:5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Luke 4:6 And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this domain and its glory, for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I want.

Luke 4:7 Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.”

- I have to imagine that this second attempt had to be a bit laughable to Jesus.
 - I mention this fact because here it is that the very cosmos that exists was created by the handiwork of the Son.
 - This includes the very creation of the earth and all that was within it.
 - So for Satan to stake possession to what he has no hand in is pretty laughable.
 - So the devil shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and then proceeds to say he will give it all to Jesus if Jesus worshiped him.
 - We have the created being looking to the creator telling him if you worship me, I will give you what was always yours in the first place – the audacity!
 - The devil is offering Jesus, in essence, a fast pass to becoming King on a much faster timetable, or so it would seem.
 - To some this would sound quite appealing and would be an attractive offer, however the Son and the Father are One.
 - Check out Jesus’ response:

Luke 4:8 Jesus replied to him, “It is written: ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’”

- Jesus, yet again, responds by humbly submitting to God’s word and will by responding with scripture.
 - Interestingly enough, Matthew’s gospel documents Jesus telling Satan “Be gone!”
 - The devil sought for Jesus to commit idolatry.
 - Jesus in turn responded with Deuteronomy 6:13. Here’s what it reads:

Deuteronomy 6:13 You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name.

- Jesus demonstrates once again His dependence upon the Father rather than misplacing His trust in temporary satisfactions.
 - Counterfeits and idols never deliver what they promised, no matter how appealing the offer is! There is always a cost.
 - We now come to the final temptation from the devil found in Luke’s account.

Luke 4:9 And he brought Him into Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here;

Luke 4:10 for it is written: ‘He will give His angels orders concerning You, to protect You,’

Luke 4:11 and, ‘On their hands they will lift You up, So that You do not strike Your foot against a stone.’”

- One interesting detail to note is that the very last temptation the devil throws Jesus’ way is that he quotes scripture to Jesus.
 - The devil quotes Psalm 91:11-12.

Psalm 91:11 For He will give His angels orders concerning you, To protect you in all your ways.

Psalm 91:12 On their hands they will lift you up,

- ◦ As followers of Jesus, we will be faced with individuals that will misuse scripture as a means to cause you to question or even test God.
 - This is why it is so important to know your Bible well.
 - Knowing your Bible leaves no room for the enemy to plant seeds of doubt.
- Notice Jesus’ response to the devil:

Luke 4:12 And Jesus answered and said to him, “It has been stated, ‘You shall

not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

- **Jesus responds back with scripture.**
 - Friends, scripture will never contradict scripture. He responds with Deuteronomy 6:16 by providing proper context.

Deuteronomy 6:16 “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.

- Jesus’ third response demonstrated that God and His word can be trusted and should not be tested.
 - **God cannot lie and every word that the scriptures record can be trusted.**
 - Within these 40 days of fasting in the wilderness, Jesus overcomes the temptations and Mark 1:13 mentions “ [...] that the angels served him.”
 - **Jesus’ baptism and temptation play such a significant role in truly understanding Jesus and His work as the suffering servant.**
- If you recall, verse 13 mentions that Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days being tested.
 - You also will notice that Jesus’ response to these temptations while in the desert are all taken out of Deuteronomy.
 - This is key to note.
 - You may remember that in the Old Testament the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years in what should have only been a matter of 11 days or so.
 - And now we see that Jesus has been sent by the Spirit to the desert and is there for 40 days.
 - This detail points us to **Jesus’ representative role** regarding the Father’s redemptive plan.
 - Jesus’ role represents both the **Nation of Israel** as a whole as well as those in whom the Father would draw to Himself (The Elect).
 - Jesus represents Israel in the following ways:
 - Firstly, if you recall the title from our earlier study, the “Son of God”.
 - This idea of Israel being the “son of God” is found in Exodus 4:22. Here’s what the text reads:

Exodus 4:22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the Lord says: “Israel is My son, My firstborn.

- So what we have is that Israel is the “son of God” in a “national” sense whereas Jesus is the “Son of God” in the personal sense.
 - Secondly, we see this relationship fully realized in Jesus being tempted in the wilderness just as Israel was tested in the wilderness.
 - This connection is most clear in Deuteronomy 8:1-2:

Deuteronomy 8:1 “All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, so that you may live and increase, and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers.

Deuteronomy 8:2 And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, in order to humble you, putting you to the test, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

- So where Israel fails in keeping God’s commands, Jesus Christ succeeds.
 - We also see that Jesus represents Humanity, most especially those who are non-Jewish.
 - We see this reality based upon what Hebrews 4:15 tells us regarding Jesus as our High Priest. Check out the text:

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin.

- The Father allowing Jesus to be tempted in the wilderness provided the means by which Christ could not only sympathize with our frailness but overcome it by the power of the Spirit within Him.
 - Some may ask the question, in what way or ways has Jesus been tempted like me?
 - Jesus didn’t struggle with lying, lust, licentiousness, or the like. So how could what He endured represent our struggle with sin and temptation.
 - To best understand what Christ endured in the wilderness versus what we endure on a daily basis in our sinful humanity we must look at 1 John 2:16.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

- What we can surmise from the text is that sin falls into one of these three categories:
 - 1. Lust of the Flesh
 - 2. Lust of the Eyes
 - 3. Boastful pride of life
 - So within the context of these three categories of sin, Jesus was tempted in these corresponding ways related to what we just read in Luke 4:1-13.
 - Here is a graphic of what we have just discovered.
 - We see within the text that Jesus demonstrates for those who would eventually identify and come through Him in His finished work so they would have the ability to overcome and endure by the Power of the Spirit as well.
 - We witnessed that Jesus was able to resist sin through the strength and power

of the Holy Spirit.

- His ability to overcome the temptation of sin and the lure of sin was found from the very word of God.
 - **Friends this lays out a very important point for us to witness from Jesus' life: The way to overcome sin is through the life of the suffering servant and obeying the word of truth.**
 - We are able to overcome in Christ because Christ overcame.
- Friends, understand that Christ set the pattern on how to resist the devil by demonstrating for us Himself.
 - James 4:7 says it this way:

James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

- Lastly, one cannot help but to imagine that as the Romans are reading this text and they hear about Jesus being in the wilderness with the wild beast that they are able to identify.
 - They are able to see that Christ was able to overcome in the strength of the Word despite His present circumstances.
 - They were able to witness in the text Christ be served and ministered to at the end of His testing.
 - Friends, this provided hope as one could imagine: Hope that they too can endure to the end in spite of their circumstances.
 - And may this be an encouragement to us that we too can, because He did.
- Next week we will explore verses 14-20 as Jesus begins to recruit his disciples and we will see Him do this in the most unlikely way.
 - We pray you join us next week for this. Let's Pray.

Citation:

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Mark - Lesson 1D

Chapter 1:14-20

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- Last week, we went into detail discussing Jesus' inauguration at His baptism followed by Him being tempted in the wilderness.
 - We witnessed a theophany at the scene of Jesus' baptism.
 - We read that the heavens split open, signifying a powerful moment demonstrating a mighty act of God.
 - God the Father verbally speaking – confirming and affirming His Son as being the Son of God and the Father was pleased with Him.
 - And lastly, we saw the Holy Spirit descending upon the Son and remaining with Him.
 - This was a sign which God gave John in preparation for His ministry, that the one in whom the Spirit would remain would be the One.
 - After Jesus' inauguration, the Spirit impels Him into the wilderness where He would be tempted by the Devil in 3 ways:
 - The Lust of the Flesh
 - The Lust of the Eyes
 - And the boastful Pride of Life
 - Jesus overcoming these temptations demonstrated that He was in fact who He said He was.
 - Tonight, as we walk through verses 14-20, we will see not only how God operates in His timetable within human history,
 - But we will also witness that when God calls His disciples, there will be a response and with that response comes a cost.
 - With that being said, pick me up in verse 14 as we read the word of the Lord, together.

Mark 1:14 Now after John was taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,

Mark 1:15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

Mark 1:16 As He was going along the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen.

Mark 1:17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will have you become fishers of people."

Mark 1:18 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

Mark 1:19 And going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, who were also in the boat mending the nets.

Mark 1:20 Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and went away to follow Him.

- Let's Pray
- Growing up in the church, I would always hear the older church mothers say, "Baby, He may not come when you want Him to, but He's always right on time".

- At that particular time, I never really understood what they meant, to which they would proceed by saying,
 - “Live a bit longer baby and one day you will see what we’re talking about”
- Now as an adult, husband, and father, and having followed Christ a bit longer along this journey, I now see what they were talking about.
 - What they were saying, essentially, was we tend to want to put God on our own timetable, however, that is not how God works.
 - God’s plan and purposes work in conjunction with His timetable.
- What we see as outcomes in our lives whether tragic or triumphant is all divinely allowed by God in order to surface about His plans and purposes.
 - Ultimately, as we lean into God’s working and willing in and around our lives, it becomes more and more apparent that, His ways are not our ways.
 - And His thoughts not our thoughts.
- We must learn how to lean upon the sovereignty of God despite what it looks like or how we may feel.
 - **If we trust God’s word, we can also trust His timing.**
- Tonight, we will have the opportunity to witness God’s redemptive timetable unfolding before our eyes.
 - These events that we will witness tonight, like a curtain to a play, will reveal both the message and mission of Christ.
 - With that being said let’s look at verses 14 and 15, together.

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

- We find ourselves at a bit of a transitioning point here in the text.
 - In our last teaching we went into detail regarding Jesus being tempted in the wilderness.
 - The results of that temptation were Christ demonstrating that He truly is the sinless, spotless one by overcoming sin and temptation.
 - In other words, where Adam failed in the garden, Christ succeeded in the wilderness, thereby being our new Adam.
 - From this point, verse 14 seems to propel us yet again to another significant moment within God’s redemptive timetable.
 - We see this reality based upon the start of verse 14.

Mark 1:14 Now after John was taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,

- Several questions may come to mind regarding these 2 verses:

- **1. Why was John the Baptist arrested?**
- **2. What is the significance of timing regarding John's arrest?**
- We will explore question 1 in more detail once we arrive to Mark 6. Tonight, we will explore question 2 regarding the significance of John's arrest and its timing.
 - What is important to note for our study tonight in our current text, is that John's arrest has set off a particular chain of events.
 - In other words, John's arrest causes a domino effect that will spring Jesus' Galilean ministry into full throttle.
- We come to this conclusion based upon the Greek word for "taken into custody".
 - The Greek word for "taken into custody" is *paradidomi*.
 - It means to be handed over or delivered to someone in which one has a relatively strong personal interest.
 - You also see this same word used when Judas hands Jesus over to the soldiers in exchange for money.
- In the same way that Judas was serving in his own self-interest, we see Herod Antipas serving in the interest of his adulteress.
 - Again, we will dive into more details of this matter at a later date.
 - **Know that the reasoning for John's arrest is simple: He is speaking truth to power.**
- As one could imagine, this message of repentance was one of much internal conflict and crisis.
 - On one hand you are internally wrestling with what is pleasing to God versus what is pleasing to you.
 - Secondly it breeds crisis because you must face the reality of what will come of your rejection of that truth – divine eternal judgment.
 - How often is it that when we present Gospel truth to non-believers there is so much conflict and tension? Men don't want the truth.
- This conflict was realized within Herod Antipas as well as a few leaders of that day, one being Nicodemus.
 - **Whenever one comes across truth, they are faced with one question: What are you going to do with what you know?**
 - **Absolute truth must be faced head on, and it will ultimately reveal where your heart is.**
 - Some will respond in receiving Messiah and the Kingdom while others reject Him, His work, His message, and methods.
- So we see that John being taken into custody was the gun-shot which lead to the next major event within God's redemptive plan.
 - Think of this transition as a baton handoff of sorts.
- If you have ever witnessed track runners getting prepared to pass the baton in a 4x100, the race is intense and the handoffs must be perfect.
 - If the baton is dropped in the race, that team forfeits the prize.

- **The goal is for clear handoffs given at the right time.**
- What Mark provides for us within this text is a clear handoff that the Father has divinely orchestrated from eternity's past.
 - It isn't by chance that right after Jesus overcomes the temptations of the enemy, that the devil tries to turn up the heat on God's plan.
 - And what better way than to silence the forerunner of the Messiah.
- As you can imagine, John the Baptist being handed over would have sparked concern around the region regarding this Messianic movement underway.
 - So in an effort to refrain from the dangers that came with knowing Jesus was Messiah, it required that He withdraw from the highly populated areas.
 - We must note that Jesus withdrawing back to Galilee wasn't our King retreating with His tail tucked between His legs.
 - God within His sovereign plan has already provided a means to curtail the premature attempt to kill Jesus before His appointed time.
- I find this to be extremely encouraging, because although Jesus' very life is in jeopardy, He is still missionally focused on His Father's work.
 - So, Jesus continues what He has already been doing – preaching His message: The gospel of God.
- Many questions arise regarding this phrase: The gospel of God
 - The word gospel here should not be confused with what we know as the gospel today which is found in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.
 - This term that Mark documents is intricately connected with that of the phrase, "The Kingdom of God"
 - **It simply points to the reality that this good news that is being preached comes from God.**
 - **God is the originator of the message while Jesus, Himself, is the content of the message.**
 - And the results of believing in that content leads not only to eternal life but provides the believer with access to the coming Kingdom of God.
- It is as if the call to start the scene has been made and the curtains are being open, and Christ stands at center stage before those who hear the message.
 - The spotlight now fades to Jesus on the Galilean stage as He steps up to announce His first line. Check out verse 15.

Mark 1:15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

- Mark documents Jesus stating these profound words: "The time is fulfilled".
 - This phrase becomes a key within this section of the text and really within the entire sovereign plan of God.
 - This phrase in a way keeps the domino effect rolling to the next scene.
 - The word time in the Greek is *kairos*. It refers to "a particular moment in time that

is so significant that it defines everything else that comes after it”.

- The term *kairos* differs from the other Greek word for time referring to chronological order, *kronos*. *Kronos* is “a moment to moment passing of time”.
- So when Jesus says “the time is fulfilled”, He is speaking to a significant moment in God’s redemptive plan within human history that displays God’s Kingdom.
 - That significant moment and display of God’s Kingdom on earth is found in the very person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - The King of Glory is literally standing before their very eyes.
- The other word that Jesus uses here is fulfilled. That Greek word *pleroo* which means to make full.
- If you can imagine a bowl of water being filled at your kitchen sink and as it is filling up, it approaches the brim until it spills over.
 - This is the picture that Mark presents for the reader regarding the Kingdom of God being near. The Kingdom is before them!
 - It will only be through and by receiving the message and the man that one will be able to receive this very Kingdom.
- This kairotic reality has arrived and the only way that men and women can enter into this Kingdom is if they “repent and believe in the gospel.”
 - Remember, repentance is not feeling sorry for yourself or what you have done, but rather a change of mind, heart, and direction.
- Right after repent, Jesus follows up by saying: “...and believe the gospel”
 - This word believe is the Greek word *pisteuo*. It means to put faith in something.
 - In other words, to consider something to be true and therefore it is worthy of one’s trust.
- So not only are those who are to receive Messiah to turn from their old way of life and behavior, but they are to trust in Jesus as their Promised King.
 - In a way, this is how the Gospel works today. You come across the works of Jesus and His claims, He makes Himself known, and we are given the faith to believe.
 - **There are only two responses to the Gospel message: It is either an overwhelming draw to the truth or an utter rejection of a Holy God.**
- We now find Jesus in the Galilee after withdrawing from the highly populated areas and back in familiar territory.
 - Let’s look at verses 16-18

Mark 1:16 As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen.

Mark 1:17 And Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”

Mark 1:18 Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

- Mark now fast forwards us to a familiar region along the Sea of Galilee.
 - The Sea of Galilee is a warm water lake about 7 miles wide, 13 miles long, and about 685 feet below sea level.
 - And it will be here where Jesus will extend the invitation for Simon and Andrew to follow Him as His disciples.
 - Keep in mind – Mark is very brief, so some details are omitted.
 - Matthew gives us a more accurate location as to where along the Galilee Jesus settles and eventually lives. Check out Matthew 4:13.

Matthew 4:13 and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.

- ◦ Here's a map of the region in which Jesus withdrew upon receiving word of John being in custody. (Refer to slides)
- Capernaum was a city on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.
 - It was considered a center for commerce.
 - Fishing and trade was extremely popular in this area and quite lucrative.
 - It was also a Roman tax polling station.
- These 3 things alone provide geographical, social, and economic significance to why the Father would have Jesus be headquartered here in Capernaum.
 - **This area would be highly frequented by Jews and Gentiles alike to hear the message of the Kingdom preached in their going out and coming in.**
- With so many great opportunities that would be presented to share the message, there was also a great risk of getting caught.
 - With Capernaum being a major Roman tax polling site, word of a Kingdom at hand other than the Roman Empire would have become a threat.
 - Whatever the case, the message of the Kingdom would go forth as now was the time to make it known to many.
- Mark continues on by saying, "He (Jesus) saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea for they were fisherman."
 - And Jesus poses the statement to them, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."
 - Then verse 18 states, "and immediately they left their nets and followed Him."
- As my wife would say when things don't seem to add up, "I got questions!"
 - Here we have two fisherman who according to their vocation itself are very business savvy, hard working men.
 - Simon and Andrew, as one could imagine, have been at this trade for years and are quite good at what they do.
 - It provides steady income, reasonable comfort for their daily and familial needs.
 - Yet, they drop everything to follow Jesus at His very summons to become His

disciples.

- The question that comes to mind is, “Why the sudden response?” Isn’t it a bit of an irrational decision?
 - These men don’t hesitate or think about what it is that they are about to get into, nor does it seem, from the text, that they have calculated the cost.
 - Or have they?
- Before anyone makes a major decision in life, we typically go through the process of counting the cost.
 - Will this work for our family dynamic or will it hurt us?
- When Pastor Steve called me to become the Associate Pastor of VBVF at that time, I considered it a high honor, but I had to count the cost.
 - Obviously as I consulted the Lord and my wife, we knew that although I had great opportunity to move up the ladder in Education that the work of the Kingdom was much greater.
 - There I was, within a year or so, being able to become a coordinator for our schools IB program. More money, more opportunity.
 - And on the other hand, there is this uncontrollable drawing to move towards the things that I knew God was calling me to for His Glory.
- It was evident from the ministry that I saw God accomplishing through VBVM and VBVF that I had to participate in what God was doing both locally and globally in the Gospel to go forth.
 - So within my own particular imagination I can only fathom that Andrew and Peter had seen or experienced for themselves, personally, who Jesus was and what He could do.
 - And it becomes evident through John’s Gospel that even prior to Andrew and Simon being called that they have had the opportunity to follow and see for themselves who Jesus was.
- We see this first encounter of Jesus’ first disciples in John 1:35-42.
 - Interestingly enough, prior to Andrew becoming a follower of Jesus, he was a disciple of John the Baptist.
 - It was through John’s witness, saying “Behold the Lamb of God!” that Andrew is introduced to Jesus, personally.
 - It was at this point that John’s two disciples, one of whom was Andrew, began to follow Jesus.
- Jesus sees that John’s previous disciples are now following Him and He asks them a powerful question, “What are you seeking?”
 - In response to Jesus’ question they respond “Rabbi (which means teacher) where are you staying?”
- John and Andrew addressing Jesus as Rabbi, demonstrated something far beyond Jesus being a teacher.
 - It demonstrated their expectation of Jesus being able to perfectly interpret the Law of God.
 - This in turn revealed a desire for them to submit themselves to Christ’s

teachings

- Secondly, John and Andrew asking where Jesus was staying was not simply a matter of interest on his physical place of rest, but rather it demonstrated interest for them to become his disciples and submit themselves to His authority.
 - In other words, Lord where you go, I will go. What you teach I will do.
 - There is this complete commitment to His Messiahship and commitment to this coming Kingdom.
 - And Jesus' response to them is so overwhelming! He says "Come and ye shall see"
- Here is this beautiful invitation to get a taste of what it will look like to follow Jesus and be under His rule.
 - Andrew grabs the divine bait here – pun intended.
- And with any good news, you can't keep it to yourself. Andrew is moved to share this news with his brother Simon.
 - **And might this be a pattern by which men come to know Jesus personally themselves, through the evangelism of a friend or family member.**
 - Check out what Andrew tells his brother, Simon Peter: John 1:41-42.

John 1:41 He first *found his own brother Simon and *said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).

John 1:42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

- The question that might be generated by some is, why the differentiation of the calling of Jesus' disciples throughout the gospels?
 - Why isn't there a consistent chronological log of them being called in all the Gospel accounts? We must keep in mind 2 things at best:
 - The audience
 - The author
 - Each Gospel account will vary by author but will bring to life a more complete picture of the events, timing, and impact amongst the people and Jesus.
 - It's like an old school projector from grade school back in the day that had the transparent sheets.
 - Every sheet was necessary, and all were needed to work together to show the big picture.
 - This situation is no different. The Gospels speak to one single message yet emphasize a particular point in each book which demonstrates another dimension of the person and power of Jesus.
 - With that in mind, watch how Luke's account fills the gaps as to how Jesus recruits Peter, Andrew, James, and John.
 - Turn with me to Luke 5:1-11.

Luke 5:1 Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret;

Luke 5:2 and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets.

Luke 5:3 And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little distance from the land. And He sat down and continued teaching the crowds from the boat.

Luke 5:4 Now when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

Luke 5:5 Simon responded and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets."

Luke 5:6 And when they had done this, they caught a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to tear;

Luke 5:7 so they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, to the point that they were sinking.

Luke 5:8 But when Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

Luke 5:9 For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken;

Luke 5:10 and likewise also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear; from now on you will be catching people."

Luke 5:11 When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

- Luke's account shows us that Simon Peter's and Andrew's partners were James and John, the Sons of Zebedee.
 - Luke's account indicates this happening within a similar timeframe.
 - Now let's examine Mark's gospel verses 19 and 20 of Chapter 1.

Mark 1:19 Going on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets.

Mark 1:20 Immediately He called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went away to follow Him.

- Both accounts report an immediate following of Jesus by means of a mighty demonstration of His power!
 - Friends, this is the beauty of God through the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - This shows us several things regarding Jesus as the King and His Kingdom drawing near:
 - Here are a few observations we can see.
 - 1. It confirms for us that Jesus is a gatherer. He calls those in whom the Father

has chosen for Him to draw.

- This completely destroys the thought that somehow we can come to know Christ in our own strength.
- The text lets us know that Jesus both saw them and called them, right where they were.
- What a humbling reality, that Jesus sees our condition, He knows right where we are. He sees us in our comfort, yet He calls us to inconvenience.
- Knowing that what will be impossible for us will be possible for Him.
- **2. In the words of Dr. Steve Lawson: The Gospel demands a verdict**
 - You can't come across the claims of Jesus or His power and not come to a conclusion.
 - He is either going to be Master and Lord of all, or nothing at all.
 - And as we see with Peter's response he responds in fear.

**Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**

- **3. There is a cost for following Jesus.**
 - You cannot remain in your comfort and still follow Christ.
 - It cost these men something great. Remember, fishing was how food and finances were provided for these men.
 - Now they are being called to trust in the provision of Jesus for their every need.
 - Rather than the comforts of their lives resting upon the thrones of their hearts, King Jesus would sit upon the throne and rule.
 - Their very will, desires, and beings, would belong to Christ in total allegiance.
 - A Gospel that doesn't cost you something is a gospel that carries no weight and is empty.
 - **Friends it cost Jesus everything, so how dare we think that it won't cost us something.**
- **4. Jesus gathers on His account and not our merit or lack thereof.**
 - Peter demonstrates humility by asking Jesus to depart from Him because Peter recognizes that holiness and sinfulness require distance.
 - Yet Jesus is willing and wanting to draw near.
- Lastly, we don't want to overlook the method in which Jesus calls His disciples.
 - It was unheard of for a Rabbi to pursue and recruit students to their school.
 - Typically, the students would request to follow the Rabbi by means of qualifications.
- It's like how individuals seek to enter into an Ivy League school.
 - You provide your accomplishments and skills.
 - Your grades and SAT/ACT scores.

- You provide them with what hobbies you do and activities you participate in.
- All of this is submitted to validate you as a future candidate worthy to be accepted within the school.
- Rabbis of that day followed similar thought, however this was not the case for Jesus.
 - He completely turned this approach right side up.
- Rather than going for the most scholarly man to follow Him or the most skilled in the Law, Jesus goes for 4 fishermen with no scholarly bent.
 - Jesus chose the most unqualified men to follow Him.
 - Yet again this demonstrates the Kingdom of God. It emphasizes who is the one that has the ability to make men and women whole.
- Lastly, I would like to point out Jesus' statement to His first four disciples:
 - He tells them: **"Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."**
 - This is not merely Jesus suggesting that they follow if they so choose. This is a summons.
- Jesus says, "I will make you become".
 - Notice, the onus is not on you or I to make yourself become a fisher of men but that Jesus will make you become fishers of men.
 - The Greek word for make is *poieo*. It means to produce or to cause.
- In other words, the agent who is calling men to follow is the only one that can make them or produce within them the ability to make disciples.
 - By simply following and learning from Jesus, is how these disciples will come to know how to truly take dead men and women and make them alive.
 - These men will be called to service as they demonstrate great sacrifice.
- **As Deitrich Bonhoeffer in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship* said: "When Christ calls a man, He bids him to come and die."**
 - This risk that these men will take will not just be a vocational risk, but it will be a physical risk.
- **Jesus summoned His disciples to join Him in dying, in a way. They would die to their old ways of life and living while Jesus would die on the cross so that those who would follow Him could have power to overcome through Him.**
 - I pray you join us next week as we will witness Jesus teaching and demonstrating His power with astonishing authority.
 - Let's Pray.

Citation:

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



Mark - Lesson 1E

Chapter 1:21-34

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- Last week, we discussed Jesus' arrival on the scene in His Galilean ministry after the arrest of John the Baptist.
 - John's arrest, although beget by the disapproval of Herod Antipas, was ordained by the Father for Jesus' rise to center stage.
 - It is here where Jesus announces that "the time was fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand."
 - Meaning that this event would begin a historic moment as the redemptive plan of God unfolds before the world.
 - Jesus then begins to preach the message of repentance, and for men and women to believe in the gospel
 - From that point on, Jesus began his recruitment of men who would participate in this gospel mission.
 - These men would not be of noble stature nor philosophical pontificators, but rather these disciples would be ordinary men called to an extraordinary task.
 - This summons to follow Jesus would not be easy.
 - These men would leave their occupations as fishermen to follow the path of the Way, Jesus Christ.
 - And in following Christ, they too would embark upon a journey that would eventually lead to suffering for the sake of Christ.
 - So that's our summary from last week's teaching.
 - Tonight, we will explore more of Jesus' demonstration of His power over the demonic realm, sickness, and disease.
 - We will see Jesus demonstrate the power and authority of God by humbly submitting to the will of the Father.
 - With that being said, pick me up in Mark 1:21-34.

Mark 1:21 They *went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach.

Mark 1:22 They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Mark 1:23 Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

Mark 1:24 saying, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

Mark 1:25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!"

Mark 1:26 Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him.

Mark 1:27 They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

Mark 1:28 Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee.

Mark 1:29 And immediately after they came out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

Mark 1:30 Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they *spoke to Jesus about her.

Mark 1:31 And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them.

Mark 1:32 When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed.

Mark 1:33 And the whole city had gathered at the door.

Mark 1:34 And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was.

- Let's Pray
- If you have a LinkedIn account or some type of professional profile for business networking, you may notice a consistent theme with all users.
 - Behind their names will be some type of letters signifying credentials of some sort.
 - These credentials range in length and carry much weight and value to a person's career.
 - It ultimately signifies those individuals have achieved something great within their profession.
 - As a matter of fact, employers love to see these credentials and will even compensate their employees because it brings the company more value and business.
 - These credentials identify those individuals as experts within their field, and rightly so.
 - They have put in the time, the study, and have given up some things in pursuit of the letters behind their name.
 - But what happens when you have a similar individual, with the same skill set or better, but is simply lacking the professional credentials?
 - Does it make them less valuable or less credible?
 - Mark moves us to a new scene within his gospel account.
 - And it's here where we find our Lord and Savior continuing in His mission of preaching the gospel of God and visibly demonstrating the Kingdom of God.
 - And what we will see tonight is that those who will encounter Jesus' ministry in the synagogue and in the region, will witness something they would not have expected –
 - **A man with no earthly credentials operating in divine authority and power.**
 - Pick me up in Mark 1:21-22

Mark 1:21 They *went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach.

Mark 1:22 They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

- Mark has now moved us from the scene on the Sea of Galilee where Jesus has recruited His first 4 disciples, to a different setting.
 - The text tells us that Jesus and His newly recruited disciples are now entering the synagogue where Jesus would teach.
 - It's important for us to note the day Jesus is teaching; He is teaching on the Sabbath.
 - Knowing this will give us a clearer understanding of what we will read later.
 - As Jesus is teaching, it becomes apparent to the people that Jesus' teaching was different than that of the scribes.
 - It's not as if Jesus and the scribes are using different scrolls from the Torah.
 - Both the scribes and Jesus have access to the Law and have an extensive understanding of the Law itself.
 - Apparently, the teachings of Jesus were so very different that Mark makes it known that the people were astonished or amazed at His teaching.
 - The Greek word for amazed here is *ekplesso*.
 - It means to be or become astounded to such a degree as to nearly lose one's mental composure.
 - This reaction from the people who are hearing Jesus teach comes about because, as the text notes, "He was teaching as one who had authority and not as the scribes."
 - This brings about several questions regarding the people's disposition and their verbal response to Jesus' teaching:
 - **1. What were the scribes teaching or the lack thereof that made Jesus' teaching so profound?**
 - **2. What does the significance in authority have to do with Jesus' means of teaching versus that of the scribes?**
 - Let's examine the first question.
 - It is important to keep in mind that the scribes were very learned men.
 - Scribes were quite familiar with the Torah as well as the oral traditions.
 - These teachings and traditions from these well-educated men would then be taught to their disciples.
 - In turn their disciples would learn these teachings and commit them to heart through means of repetition.
 - The authority by which the scribes of that day would learn would be emphasized from the scribes' teachers and their passing down traditions.
 - Every reference and teaching that would be taught was said to have been given by the authority of Rabbi "such and such".
 - The Rabbi's received their authority from the academy in which they attended.

- For example, those who graduate from the university tend to have their degrees accredited and validated by that university.
 - It provides the credibility for the degree you hold that has been conferred by the board of regents.
 - This is why Alumni associations are so important.
 - The more prominent your university, the more weighty your alumni association is – it carries weight.
- In this same way, a Rabbi's academy gave them the authority to not only teach, but to also have a “stamp of approval” on what that Rabbi said.
 - David Daube, who was considered one of the top Jewish Law scholars, suggested there were two categories of scribes in that day:
 - 1. Those Rabbis that had the authority to lay down doctrines
 - 2. Inferior teachers who were not entitled to introduce fresh rules as means to bring understanding to the Law.
- So the point comes to the surface: If the scribes hold to rabbinic authority as to what they can teach and what is to be explained, then what authority was Jesus teaching?
 - Friends, this is why the people in the synagogue were so mind blown, because Jesus was not affiliated with any rabbinical school.
 - **So, by whose authority was He teaching?**
- **Jesus' teaching and authority came from the only source by which all authority comes from – God Himself.**
 - Jesus needed no authority from a rabbinical institution because He was and is the very authority and word of God.
 - John 1:1-3, 14 tells us:

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- Therefore, every word that proceeded from the mouth of Jesus was established and superseded by the Father, that His word may be upheld.
 - Isaiah 50:4-5 speaks to the reality that God's authority comes from above and not from man and that Messiah has that divine authority to speak.

Isaiah 50:4 The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know

how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.

Isaiah 50:5 The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not disobedient Nor did I turn back.

- Daube goes further to explain that the phrase “a new teaching with authority” is dealing specifically with this idea of establishing a “new rule” or way.
 - This was known as “*halakha hadhasha*”.
 - In other words, when Jesus spoke, He provide the way in which the scriptures were to be understood and lived out.
 - **Friends, this brings up a key point that to truly understand the very commands of God and His ways, it is found in living and following Jesus, daily.**
 - This is why we should meditate upon the scriptures day and night and seek the Holy Spirit for understanding, because He activates the Word in our hearts.
 - As we follow Jesus and obey His instructions we will consistently be conforming our ways to His ways.
 - After the people are amazed and see that Jesus is teaching with an authority that they are not accustomed to, they will now see that authority demonstrated over the demonic realm.
 - Check out verses 23-26.

Mark 1:23 Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

Mark 1:24 saying, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”

Mark 1:25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!”

Mark 1:26 Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him.

- We now find within the text that this demon possessed man calls out to Jesus in a sense of familiarity.
 - So where the people are unable to recognize who Jesus is by demonstration of His authority and power in teaching, this demon clearly knows who Jesus is.
 - One question that may come to mind is how is it that demons can possess a person?
 - We see this matter present and in play with demons interacting with physical bodies all the way back in Genesis.
 - We see Satan inhabiting the body of a serpent in the garden in Genesis 3.
 - We also witness demons mating with women shortly after the flood in Genesis 6.
 - This interaction between spirits and humans is not new and therefore we should recognize that spiritual matters are real and should be taken seriously.

- Furthermore, we witness within the context of the New Testament that spirit being in unity with human bodies is possible.
 - The very Spirit of God inhabits and makes residents in every believer in Christ.
 - So, if we can accept the reality of the Spirit indwelling the elect, then we can rest assured that demonic spirits can temporarily possess a person.
 - However, we must note that these possessions are mutually exclusive.
- **Remember, that because believers in Christ have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that indwelling is a permanent residence.**
 - The scripture tells us that He will never leave us nor forsake us.
 - And because the Spirit of God takes up permanent residence, it leaves no room for any other spiritual residence to come in – no vacancy in the inn.
- **If this shows us anything it shows us that God is a jealous God, and He shares His possessions with no one and nothing.**
 - There is a clear separation and distinction from darkness and light.
 - For our edification, check out 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 in your hearing.

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

2 Corinthians 6:15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

2 Corinthians 6:16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

2 Corinthians 6:17 “Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord.

**“And do not touch what is unclean;
And I will welcome you.**

**2 Corinthians 6:18 “And I will be a father to you,
And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,”
Says the Lord Almighty.**

- Check out Mark 1 verse 24. The first question that this unclean spirit asked Jesus was “What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth?”
 - The demonic spirit then follows up by saying “Have you come to destroy us. I know you are the Holy One of God.”
 - Let's examine the first question that this unclean spirit asked Jesus.
 - “What business do we have with one another?”
 - This is a very interesting phrase worthy to investigate.
 - This phrase in classical Greek translates to what is known as a Hebrew idiom.
 - As you may know, an idiom is a phrase that means something different than its literal meaning.

- As a matter of fact, different languages and cultures have their own idioms.
- For example, when someone says “It’s raining cats and dogs outside”, they don’t literally mean animals are falling from the sky.
 - They simply are implying that the rain showers are unusually or unbelievably loud.
- What we witness within this Hebrew idiom is that there is a distinction between good and evil.
 - In other words, this demon recognizes that he and Jesus represent two different kingdoms and they have no dealings with one another.
- The use of this idiom further clarifies for the reader the demon’s second question where he asks, “Have you come to destroy us?”
 - The fact that this demonic spirit asked the question about being destroyed shows us this demonic spirit perceived the significance of Jesus’ presence to all the demonic forces.
- Then comes the last statement: “I know you are the Holy One of God”
 - At this point, one could say this demon has revealed the true identity and authority of Jesus.
 - Would this have been the opportunity for people to hear what was said and therefore believe that Jesus was who He said He was?
- Absolutely not! Jesus responds by rebuking the demon, first by silencing him and then commanding him to go.
 - This demonstrates two things for the hearer and reader of the text both then and now:
- 1. It shows us that all creation must submit under the authority of Christ who is the Holy One of God.
 - Jesus telling the unclean spirit to be quiet demonstrates complete power and control.
- 2. It shows that although the unclean spirit knew who Jesus truly was, as one scholar records, “demons do not make good character witnesses”.
 - Therefore, the unclean spirits’ testimony is to be completely disregarded.
- It is at this point that Mark tells us that the demon begins to convulse with a loud voice and leaves the man.
 - One interesting detail that Luke’s account mentions is that the demonic spirit leaves the man without even harming the man he was possessing.
 - Yet again, demonstrating Jesus’ power and rule over all things in every situation.
 - So, with this scene having just occurred before the very eyes of the people you can only imagine the conversations happening.
 - Let’s keep moving to verses 27 and 28.

Mark 1:27 They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the

unclean spirits, and they obey Him.”

Mark 1:28 Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee.

- Mark now brings us to the reaction of the crowd of people in the synagogue.
 - It is as if Mark pans the camera from the scene where Jesus has expelled this demon to the faces of the people.
 - The text records that the people were amazed and began to debate amongst themselves.
 - That word amazement in Greek is *thambeo* which means to be affected by a particular event with wonder.
 - It's the jaw dropping effect that happens when you are blown away at what was just observed.
 - This event that they have just witnessed moves them from amazement to now rationalizing and evaluating the reality of what was just witnessed.
 - Because now the situation is amplified even more.
 - Jesus not only teaches with authority unlike the experts of their day but Jesus' very command causes unclean spirits to obey His very word.
 - **Friends this was unlike anything that they have seen or heard of.**
 - What they have just witnessed can't be unseen or swept under the rug.
 - The process by which the rabbis would exorcize demons didn't come close to what Jesus could do.
 - **Jesus' authority came from the Father and His power by the Holy Spirit.**
 - Because of this demonstration of power and might, it only makes sense that news would begin to spread quickly throughout the region and making Jesus known all the more.
 - Mark now moves us to a new scene in the same region. Check out the next 3 verses, verses 29-31.

Mark 1:29 And immediately after they came out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

Mark 1:30 Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they *spoke to Jesus about her.

Mark 1:31 And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them.

- We now are brought to a new setting within Capernaum after leaving this dynamic moment at the synagogue.
 - And Mark tells us that Jesus and His four disciples are now headed to Simon and Andrew's home.
 - It was tradition that after the sabbath service that one would participate in the sabbath meal.

- This Jewish practice is still upheld to this day.
- So in keeping with tradition, Jesus and His disciples make their way to Simon and Andrew's home.
 - We then notice in verse 30 that the text pivots to them having arrived to the scene where Jesus finds Peter's mother-in-law laying ill.
 - One quick observation that we can make is that Peter is a married man.
 - I mention this simply because there are some who have assumed that none of the apostles were married or could be married.
 - We see here most clearly that this is not the case.
- The text mentions that Peter's mother-in-law was laying down with a fever.
 - The word for fever here is *pyresso* which means to suffer with a fever which is frequently a symptom of infection.
 - Based upon that definition it can be assumed that this sickness was beyond just a common cold.
 - Peter's mother-in-law must have been battling some type of disease for a long period of time.
- This illness could potentially be the reason as to why Peter's mother-in-law is staying with them.
 - But whatever the case may be, this illness was serious enough for Peter to inform Jesus in an effort for his mother-in-law to be healed.
- What is interesting to note within the observation is Peter's motivation was not to bring Jesus to his home to heal his mother-in-law.
 - Peter's motivation is to enjoy a meal with Jesus and to spend time with the one in whom he has committed to follow.
 - I find this reality so beautiful, because how often is it that we are looking for Jesus to do something for us in our lives versus simply spending time with Him.
- After Peter explains to Jesus what is going on with his mother-in-law, Mark tells us that Jesus went to her, took her by the hand, lifted her up, and the fever left her.
 - Notice that this particular description of Jesus' care for Peter's mother-in-law differs in approach to the end goal of healing her from that of the other gospel accounts.
 - This not only speaks to the authorship of this gospel account, but it also speaks to the theme of the gospel as well – Jesus as Servant-King!
 - Jesus first draws near to the sick.
 - He then meets them with compassion.
 - He lifts them up by His strength and heals.
- The text tells us that the fever left her. I love what follows suit after the fever is gone.
 - **The text tells us that she began to serve Jesus and His disciples.**
 - **The one in whom needed to be served was served by the King, and now in return she serves others.**

- **Might I just say that as followers of Jesus, we are called to serve.**
- I don't want us to miss what just happened here because I believe this is a pattern by which Jesus calls us to serve others.
 - As we have been gratefully and graciously given new life in Christ, He calls us to serve those who are in need.
 - We too at one point were in need of being served because we were sinking deeper into our sickness of sin.
 - But thanks be to God that the Master came by our way and by just His touch alone, He has made us well.
 - And by His word alone can we be made whole.
- **Peter now personally witnesses within his immediate circle, Jesus' healing power in a more personal manner.**
 - Let's keep moving. Check out verses 32-34

Mark 1:32 When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed.

Mark 1:33 And the whole city had gathered at the door.

Mark 1:34 And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was.

- So, evening has now come and people are beginning to bring those who were ill and demon-possessed to Jesus.
 - As you can imagine, many have received word of what Jesus did in the morning service.
 - And now they are wanting to bring to Him their own personal needs and issues before Him because they know if He did those things, He can do this.
 - However, before we move too quickly past verse 32, one may wonder, why did they wait for the sun to set?
 - If these were such pressing needs, why not make your way to Jesus the moment you hear what He has done in town.
 - We find this answer from the basic rabbinical teaching of that day which was: no healing could occur on the sabbath day unless a life was endangered.
 - Therefore, because the rabbis instructed that a “new day” begins at sundown, it was only appropriate to send those in need on the “new day”.
 - It may be wise for us to observe in verse 33 that Mark mentions “the whole city was at the door.”
 - Like our earlier run in at the beginning of our Mark study regarding the word “all”, we must approach this word “whole” in the same way.
 - It is not to mean that the entire community came to be healed.
 - Jeremias suggests a translation, “Great was the number of those healed.”³⁴,
 - So it is safe for us to assume that there was a large gathering of people

seeking to be healed.

- We then see in verse 34 that those who were coming to Jesus to be healed, whether sick with varying disease or to cast out demons, were made whole.
 - Once again we witness the very works of Jesus demonstrating His power and authority over sickness and the demonic realm.
 - But notice Jesus' consistency in how He deals with those who are demon possessed.
- He, again, does not permit the demons to speak just like He forbid the demon possessed man in the synagogue.
 - Same situation, different setting. This is not by chance. The question becomes, why?
 - Why is Jesus forbidding these demons, yet again, from speaking of His divine identity?
- As we mentioned earlier, demons don't make good character witnesses.
 - This would cause more confusion as to the believability of Jesus being who He says He is.
 - **We must realize that Jesus keeping his Messianic identity from being exposed in that way and at this time was a part of God's plan.**
 - In other words, it's one thing for Jesus to outright say, "I am the Messiah" versus you coming to that conclusion yourself.
- As human beings, we tend to err on the side of proof. We need evidence to validate the claims that are being made.
 - Growing up, whenever I was doing something I wasn't supposed to be doing, my mom would always give me a warning shot.
 - I would then proceed by trying to see how much farther I could push the boundary to get what I wanted.
- Once my mom caught on to what I was doing, which was immediately, and she would tell me, "Ok now... I can show you better than I can tell you!"
 - That was to mean that I have told you what the consequences are, verbally to spare you from the embarrassment.
 - But don't think that I'm not going to bring out the belt in public.
- In a way, this was how the Father had planned for His Son to be revealed, initially. **Not through proclamation but through demonstration which would lead to revelation.**
 - This is where we see Jesus as a humble servant of God.
 - Most assuredly He could tell the people, "Can't you see me doing all these things, I am Messiah!"
 - Jesus could definitely pull out all the bells and whistles for men to see Him in His fullness, however, that was not the way in which He would be revealed.
- The question becomes, "Why does Jesus choose not to reveal His identity out right?"
 - If you want people to know who you are, wouldn't the most logical way to do

that be by telling them?

- At least that's what we as human beings do in our natural nature.
- We plaster our credentials and accomplishments on social media and the like.
- However, this is not the way in which the Father chooses for Jesus to be made known.
 - It is important to note, that this will not be the only time in which Jesus silenced the demonic spirits.
- This is not to say that Jesus does not know who He is as some scholars have suggested, foolishly.
 - Know that Jesus is very aware of His person, identity, and His purpose in His first coming.
 - It is the Jewish people and religious leaders who are not aware of Jesus being Messiah, or at least at this time.
 - It would not be until a few chapters later that Peter, by the leading of the Holy Spirit comes to the realization that Jesus is Messiah.
 - And even still, Peter struggles with the fullness of the revelation of Jesus' person.
- A German Lutheran theologian named Wilhelm Wrede developed a theory in which he attempted to explain the reasoning for Jesus not revealing who He was.
 - He called this theory the "Messianic Secret".
- However, the problem with this theory is the suggestion that somehow the purpose of silencing people was to be "secretive".
 - This is why this theory has not only been disproved, but universally rejected amongst most theologians and scholars.
- The purpose of Jesus silencing these individuals and His disciples after the demonstration of His power and authority are for several reasons:
 - 1. It could potentially cause a premature attack against Jesus therefore possibly delaying this purpose for coming.
 - 2. It would prevent Jesus from going into certain towns keeping Him from sharing the message of the Kingdom of God being near.
 - 3. It brings about the reality that the Kingdom of God is revealed to those that have eyes to see and ears to hear.
- Those in whom would see the true identity of Jesus would see Him because the Father has given them the faith and ability to know His Son.
 - And this reality would be revealed at God's appointed time.
- When you came to truly know Jesus, for some it was an immediate moment of belief.
 - For others it was a series of circumstances that you endured that brought you to the end of yourself to truly see what God was showing you all along.
- **If the revelation of who Jesus is, is forced, it produces confusion or false conversions.**
 - And I believe for some people, this instance can be true which is why we see

things such as people leaving the church or “ex-pastors”.

- These are things in which the enemy uses to deter people from the truth.
- This is why emotionalism within the church can be so detrimental to people – what can I get from Jesus, etc.
- We must also keep in mind that the people of that day were anticipating a political deliverer who would bring justice and victory.
 - So, these acts that Jesus is doing within the Galilean region were nothing close to a political takeover.
- This was intentional! Because the way in which Messiah would be seen as the victorious King would first be seen through His humility and service as a servant of God.
 - Although Jesus knows that He is the King of Glory, for a time that Glory will be given in glimpses of healing and righteousness by way of serving.
 - Check out Isaiah 42:1-4

Isaiah 42:1 “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

Isaiah 42:2 “He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street.

Isaiah 42:3 “A bruised reed He will not break And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice.

Isaiah 42:4 “He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.”

- Friends, what we will witness as the Gospel of Mark unfolds, is what was assumed to be 2 Messiahs in the Jewish people’s misunderstanding, is really 1 Messiah with 2 separate comings.
 - His first coming will be in service to the Father to those in need and who are afflicted.
 - Whereas His second coming will be to physically rule and reign on the earth with all power and authority.
 - Justice for the many will be received, first, through the humility of service and suffering for the sake of the called (elect).
 - It is my prayer that, as we walk through the gospel of Mark, you will embrace these pages with fresh eyes.
 - I pray you will join us next week as we will witness one of the first Messianic miracles unfold before your very eyes. Let’s Pray.



Mark - Lesson 1F

Chapter 1:35-45

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- Last week, we came across Jesus' teaching in the synagogue with an authority that was not seen before.
 - The people within the synagogue were familiar with the current scribes and their teaching authority.
 - However, when Jesus began to teach the people, we discovered that the men and women marveled.
 - They marveled at the fact that what Jesus was saying was establishing the way in which the Law should be lived.
 - This was unlike anything they had heard.
 - We then witnessed the demonstration of Jesus' authority and power as Jesus expelled a demonic spirit out of a man.
 - As you could imagine this took the amazement of the people to a whole new level, to the point that Jesus became well known in the area.
 - This was then followed by Jesus miraculously healing Peter's mother-in-law at Peter's home.
 - Simply by a touch from Jesus, Peter's mother-in-Law is made well and she moves from being served by the King to serve the King and His disciples.
 - This news and excitement about Jesus continued to spread through the area to the point that folks were at Peter's door for Jesus to meet their needs.
 - Tonight, won't be any different. We will continue to see the demonstrative work of Christ visibly seen through His healing power.
 - However, tonight we will witness a particular miracle that stands out from the other healings – The first Messianic Miracle.
 - With that being said, pick me up in Mark 1:35-45.

Mark 1:35 In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

Mark 1:36 Simon and his companions searched for Him;

Mark 1:37 they found Him, and *said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

Mark 1:38 He *said to them, "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for."

Mark 1:39 And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons.

Mark 1:40 And a leper *came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

Mark 1:41 Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and *said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."

Mark 1:42 Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

Mark 1:43 And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away,

Mark 1:44 and He *said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Mark 1:45 But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the

news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.

- Let's Pray
- Have you ever had a “foot in your mouth” moment?
 - I'm talking about a time where you just knew that you had it all figured out.
 - You thought through the plan or procedure as best you could.
 - Only to find out that you missed it by a longshot and looked like a fool in the process.
 - I think we all have been there at some point or another – and if you haven't you will.
 - We have this natural propensity to think that we know best or that our “2 cents” should be factored into the “bigger plan”.
 - Within humanity, we struggle with this idea of humility and submission before a Holy God because we think we know best.
 - And it's not until we come to the realization of our “foot in mouth” moment that we realize God was right and we were wrong all along.
 - It's almost as if there has been a gut punch that knocks the wind out of us.
 - Tonight, we will begin in verse 35 where we will witness Peter's first of many “foot in mouth” moments.
 - While also witnessing how the plans of men never supersede the plans of God.
 - Tonight, we will witness just how much authority Jesus has over all things.
 - Check out verse 35.

Mark 1:35 In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

Mark 1:36 Simon and his companions searched for Him.

Mark 1:37 they found Him, and *said to Him, “Everyone is looking for You.”

- Mark mentions that after Jesus' time at Peter's home while healing those who were sick and demon possessed after the sabbath, that Jesus arose to a secluded place to pray.
 - Notice the time the text records. It is said to be early in the morning while it was still dark.
 - The text mentions that the destination is far away from where the crowds had gathered, putting some distance from Peter's home.
 - We know this because Mark says that Jesus went to a secluded place.
 - The word secluded in the text means an uninhabited and uncultivated region.
 - You may also find other translations use the word desolate to convey the idea of a wilderness type setting.

- We then see that Mark reveals the reasoning behind Jesus receding to the recesses of the wilderness. He is going to pray.
 - In other words, Jesus pulls away from the demands of the people to abide with the Father.
- We must remember that although Jesus is fully God, He is also fully human.
 - There needed to be a recharge, if you will, and that came through abiding.
- This is not far removed from how we as humans respond within our world today.
 - The moment that we become physically or emotionally drained, we put our phones on silent mode or “do not disturb”.
 - We do this because we too need to recharge from the demands that people and life place upon us.
 - So, it’s not a surprise that we find our Lord and Savior in need of drawing away from the demands of the people to be strengthened by the Father’s presence.
- It is interesting to note that the setting where Jesus withdraws to is, once again, a familiar place. He is back in the wilderness; the only difference is it’s a different circumstance.
 - The first time was to be tempted to ultimately prove who He was as the Son of God.
 - Now, it is to prepare Himself for the events that He will face ahead, missionally.
- What a beautiful picture the text provides us with as we see Jesus with the Father in prayer.
 - He must depend upon the wisdom, power, and strength of the Father to accomplish the work and assignment He has been divinely given.
 - I love what Charles Spurgeon said regarding prayer. He said:

“The fact is, the secret of all ministerial success lies in prevalence at the mercy-seat”

- Mark shows us a key point here in the text: Prayerfulness demonstrates dependency upon the Divine One whereas prayerlessness renders self-sufficiency. (citation pg.53 Dr. Constable's Notes)
 - We see in every stage of Jesus’ ministry that He demonstrates dependence and reliance upon the Father.
 - And in the same way, so should we.
 - We too must constantly rely upon Jesus in our loving submission and obedience to Him – and it begins in our prayer lives.
 - Check out what Jesus says regarding His dependence on the Father in John 5:19.

John 5:19 Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in

the same way.

- ○ Friends, if there is consistent submission and dependence within the Godhead, how much more do you think that we should be dependent upon God, ourselves.
- As Jesus is spending time with the Father in preparation for the ministry work that He will be doing, the text mentions that Peter and his companions are searching for Him.
 - The word for searching here in the text is not to mean a casual search for something.
 - The word “search” in the Greek has a more intense meaning.
 - The Greek word is *katadioko*. It means to pursue in a hostile sense. Literally put, Peter and the gang are hunting for Jesus.
- The reason we are able to tell the intensity by which Peter and the disciples are looking for Jesus is found in verse 37 after they have located Him.
 - Peter says, “Everyone is looking for You.”
- Now, at first glance, one would assume that Peter was concerned in the whereabouts of Jesus and possibly His safety.
 - However, going to that assumption means that one has dismissed the intensity of the Greek wording for “searching” in the previous verse.
 - This isn’t a statement of concern; this was a statement of annoyance!
- In other words, Peter is expressing his frustration with Jesus after having intensely been searching for Him for who knows how long.
 - But whatever the time it took to find Him, Jesus’ wandering has stirred up some consternation and annoyance.
 - The question here is why. Why did Peter react this way regarding the whereabouts of Jesus?
- Peter sees all that Jesus has accomplished through His healings and demonstration of His Power.
 - Yet, Peter sees Jesus’ withdrawal to the wilderness to pray as a missed opportunity to further serve the needs of the people.
- Friends, herein lies the issue. There seems to be a misunderstanding or rather a misplacement of priorities for Peter.
 - Mark shows us our very first encounter with Peter’s misunderstanding of leadership and mission.
 - And with this account being based upon Peter’s personal eyewitness of this event, it alludes to the humility of Peter recognizing just how much he missed it from the beginning.
- Jesus, in verse 38, brings some insight and clarity to Peter and the disciples as to what this mission is about and how it is to be accomplished.
 - Check out what Jesus says and how He responds to Peter’s annoyance in verse 38.

Mark 1:38 He ***said to them, “Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.”**

- Jesus, in a way, lets Peter know, your understanding of who I am and what I have come to do is short-sighted in a very clear manner.
 - Jesus redirects Peter’s personal priorities and refocuses them on the plan.
 - In other words, “This is what we are going to do.”
 - What we witness here is that Peter can only see what’s in front of him and that is these crowds gathering to be healed.
 - Peter sees the fame and the recognition that comes with Jesus and he believes that this is the bread and butter of Jesus’ ministry.
 - However, if just healing and casting out demons was all that Jesus did and never went to the cross to die, we would have never had the opportunity for atonement for sins.
 - So, in few short words, Jesus lets Peter know, “You see me serving and healing now, but at a later time you will see me ruling over all”
 - This simply comes to show us that Peter had not fully come to the realization of who Jesus really was.
 - Jesus’ Messianic mission was for people to come to the realization of who He was through revelation by way of demonstration.
 - And if one was simply caught up in what Jesus could do rather than who Jesus was and why He came, then they missed the point.
 - Jesus was not just a healer.
 - Jesus was not just a good teacher.
 - Jesus was the one in whom would provide the means by which those who were called would come into the Kingdom to serve the purposes of the King to the Glory of the King.
 - In other words, Jesus says “move beyond what you are seeing and see the claims that I am making by what I am doing”.
 - This message to prepare the people to receive their Messiah would come through preaching the gospel of God.
 - And it would be through preaching that people would come to know who Messiah was.
 - This brings to life the importance of the preaching hour.
 - Preaching is an essential means by which one is able to come to the realization of who Jesus is by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.
 - This is why Paul tells us in Romans 10:14-17:

Romans 10:14 **How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?**

Romans 10:15 **How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written,**

“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!”

Romans 10:16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says,

“Lord, who has believed our report?”

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- After Jesus concretely describes the purpose of His mission, and why He must continue to travel and teach, it's clear that Peter comes to grips that his plans pale in comparison to that of God's plans.
 - Mark mentions in verse 39, almost without hesitation, that:

Mark 1:39 And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons.”

- Peter received that spiritual gut check. It's that feeling of knowing that you have completely put your foot in your mouth and have spoken out of term.
 - And as we walk further through the gospel account, this won't be Peter's last foot in mouth moment.
 - Let's keep moving, check out verse 40.

Mark 1:40 And a leper *came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.”

- We now arrive to the moment where we realize why Jesus has pulled away to the wilderness to pray.
 - The text tells us that as Jesus and His disciples are moving throughout the Galilee, they approach an interesting situation.
 - It's almost as if Mark jumps us into a new scene in mid-sentence as if it were a “and suddenly it happened” moment.
 - Mark mentions that a leper now appears before Jesus as He and His disciples are moving towards the next town.
 - Mark mentions that this leper, as he is approaching, falls to his knees pleading with Jesus that “If He was willing, Jesus could make Him clean.”
 - There are a few things we should examine within verse 40 alone.
 - The first thing that we should take note of is that this man who meets Jesus has leprosy.
 - Leprosy was a dreaded skin disease that was contagious upon contact.
 - It often symbolized defilement, disfigurement, and alienation ultimately brought about by the fall in Genesis 3.
 - Those with leprosy were to be banned from the Jewish community and called to live far outside the city walls.
 - According to scholars it was said that lepers were not allowed to come within 5 paces of an individual.

- They were also to cover themselves and upon anyone approaching, were to make themselves known that they were unclean and should not be approached.
- It was thought during that time that those afflicted with leprosy had sinned against God in a particular way unlike others.
 - Josephus documenting events during the time of the temple, in his description of the Mosaic law states that it was forbidden for the leper to come into the city.
 - As a matter of fact, the leper was not able to live with any others. It was as if they were dead persons.
- So the fact that we see this Leper approaching Jesus and not providing warning of his physical condition is already a strike against the leper, as is.
 - It's clear that this leper is desperate to be healed and cleansed.
 - And it just so happens that Jesus is coming across his path at the right time.
- One could ask the question; how does this Leper even know who Jesus is?
 - If he has been in isolation this whole time, unable to be around people, who has provided this news to him that Jesus was passing by?
- Maybe it was by word of mouth and the leper has heard this news of Jesus through the grapevine.
 - Most assuredly, this could be a strong possibility being that Jesus and His power and authority is being made known in the land.
 - But whatever the case, this Leper has a personal meeting with Jesus, face to face.
 - This, friends, is where we will discover what is known as the first Messianic Miracle.
- It is important for us to see that although this leper's request seemed impossible, He believed the reports that he heard about Jesus and trusted that Jesus could heal Him if He so chose.
 - I say this because oftentimes within the charismatic, word of faith, and Pentecostal denominations, there is this emphasis on faith and healing.
- They teach that in order for you to attain healing from God you have to have faith to believe it – and to that extent it's understandable, until you don't get healed.
 - The moment that someone who claims to be ill doesn't get healed, the onus is then placed on that individual.
 - Phrases such as "You didn't have enough faith", or "You didn't believe strong enough" begin to surface.
- These types of teachings and beliefs are what has caused so many people to not only walk away from the faith, but also have poor orthodoxy.
 - We must understand that this instance regarding the healing of leprosy was a matter of divine appointment.
 - This instance was to demonstrate God's Glory and authority.
 - All of this is to say that just because God does not heal you or answer your prayer does not mean that He is absent.

- God will respond when He chooses to respond and how He chooses to respond. We must trust His sovereign plan and not our personal preferences.
- Let's keep moving. Check out verses 41 and 42.

Mark 1:41 Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and *said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.”

Mark 1:42 Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

- There are a few things here that the text makes known that must be investigated.
 - The first thing that the text mentions regarding Jesus meeting the need of this leper, is that Jesus was moved with compassion.
 - To some, the English translation will read as if Jesus was so moved by this man's ask that He was overwhelmed with love to meet the need.
 - However, if we do not get the sense of the Greek wording here, we will truly miss the meaning of compassion in this context.
 - The Greek word for “compassion” is *orgizo*. It means to be inclined to anger or to make angry.
 - To the average reader, the question would be, why is Jesus angry with this man? He is coming to Him in need. How does anger become the rightful response?
 - In order to answer this question appropriately, we have to recognize what Jesus is angered about.
 - The reasoning behind Jesus' anger is not directed towards the man but rather towards sin itself.
 - The ailments and sickness that humanity is confounded to is in fact the result of sin.
 - For some people, sin or the perception thereof is simply a matter of “personal decision making”.
 - Many feel like their lives are somehow not marred by the fall of man in Genesis 3, however, that is far from the truth.
 - Everything that man struggles with and suffers with in this life is a result of sin.
 - The consequences of sin in the garden have further led to the spiraling effects of the brokenness of our world today in every area imaginable.
 - Sin has broken humanity to the core:
 - Physically
 - Mentally
 - Financially
 - Sexually
 - Emotionally
 - Relationally
 - Personally

- Maritally
- You pinpoint every facet of the human life, and I can show you how sin has corrupted it.
 - Sin spreads like a disease and it eventually leaves one empty and completely dead.
- Friends, this is why Jesus is so angered. Because He sees just how deadly sin is.
 - Just like the leper, sin causes separation, spiritual disfigurement, and leaves one completely defiled.
 - This is not the way in which God intended for man to be nor to live.
 - This is what moves Jesus to respond, not just to the leper in his personal condition, but into the world to save those in whom the Father draws.
 - Check out Jesus' response.
- Mark tells us that Jesus stretches out His hand, touches the man, and heals him.
 - Friends, just one touch and a word from Jesus made this man clean.
- Jesus could have most certainly said a word to the disease of this leper and the leprosy could have gone away.
 - Technically, an unclean person touching a clean man would have made the clean person unclean.
 - Would this touch have made Jesus unclean? No, because He who was clean (Jesus) was pure and Holy.
- Therefore, understanding Jesus as our vicarious substitute is so important because Jesus has taken upon Himself our sin so that we could be made whole.
- Understand what just happened here: Jesus superseded the Levitical law which forbids a clean person to touch an unclean person and establishes His authority and power in a way that would demonstrate who He is.
 - The reason that this miracle is known as a Messianic miracle is because this is the first ever record of the healing of a Jewish leper.
- The only way in which a Jewish leper could be healed was if and only if the healer was in fact Messiah, Himself.
 - During this time, not only was there no cure for leprosy, but there was no ceremonial means that could cure the leper.
 - And lo and behold Jesus Christ has done what only He could do.
- What Jesus would tell this leper after He has healed him is key for us to understand moving forward.
 - Check out verses 43 and 44.

Mark 1:43 And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away,
Mark 1:44 and He *said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

- We witness yet again, Jesus' warning the leper not to say anything to anyone

regarding him being cleansed.

- We discussed last week how the Father wants to demonstrate who His Son is, which is through display and not by word of mouth.
 - The validation of Jesus as Messiah will be through and by the religious leaders of that day recognizing that Messiah was here.
 - It's the saying that we often hear today, "Don't just talk about it, be about it"
 - We need proof as human beings and the only way in which proof could truly be confirmed is through and by the law.
- This is why we see Jesus sternly telling the man to "show himself to the priest and offer your cleansing what Moses commanded."
 - The question becomes, "What is it that Moses commanded regarding the cleansing of a Leper?"
 - If there was a process, what was it?
- To understand what Jesus was telling this man, we have to know what Moses commanded regarding the cleansing of a Leper.
 - We find that answer in Leviticus 13-14.
 - Leviticus 14 was established if a Jew was to be healed of leprosy.
 - And up to this particular point, the priest never had the opportunity to perform this particular procedure.
- Let's look at what this procedure entailed regarding a leper who was miraculously healed.
 - This procedure was accomplished in 3 stages.
- Stage 1 was the: Initial Examination
 - The initial examination was where the leper would send for a priest to come to the outside camp to examine the condition of the leper.
 - What is mind blowing is that Jesus sends the leper to go to the priest to make them aware of his condition.
 - This was unorthodox, because here we have Jesus sending the healed to go tell the priest to come and see what has been done.
- Stage 2 was the week of supervision
 - The leper would be required to shave all of their hair and sit under a week of supervision by the priest to see if there were any skin variations that occurred in that time.
 - This would have been what the priest would have done in the outermost parts of the camp.
- Stage 3 was confirmation through sacrifices
 - If the leper was indeed healed, they would need to sacrifice 4 different types of sacrifices.
 - Those sacrifices included the following:
 - Guilt offering
 - Sin offering

- Burnt offering
- Grain offering
- We will look at these offerings individually to understand their significance to the restoration of the leper into community with God and man.
- Let's look at our next graphic.
- What is interesting to note about these offerings is that each of them pertains to what is considered a type of ceremonial cleansing.
 - These offerings that you see in our current slide have to deal with making the Leper right before a Holy God.
 - The guilt and sin offering deals with taking away or removing sin through a payment of penalty, which in this case involved one male lamb to be slain.
 - And along with that would be a log of oil waved before the Lord as an offering.
- This is what is theologically known as expiation.
 - It is where one is made clean by the removal of sin due to a payment of penalty.
- In the same way there are two other offerings made, known as the burnt offering and the grain offering.
 - These offerings dealt with making an atonement for the leper for them to be cleansed.
 - This offering appeased or satisfied the judgement or wrath of God by way of sacrifice.
- This theological term is known as propitiation. Propitiation deals with the object of expiation.
 - The thing that appeases the very wrath of God is that which has rightly satisfied the payment of sin.
- Friends, this is why Jesus touching the Leper is so key because it demonstrates for us a picture of what Jesus would do for us as the suffering king on the cross.
 - By touching the Leper, Jesus takes upon Himself our unclean state and in exchange makes us clean.
 - This is why Paul says these words in Romans 5:8-11:

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Romans 5:11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

- This was the point of the first Messianic miracle. For the religious leaders of Israel to

see that their Messiah had in fact arrived in the person of Jesus.

- The only one in whom could heal in this way was the Messiah Himself.
- Some could make the argument based upon the Mosaic Law that only God Himself could heal a leper.
- Some Rabbis argued that not even Messiah Himself had the power to do so.
- If that were still the case Jesus' point still stood, that not only is He Messiah but He is God in flesh!
 - Friends, this is why Jesus sternly warns the leper to go straight to the priest to show himself before them.
 - They would have had record of his name and when he first came down with leprosy.
- This would have been a means by which Jesus provides hard evidence for the very learned scholars of their time.
 - However, like many of the healings and works that Jesus did, the leper did not follow Jesus' instructions.
 - Check out verse 45.

Mark 1:45 But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.

- Interesting detail regarding verse 45; The other gospel accounts do not record what happens after Jesus instructs the leper to go to the priest.
 - Mark's account is the only account that documents what took place here.
 - It could be argued that the reason why the leper's actions are accounted for here is because within the synoptic gospels, it is only Peter and 3 other disciples with Jesus at this time.
 - It can also be seen that with the authorship and action focus of Mark's account he wanted to focus on the leper's response to Jesus' command.
 - We read earlier that Jesus "sternly warned the leper not to say anything to anyone."
 - However, we see that that is not the case.
 - The leper goes on freely proclaiming what Jesus has done for him freely to all those who would hear him.
 - To some, this would have been their exact response. Overwhelmed with a sense of relief, one could not keep this news to themselves.
 - However, the reality is that Jesus gave this man a command which was to not announce what had been done.
 - Again, we see this strong sense of timing in Jesus wanting this news to be made known in the right manner at the right time.
 - Jesus wants the gospel of God and the Kingdom to be made known to men

and women, however, there is an order in which it must be done.

- That order required that Leviticus 14 be executed for the religious leaders of Israel to see for themselves who Jesus was.
- We find within verse 44 leading into 45, that Jesus wanted the man to obey His command because Jesus honored the Mosaic Law.
- As a matter of fact, scripture tells us that Jesus did not come to abolish the law but rather to fulfill it. Check out Matthew 5:17

Matthew 5:17 Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

- Jesus makes it clear throughout His ministry that He was to fulfill the Law of God through complete obedience to the Father.
 - We now observe from this Leper that his lack of obedience to Jesus' command has now caused unnecessary hurdles for Jesus regarding moving from town to town for ministry.
 - This could be seen as Peter's issue from earlier, believing that his priorities somehow outweighed Jesus' need to rest and reboot for ministry.
 - Whatever the case, Jesus' intent to go into public places to preach became hindered, therefore causing Him to remain in the unpopulated areas for a time.
 - But notice what the text is telling us, even with the disobedience of the leper, Jesus' work and power were still made known.
 - Even with man's best attempt at our own pursuits, God's plans and purposes always prevail.
 - Lastly, I find it interesting that where the leper has a need and seeks Jesus for healing, that the leper's burden of alienation now becomes Jesus' burden to bear.
 - Friends, although this burden for the leper was too great of a burden to bear being in isolation from men and from God, Jesus has taken upon Himself that burden to carry.
 - This is yet again another picture of Jesus as our Suffering Servant King!
 - Jesus inconveniences Himself for the inconvenience of our selfishness and sin.
 - This Leper's environment and circumstances have greatly changed which has now caused Jesus' circumstances to change.
 - Jesus moves from previously being able to move from town to town freely and into public spaces freely.
 - To now having to stay in the recesses of the unpopulated and uninhabited areas.
 - Isn't that the very definition of a servant? He takes upon Himself our burdens.
 - He takes upon Himself our mistakes and our griefs – He bears them.
 - Friends, this is what Jesus would take upon Himself at the cross.
 - Every mistake, every selfish motive, every broken command, everything

placed upon Him. Isaiah 53:5 tells us what Jesus would ultimately endure.

**Isaiah 53:5 But He was pierced for our offenses,
He was crushed for our wrongdoings;
The punishment for our well-being was laid upon Him,
And by His wounds we are healed.**

- ◦ Next week, we will see that although the leper disobeyed the command of Jesus, the plan and purpose of Jesus would not be hindered.
 - I pray you join us next week as we walk through Mark 2:1-12.
- Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 2A

Chapter 2:1-12

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- Last week we discussed the first Messianic miracle – the healing of the Leper.
 - After the leper’s healing, he was to go straight to the priest and to provide the sacrifices Moses commanded.
 - This would begin Jesus’ formal announcement to the religious leaders about Jesus being the Messianic King.
 - However, due to the disobedience of the Leper, instead of making the religious leaders aware of Jesus’ Messianic miracle, he made everyone else aware.
 - This ultimately prevented Jesus from being able to enter into the major cities and therefore caused Him to remain in the outskirts of the cities.
 - Tonight, we have a chance to witness God not only redeem what would seem like lost opportunity and provide a timely experience.
 - We will continue to see within this gospel account that there is never a wasted experience with God.
 - Tonight, we will witness Jesus not only demonstrate His healing power, but above all, He will demonstrate His authority to forgive sins.
 - If I were to put a tag on the text tonight it would be: A Paralytic Man and a Divine Prerogative. Turn with me to Mark 2:1-12.

Mark 2:1 When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home.

Mark 2:2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them.

Mark 2:3 And they *came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men.

Mark 2:4 Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying.

Mark 2:5 And Jesus seeing their faith *said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

Mark 2:6 But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,

Mark 2:7 “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Mark 2:8 Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, *said to them, “Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?

Mark 2:9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk’?

Mark 2:10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He *said to the paralytic,

Mark 2:11 “I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.”

Mark 2:12 And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.”

- Let's Pray
- The greatest question that man has pondered on for centuries is, "What is beyond this life?"
 - To know where one will be for eternity is predicated upon the premise of this one question: "Have your sins been forgiven?"
 - For who can forgive sins but God and God alone.
 - Rabbi Johannon B. Zakkai was faced with this startling reality towards the end of his very life.
 - In the Encyclopedia Judaica, a moving account is given of his death.
 - He compares the judgement of two rulers: One is an earthly human king versus that of God Himself as Cosmic King.
 - He begins with the earthly king and how his judgement, anger, and rule does not last forever.
 - And how this king can be persuaded and bribed with money.
 - He then pivots to the Cosmic King, the King of Kings, God Himself.
 - And in his explanation of this King's judgement, you can hear a different tune.
 - This is what the later half of the account reads:

Now that I am being taken before the supreme King of Kings, who lives and endures forever and ever, whose anger is an everlasting anger, who if He imprisons me imprisons me forever – who if He puts me to death puts me to death forever, and whom I cannot persuade with words or bribe with money – nay more, when there are. Two ways before me, one leading to Paradise and the other to Gehinnom, and I do not know by which I shall be taken, shall I not weep?

- This Rabbi who lived during the time of Jesus' ministry on earth, towards the end of his life, was not sure of his very own salvation.
 - He ultimately was not convinced that his very own sins had been forgiven.
 - What a dreadful thought that is. To not know where you will be beyond this life.
 - The only way in which one can enter the kingdom of God is if they repent of their sins and turn to Christ as their Lord and Savior.
 - There is no other way.
 - No amount of money, works, and gifts can allow a person to enter the Kingdom.
 - It is only through forgiveness of sins by God alone and that is found in Christ alone.
 - Tonight, we will see Jesus not only continue in his ministry of healing, but we will witness him do what only He can and that is to forgive the sins of sinners.
 - With that being said, pick me up at Mark 2:1-3.

Mark 2:1 When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home.

Mark 2:2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them.

Mark 2:3 And they *came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men.

- Mark lets us know that Jesus has returned to Capernaum after several days of His preaching tours in the region.
 - Jesus' travels have been quite extensive being that the news of Him healing the leper has been traveling so fast after a matter of a few days.
 - And as one can imagine, news of this messianic miracle getting out would have grasped the attention and following of many people.
 - With the rise of Jesus' following, it provided more opportunities for Jesus to preach the gospel of God to more people.
 - This very reaction is directly connected to what Jesus told Peter needed to be accomplished in verse 38.
 - Preaching the gospel of God was priority – and so it was.
 - The text mentions that with Jesus returning to Capernaum, that He made it back home.
 - Now, scripture doesn't say if Jesus had a physical dwelling place of His own.
 - However, we can assume that the text referencing "His" home could potentially be Peter's residence from our previous study.
 - It is in verse 2 that Mark makes mention that accompanying Jesus' arrival to Peter's home was a plethora of people.
 - Some have traveled to hear Him preach, some are coming to be healed, while others have come to simply observe and spectate.
 - Mark tells us that Peter's home has become so full that there was no longer any room – not even near the door.
 - To understand how much space we are dealing with, it may help to provide a graphic of what potentially what would have been Peter's home at the time.
 - Archeologist have recently discovered beneath the remains of a church built during the Byzantine period the foundations of a family dwelling
 - And it is said that this family dwelling, more than likely, belonged to Simon Peter.
 - Research shows, like most first-century homes, Peter's home was encased around two courtyards and a cluster of buildings.
 - It is in verse 3 that Mark says, amongst this growing crowd of people, four men carrying a paralytic came to the home.
 - Mark does not give us where these men and the paralytic have traveled from.
 - Whether near or far, it could be assumed that carrying this man for any amount of distance took time and much strength.
 - So, it is safe to say that the goal was to get the paralytic to Jesus as soon as

possible – as fast as possible.

- One question that you might be wrestling through is who could have been amongst this large crowd of people?
 - We will see a little later on who all is within this large crowd.
 - Let's keep moving. Check out verses 4-5

Mark 2:4 Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying.

Mark 2:5 And Jesus seeing their faith *said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

- A lot to unpack, but let's begin in the first half of verse 4.
 - Mark tells us that because the crowd was too large to press through, these men had to get creative.
 - Desperate times called for desperate measures.
 - These men carrying this paralyzed man were not going to let a group of people prevent them from bringing their friend to Jesus to be healed.
 - So they did what anyone would have done at that moment – find a window or a back door??
 - No! They decided the best way to get the paralyzed man to Jesus was to make room through the roof.
 - The text says they “removed the roof” by way of digging. The Greek wording here insinuates a demolition project was taking place on the roof.
 - Roofs during the first century contained a simple composite unlike our roofing structures today.
 - The roof was typically made from wooden beams with thatch and clay laced perpendicular to each other.
 - It's interesting to note that the text mentions no concern regarding the men's disposition in destroying the roof above Jesus' head.
 - There was no shame regarding their means and methods.
 - They simply knew they had a problem that needed to be met and that Jesus had the answer and ability to meet their friend's need.
 - We can't read verse 4 and not be encouraged by what has just been done.
 - This scene is so spectacular that Jesus' response recognizes this reality and the effort behind it.
 - Check out what Jesus says in verse 5. “And Jesus said seeing their faith said to the paralytic, Son your sins are forgiven...” Let's stop there.
 - The text says that Jesus sees “their faith”.
 - This brings about a question, “What is faith and more specifically, in this context?”

- The Greek word for “faith” here is *pistis*. It means to have strong confidence in and reliance on someone or something.
 - In other words, the one in whom is the object of our faith (Jesus Christ) is the one by which can bring about what we can’t see right now.
 - The writer of Hebrews tells us what faith is this way:

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

- The friends of this paralyzed man realized that the only way that he could be healed was if they got him to Jesus.
 - Contextually, this type of faith is in regard to placing “trust” in someone.
 - For example, every week you go to a church service and sit in a particular row in a particular seat.
 - You have faith that the creator or designer of that chair knows what they are doing and have the confidence to sit in that chair without falling.
 - It’s the same faith you have with your doctor that fills your prescription with what you need to make you feel better.
 - In the same way, these men have come to the realization that what they heard about Jesus is trustworthy and the claims are true.
 - And Jesus can visibly see the faith of these men based upon their actions.
 - It’s exactly what James mentions regarding faith where he says:

James 2:26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

- ◦ Faith requires action. Check out verse 5.
 - And Jesus, seeing their faith, *said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”
 - This is the first mention of faith in Mark’s gospel that’s directly linked to acting or responding rather than with knowing or feeling.
- However, Jesus’ response to the faith of these men who brought the paralyzed man before Him, is a response that was not anticipated or expected.
 - This is definitely not the answer that the paralytic was expecting at the onset.
- Imagine, at this point, the paralytic’s eyes are closed and his heart probably racing?
 - He has been in this condition for who knows how long and it could be estimated that they have traveled some miles to get here.
 - They have been blocked by the crowd on the first level to the point that he watches his friends dig a hole in the roof.
 - And Jesus responds to him by saying, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

- To the crowd, this seems like a missed opportunity, but to Jesus this was the opportunity.
 - This was the opportunity and the appointed time to demonstrate for those in the crowd, who Jesus truly was.
- The man came thinking that his physical problem was the issue, however, Jesus lets him and others know the greatest problem was first a spiritual one.
 - The man came with a physical, temporary problem; however, Jesus would address the spiritual need which would lead to eternal benefit.
 - At that very moment, the man's sins were forgiven because Christ forgave!
- "The teaching that disease was a consequence of sin was held especially to explain general epidemics and those illnesses with obscure origin and fatal results, such as leprosy".
 - Rabbinical teaching of that day was that the forgiveness of sins proceeds the healing.
- And what Jesus was demonstrating was that the only way in which one can truly be made whole is if they are wholly forgiven by God.
 - Jesus didn't say your sin is forgiven; He said your sins are forgiven.
 - This paralyzed man has been made completely whole, spiritually, by Jesus.
- Notice, the man's physical condition has not changed, yet. We will witness this later on as a means of demonstration and revelation. Right now, know that:
 - He has not had to go to be ceremonially cleansed.
 - He did not need to provide a sacrifice by the priest.
 - He did not have to perform to get God's attention or approval.
 - The 4 men simply demonstrated faith and upon faith in Christ, forgiveness was provided for the paralytic.
- If you recall in last week's teaching, we discussed the healing of the leper.
 - We saw a similar connection drawn regarding sin and suffering.
- We discovered that Jesus' anger in that situation was not based upon the man's physical condition, but rather sin itself.
 - It is sin itself that has brought about the corruption and spiritual separation of humanity as a whole.
 - And it is sin that has caused separation between man and God.
- And although sin has caused both physical and spiritual separation it is only through God and by God that restoration can take place.
 - It is here, where Jesus makes it known plainly and clearly to the crowd, who He is – and there is a special reason as to why.
- Notice what begins to emerge from the situation after Jesus has just publicly forgiven the paralytic of his sins.
 - Check out verses 6-7.

Mark 2:6 But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their

hearts,

Mark 2:7 “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?”

- We find within verse 6 who is among these great number of people in Peter’s home and why Jesus addressed the paralytic the way He did, first.
 - A question that comes to mind is “How and why did the scribes make their way in this gathering to hear Jesus teach?”
 - Wouldn’t there have been better things for them to do with their time other than listening to Jesus?
 - We find that the answer to the question can be found once again in our last teaching.
 - If you recall, the Leper did not go straight to the priest as Jesus commanded him to.
 - Instead, the Leper took it upon himself to be Jesus’ personal evangelist and told many people about what he had just experienced.
 - This would have been breaking news!
 - All the major networks and news stations would have been out interviewing this man to know the truth and seeking the facts.
 - Well with word of mouth traveling fast in the region, it would only be a matter of time until the priest and religious leaders in Jerusalem and Judea would hear about what Jesus did.
 - This would have triggered huge scriptural awareness for them according to this Messianic sign.
 - Friends, this would give way to the means of another Sanhedrin investigation.
 - Why? Because the healing of the leper was only to be accomplished by Messiah Himself.
 - So the only way to get the news and the whereabouts of where Jesus was, was to follow the chatter throughout the region and begin investigating.
 - If you recall from our earlier teaching in Mark, the Investigation was done in two stages, similar to the investigation that was done regarding John’s baptisms.
 - The first stage was simple observation.
 - The religious leaders and scribes were not allowed to ask questions regarding these Messianic claims, they simply were to take note.
 - In the second stage, they were permitted to ask questions.
 - So, what we first observe is why there were so many people in the crowd.
 - One, there’s much interest in the midst to see what Jesus was doing.
 - But most importantly, the curiosity of the religious leaders have been peaked in an effort to launch yet another Sanhedrin investigation.
 - As a side note from earlier, we see that the inability for the paralytic to get to Jesus was mainly due to the “gatekeeping” of the religious leaders.
 - Religiosity has a tendency to prevent those who truly want to hear the gospel

from getting to the gospel.

- It creates barriers for people to not hear the word preached because of the “gatekeepers” blocking the way to Jesus.
- We must warrant against this and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work and get out of the way.
- One key thing that we can see from the leper’s disobedience is that it did not hinder the plans of God.
 - Not only were crowds gathering to hear Jesus, but this created the perfect opportunity for the religious leaders to be exactly where God wanted them to be.
 - This simply goes to show us that despite man’s foolishness, God still gets the glory.
- Moving further along in verse 6, we see that after Jesus has forgiven the paralytic’s sins, the scribes begin to “reason in their hearts”.
 - The religious leaders do not mumble a word.
 - Remember, these investigations begin by simply observing the claims that have been made regarding a Messianic movement.
 - So their second best option is to tell Jesus off in their minds.
- We all have had this moment before. Someone says something you don’t agree with or disrespects you, you tend to reason your response in your mind.
 - You “tell them off” or give them a piece of your mind, internally.
- However, like a good storyteller, Mark provides us the internal dialogue that the religious leaders are having within their hearts.
 - Verse 7 provides the discussion verbatim, check out the text, again:

Mark 2:7 “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?”

- Understand, the religious leaders have just witnessed Jesus telling a paralyzed man, “Your sins are forgiven.”
 - This was a “clutch your pearls moment” because that phrase “Your sins are forgiven” was a buzz word for the scribes and pharisees.
 - They initially came to observe the Messianic claims made, based upon word of the Leper being healed.
 - However, this was Jesus’ moment to bait and hook the religious leaders in after the Leper’s failure of obeying Jesus’ command.
 - And what better way to stir the pot than to have all the people a part of the party, including the religious leaders, to witness this authoritative moment.
 - The religious leaders, as you can imagine, are looking at Jesus with a sense of unbelief.
 - “The audacity of this man forgiving sins!”
 - The religious leaders knew according to Old Testament Judaism that no man, not

even Messiah had the authority to forgive the sins of the people.

- In order to truly understand verse 7 in its fullness, we have to understand the weightiness of verse 5.
- Remember, Jesus is speaking in his native language, which is Hebrew, not English.
 - The Hebrew phrase “Your sins are forgiven” is written in the passive form and this similar instance is only in one section of the Hebrew bible.
 - It is found in Leviticus 4-6.
- The focus of Leviticus Chapters 4-6 deals specifically with atonement.
 - And the way in which atonement was made possible was through blood sacrifice.
- The word “forgiven” in Hebrew is the word *salach*.
 - This word is used only by God meaning that He is the only One in Whom provides forgiveness through the means He provides.
 - This forgiveness of sins was provided in a salvific sense.
- The pharisees knew the point that Jesus was making when He forgave the sins of the paralytic.
 - Jesus was claiming the authority that God Himself asserted in Leviticus 4-6.
 - In other words, Jesus just dropped the bomb on them that He is God.
- This is why the religious leaders are speaking in their hearts that this statement coming from Jesus was so blasphemous.
 - No one could forgive sins in a salvation sense but God alone.
- Friends, herein lies the point that Jesus was trying to make with the Leper’s situation from last week’s teaching:
 - If the Leper would have obeyed Jesus’ command and went to the priest immediately, Jesus’ Messianic claim would have been made known to the leaders at that time.
 - They would have drawn the proper conclusions by following Leviticus 13-14 as the law commanded, checked the records in the synagogue, and would have come face to face with the truth.
- In other words, the Law itself would have shown them that their Messiah was right before their very eyes.
 - We see despite the disobedience of the Leper, Jesus is still able to make His announcement.
 - The question now would be, “Would the religious leaders take Him at His word or not?”
- We will see in the next few verses, that Jesus is going to turn up the heat on the religious leaders.
 - They will have to come face to face with the claims Jesus is making.
 - Check out verses 8-11.

Mark 2:8 Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that

way within themselves, *said to them, “Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?

Mark 2:9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk’?

Mark 2:10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He *said to the paralytic,

Mark 2:11 “I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.”

- Mark mentions right after verse 7, that the matters of the hearts of these religious leaders were made known before all who were present in the gathering.
 - He mentions that Jesus was made aware in His Spirit of what the men were thinking to themselves.
 - This was in fact another Messianic claim that Jesus has made in acknowledging the thoughts of the religious leaders.
 - As a matter of fact Dr. Edershim in his book: Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah, summarizes the Talmud:Sanhedin 93b by saying the following:

“It is inferred that the Messiah knew the thoughts of the heart”

- ◦ Check out what Isaiah 11:3 says this:

Isaiah 11:3 And He will delight in the fear of the Lord,
And He will not judge by what His eyes see,
Nor make a decision by what His ears hear

- We also see a similar instance in 1 Samuel 16:7:

1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God does not see as man sees, since man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

- It is only God that can know the thoughts of man’s heart.
 - So for Jesus to publicly make known the reasoning of those things in their hearts makes it clear that Jesus is clearly God in flesh.
 - It is clear from what we have just observed that Jesus’ claim to deity in a passive way is easily evident in multiple places within the first chapter of Mark alone.
 - So, Jesus aware in His Spirit of what these religious leaders are thinking calls them out on their stuff.
 - He brings their very questions to the table, publicly.
 - This would be the means by which Jesus would publicly demonstrate amongst the religious leaders who He was.

- Jesus then proceeds to answer the question in their heart with a question of His own.
 - Look at verse 9

Mark 2:9 Which is easier, to say to the paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven’; or to say, ‘Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk’?

- This method of questioning was a typical method of Jewish education within rabbinic schools of thought – answering a question with a question.
 - The reasoning behind this train of thought was for one to reason within themselves and to provide the right answer on their own.
 - And the question Jesus ask is, “Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man, your sins are forgiven, or pick up your pallet and walk?”
 - It could be clear at first glance that, hands down, saying “Your sins are forgiven” is the easiest of the two.
 - Telling someone their sins are forgiven verbally can produce no visible evidence of them having been forgiven.
 - It would be harder to tell a man who is paralyzed “Get up and walk” as if with authority, only to visibly see that you had no power to make it happen.
 - So from this brief exchange, it is clear that Jesus is trying to make a point here.
 - The rabbinic logic that Jesus uses is known as *kal v’chomer* which means “from light to heavy”
 - It is the idea that if I can accomplish the more difficult thing, then I am capable of the easier thing.
 - For example, if I tell you I could bench press 120 lbs but you don’t believe me, I could prove the lesser by lifting more.
 - By doing this, it proves that I could easily perform the lesser weight.
 - In this same way, Jesus forgiving the sins of the paralyzed man was the easier of the two to claim, in that sense.
 - In one instance, no one can physically prove that the paralytic has been forgiven, unless Jesus accomplished the greater.
 - On the other hand, saying the paralyzed man is healed would require burden of proof.
 - It’s like we mentioned last week, “I’ll believe it when I see it”.
 - So Jesus makes this moment the perfect opportunity to demonstrate who He is by backing up His statement having the authority to forgive sins.
 - Check out verse 10 and 11.

Mark 2:10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He *said to the paralyzed man,

Mark 2:11 “I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet, and go home.”

- Here is where we witness the mic drop moment between what Jesus said and what He did.
 - Jesus not only provides a question with a question, but He also provides the answer for them to see the truth claims being made for all to see.
 - Remember, when one comes across the truth, there are only two responses.
 - Either the truth will be made known and accepted, or rejected. There is no gray area.
 - Jesus says, (paraphrasing), “I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”
 - In other words, Jesus wanted the religious leaders to see that He, in fact, has all authority both to forgive sins, and to heal.
 - Notice the title that Jesus uses in verse 10. He uses the title Son of Man.
 - The phrase “Son of Man” is found 93 times in Ezekiel.
 - It also appears within apocalyptic literature such as the book of Enoch.
 - And is connected to the Jewish expectations of the Messiah, even before Christ is on the scene.
 - So, Jesus’ use of this title before the religious leaders is for them to know both verbally and visually that Jesus is the God-man.
 - And what better way for Jesus to drop the mic than in verse 11 and 12.
 - He tells the paralyzed man “I say to you get up, pick up your pallet, and go home.
 - Watch what happens in verse 12.

Mark 2:12 And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.”

- Immediately after Jesus gives the word for the paralytic to rise up and walk, the text tells us that in the sight of all, the man got up and walked!
 - If ever there was a point to be clearly made evident before all, but most especially the religious leaders, this would be the moment.
 - Not only did Jesus prove the more difficult task in front of the crowd, but He proved what only God could do – forgive sins.
 - Friends, there was no unseeing what was just witnessed in front of them all.
 - It’s not as if this miracle was performed in a closed setting with just Jesus and the religious leaders.
 - For that particular scenario would have allowed the religious leaders to potentially control the narrative and deny what they had seen.
 - Remember, demonstration leads to revelation. The scribes and pharisees had to provide a verdict.
 - What we must not forget regarding this scene is that the pharisees can only observe.

- They can't speak or inquire out loud due to the process of investigation for the Sanhedrin.
- These religious leaders are forced to reason within their hearts the very questions they have just posed about Jesus.
 - It's that sobering reality you experience when you have nothing else to do but to grapple with the claims you have just witnessed regardless of your previous position.
 - The religious leaders' position aside, it is clear that everyone else who came to observe Jesus' teaching and power were moved beyond words.
- The text mentions that they all began to glorify God saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"
 - Interesting fact, when the text mentions the term amazed, regarding the crowd's response, it means that their view on the matter changed.
 - They moved from some possibly questioning or wanting to see if all that has been heard is true, to now seeing for themselves that it is true.
- It's one thing to watch a movie trailer and to build your assumptions on a minute and a half clip.
 - You must see the entire movie which provides the true evidence as to if the trailer was accurate or not.
- In this case, the movie trailers of what people had heard about Jesus superseded their expectation as they saw for themselves just how great He was!
 - Jesus, before all, not only demonstrated that He has victory over sickness and physical ailments, but He has the authority to forgive sin.
- The question becomes: "Why would this matter become problematic for the religious leaders of that day?"
 - Shouldn't knowing Messiah had arrived be worthy of praise and relief?
 - To the average person anticipating Messiah and His coming, absolutely! This means that victory and justice have arrived.
 - However, this victory and justice that has arrived first comes at a high cost and not in the way most expected.
- As a side note: Jesus used the term "Son of Man", this term not only established divine origins, but it also designated His office and position as God's Son.
 - The way in which sins could be forgiven and men and women could enter the kingdom would first be through the humiliation of the Son.
 - It would come through the rejection, piercing, and crushing of the Son of Man.
- The fact that Jesus doesn't even use the title in the first person shows us that Jesus wasn't trying to flaunt who He was.
 - He was simply being who He was. An obedient servant and Son of God!
- And it would be through this demonstration that the religious leaders would return to Jerusalem with their verdict regarding this Messianic Movement.
 - This movement, regarding Jesus Christ, is a significant movement!
 - This movement would be the very threat to the people and religious leaders'

true paralysis – The paralysis of the Heart.

- The verdict is in and from it, the pharisees would now move to stage 2 of their investigation which required interrogation.
 - We will begin to see the religious leaders see Jesus as a threat against the very religious structure of that day.
- Here would mark the very beginnings of how they will silence the very Messiah that has come to save them.
 - We will dive into this part of the Sanhedrin investigation, in our next teaching. Let's Pray.

Citation:

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Mark - Lesson 2B

Chapter 2:13-17

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- Last week, we began Mark Chapter 2.
 - It was here where we were introduced to four men and a paralytic man.
 - The intention was for the paralytic man to get to Jesus by going straight through the front door of Peter's home.
 - However, due to the barricade of people gathered in the crowd, more specifically, the religious leaders, that path became impossible.
 - The paralytic's friends decided that the next best means was to dig a hole through the roof in order to get their friend to Jesus.
 - The faith of these men were noted by Jesus and in seeing their faith Jesus forgives the sins of this paralytic.
 - This was a bit unorthodox because no one had authority to forgive sins but God.
 - It was here that Jesus baits the Pharisees by using a rabbinical teaching method called the *kal v'chomer* which is "lesser to the greater"
 - Jesus proves to the Pharisees and the people that He has the authority to forgive sins by healing the paralytic man.
 - By proving the harder or greater thing, Jesus proved that He was able to do the lesser.
 - He lets them know that the Son of Man has the authority to forgive sins.
 - Jesus ultimately proves that the greatest need that humanity has is spiritual paralysis and the only way to fix it is dealing with sin.
 - Tonight, we will see Jesus recruit another disciple that will take many by surprise.
 - Not only does Jesus' choice of disciples become more interesting, but it becomes all the more telling of His mission and ministry.
 - If I were to put a tag on the text tonight, it would be "The Scandal of Grace".
 - Let's read the text. Mark 2:13-17

Mark 2:13 And He went out again by the seashore; and all the people were coming to Him, and He was teaching them.

Mark 2:14 As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax booth, and He *said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him.

Mark 2:15 And it *happened that He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following Him.

Mark 2:16 When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, "Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?"

Mark 2:17 And hearing this, Jesus *said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

- Let's Pray
- Scottish Theologian, Thomas Boston said this regarding grace:

“Surely corruption is ingrained in our hearts, interwoven with our very natures, has sunk deep into our souls, and will never be cured but by a miracle of grace.”

- Grace is the means by which we divinely receive something that is undeserved.
 - Grace is not received on the count of merit, but rather the mercy of God.
 - We find grace is fully personified in the incarnation of Christ.
 - Jesus appearing in the world at the right moment and at the right time is a miracle from Holy God.
 - That He thought about us and loved us so that He drew near to the broken hearted so that we may see His love fully expressed.
 - Love is best witnessed in action and not words.
 - Tonight we will witness Jesus draw near the least and the lowly of society by means of fellowship through the lens of grace.
 - With that being said, pick me up in verse 13.

Mark 2:13 And He went out again by the seashore and all the people were coming to Him, and He was teaching them.

- It is after the miraculous healing of the paralytic that Mark tells us that Jesus goes back again to the shores of the Sea of Galilee.
 - It is here that the text mentions that all the people were coming to Him.
 - This simply shows us how popular Jesus and His ministry had become especially with more and more evidence being provided.
 - Men and women are marveling and amazed at all that Jesus has done in the region thus far. In just this short period of time, Jesus has:
 - Preached in the synagogue with authority like no one has.
 - He has expelled a demon out of a man in the synagogue.
 - He has healed Peter's mother-in-law as well as met the healing needs of the other people.
 - He has performed a miracle that no one has ever seen been done: The healing of a Jewish Leper.
 - And now He has healed a paralytic man and on top of that forgiven his sins.
 - At this point, you may be saying to yourself, I would have been following Jesus too, especially with knowing all that He has done.
 - I love what the end of verse 13 mentions, because this detail connects back to verse 37 which is **“the purpose of Jesus' teaching ministry”**.
 - The text says, **“and He was teaching them.”**

- This phrase should ring true in the ears of everyone that has ears to hear.
 - Although the healings and miraculous signs were great and magnificent works, He did not see them as His primary ministry focus.
 - **Jesus' primary focus was to travel and make known the glorious gospel of God.**
 - And that was so men and women would come to repent and to receive the Kingdom of God for it is at hand.
- I stress this point once again because there are particular denominations that believe that the miracles, signs, and wonders are what is truly needed to experience Jesus' presence.
 - However, Jesus Himself makes it abundantly clear that to know Him truly is to follow and obey His words and commands.
 - **Signs and healings are simply tools that can point you to the person of Jesus.**
 - **But they are not the things that will keep you at the feet of Jesus.**
- If the signs and miracles were to have stopped and Jesus only focused on teaching, the numbers of followers would have dropped drastically.
 - **Why? Because people seek to be entertained and amused rather than to be fed.**
- This will be a way in which Jesus will separate those who are truly following for the sake of being with Jesus versus those who simply want to know Him for what He does.
 - Check out verse 14.

Mark 2:14 As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax booth, and He *said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him.

- It is here that we are introduced to the next of Jesus' disciples.
 - In Mark's gospel we see that his name is Levi. However, when we read Matthew's account, we see that Levi is actually Matthew.
 - It is estimated that Levi also could have been Matthew's pre-conversion name.
 - The name "Matthew" means "gift of YHWH".
 - For those who may doubt if Levi and Matthew are the same person within the gospel accounts, we can examine the parallel accounts in the synoptic gospels.
 - In comparing the experiences between Levi and Matthew in the synoptic accounts, it is clear to conclude the apostle Matthew and Levi are the same person.
 - Mark provides us with a detail that Matthew is the son of Alphaeus.
 - Not much is provided regarding Matthew's father.
 - However, it is important to note that there are no sibling relations connected to that of James, son of Alphaeus, better known as James the lesser.
 - As Jesus is passing by the Sea of Galilee, He spots Levi sitting at a tax booth.

- This detail will provide insight as to more of who Levi (Matthew) is.
- The text states that Levi is sitting in the tax booth – which only means one thing, he was a tax-collector.
- A tax-collector was a person that collected taxes for the Roman government.
 - Within Jewish society, Jews who took on a role as a tax-collector were considered to be Roman sympathizers.
 - They were corrupt in the sense that they collected more money than what was necessary.
- Being a tax-collector was forbidden to Jews by Jewish law.
- Based on Jewish writings, there were considered two types of tax-collectors:
 - 1. Income Tax officials.
 - 2. Customs or toll-tax officials.
- Capernaum was known for its major tax polling station.
 - Because of the location of the tax booth where Matthew was sitting, it is estimated that he was in the service of Herod Antipas.
 - So as merchants and fisherman were coming into port for their goods, it was more than likely that they had to deal with Matthew.
 - Knowing this reality gives us insight as to what type of publican Matthew was; **He was a toll official.**
- So here we have a Jewish tax-collector who is minding his own business at the tax booth.
 - Known by Jewish religious leaders as being equal to the worst of sinners as they come.
 - More than likely, Matthew is working through his mind how to maximize his profits by attempting to extort the fisherman that day.
- But all of a sudden, Jesus passing by sees Matthew, knowing what he does and gives an authoritative command.
 - Jesus tells Him, “Follow Me.”
- Remember, the statement “Follow Me” is a summons which informs us that it is not a suggestion or question for Matthew to “possibly consider”.
 - Jesus is literally calling Matthew from the things that he is accustomed, to now following Jesus.
 - The text then mentions that, without hesitation, Matthew gets up and follows Jesus.
- This becomes yet again a similar pattern for those in who Jesus is calling as His disciples.
 - They are all leaving behind what they had, their vocations, their careers, their belongings, and they give it all up for the sake of Christ.
 - **If this shows us anything, it shows us, once again, that there is a cost that comes to following Jesus.**
- The question that comes to the forefront is, “How was Matthew able to give this

up knowing who he was working for?”

- We saw with Peter and Andrew, James and John, that these four men were working as fishermen and worked for their relatives.
- Whereas Matthew is working for the Roman government.
- For a man in Matthew’s position, it was uncommon for him to just up and leave his post as the toll-official.
 - **Forget him messing up his means of income, he was interfering with the Roman government’s money.**
 - The typical process for someone in Matthew’s position would have been to make prior arrangements before leaving for the day.
- Imagine if you are on the job working for someone and you are on “company time” and all of a sudden you leave work without any notice to your superiors.
 - More than likely that would result in a write up at best or at worst, being fired.
 - And here we have Matthew, being summoned by Jesus to Follow Him, and Matthew doesn’t even think twice.
 - As a matter of fact, Luke 5:28 says:

Luke 5:28 And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him.

- **Matthew sees that Jesus’ call and authority is much greater than that of the Roman government itself.**
 - No man in their right mind would abandon their post within the government knowing the risks.
 - However, Matthew is more concerned with following Jesus than he has concerns about what his superiors will think.
 - **The superior Himself, Jesus Christ has called him and he has no other choice than to get up and follow.**
 - I think this sheds light into how the Father calls men and women to Himself.
 - Being drawn to God is not a drawing that you can resist.
 - It is not a drawing that you can reject.
 - **It is a drawing that compels you without the need to explain to you why, you simply respond in obedience.**
 - Check out what Matthew now does in response to being called by Jesus. Look at verse 15.

Mark 2:15 And it *happened that He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following Him.

- We now find that after Matthew has responded to Jesus’ call to Follow, he responds in a celebratory way.

- What better way to celebrate a new direction in one's life than to welcome Jesus, His disciples, and some associates over for dinner.
 - We see here that the location of this celebration is at Matthew's home.
- The text lets us know that Jesus and His disciples join Matthew for dinner, however, they are accompanied by some interesting guest.
 - They are accompanied by "tax-collectors and sinners".
- Mark makes a very clear distinction here between the tax-collector and sinners.
 - A question that comes to mind is "What kind of sinners were a part of this gathering other than tax-collectors?"
- It's important to note that the term here for sinners in the Greek is *hamartolos*.
 - It means an "irreligious Jew".
- In other words the people that are gathered at Matthew's home with Jesus and His disciples are individuals who have no regard for the Torah.
 - Their behavior and lifestyle do not line up nor support the expectations that the law of God has established for God's people.
- Those who fall under this particular category of "sinners" were the following:
 - Gamblers
 - Moneylenders
 - Folks that raced doves for sport
 - Thieves
 - The list could go on.
- And it is here that the text mentions that Jesus is "reclining at the table" with these individuals.
 - This detail provides yet a peek into the focus of Jesus; ministry which will provide much consternation and irritation with the religious leaders.
- **According to ancient teaching, sharing a meal was embedded with ritual meaning and signified the most solemn and intimate of social relations.**
 - Dining together created a bond amongst the diners.
- **In the Greek tradition, table etiquette was a part of ethical instruction and was especially based in the ethics of friendship.**
 - That is to say, rules of etiquette at the table were defined in terms of behavior that enhanced the enjoyment of the occasion for all present or contributed to the "friend-making character of the table".
- This sharing of a meal together and sitting at the table in a reclined position demonstrated Jesus' desire to connect and draw near the outcast.
 - Jesus, who is a Jew, is associating with people within the Jewish community who are considered the outcast and lowly.
 - What a beautiful picture of Jesus making himself available to those in whom amongst the religious leaders consider unworthy.
 - **Yet Jesus demonstrates this scandalous grace!**
- **This is in fact the purpose of Jesus' ministry. To draw near to the needy and to**

make Himself and His life available for them to see.

- Remember, the people in the Galilee have not seen teaching or interaction like this before.
 - A man with authority and the ability to rightly divide the scriptures yet is drawing near to those who have no regard for it?!
 - This was unprecedented! And this was the issue that the religious leaders had.
 - Let's keep moving. Check out verse 16.

Mark 2:16 When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, “Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?”

- Mark mentions that the “scribes of the Pharisees” have officially spoken regarding Jesus and the Messianic claims being made.
 - Keep in mind that the religious leaders are investigating these claims and have moved from simple observation to interrogation.
 - Here is where they can ask pointed questions in an effort to trip up Jesus and His followers in an effort to sabotage the messianic movement.
 - But most importantly, to make it seem as though Jesus is not who He claimed to be.
 - Now before we move too quickly into the questioning of the scribes, we need to look closely at the text.
 - Mark mentions an interesting phrase, he says “scribes of the Pharisees”.
 - Why the distinction in the particular religious groups?
 - Interesting to note, scribes were not confined to Israel.
 - Scribes are noted to have worked in many different vocational capacities, for instance:
 - Religious, political, judicial, social, and even economic areas.
 - **In this case, these scribes were functioning as wise sages and interpreters of the Torah in an effort to trip Jesus up.**
 - Think of the scribes as independent contractors or consultants for different companies.
 - These individuals have acquired a certain set of skills and those skills fall, primarily, in the realm of teaching and interpreting Jewish law and copying manuscripts.
 - So when varying entities need a “legal expert” or consultant as muscle to tighten up the company, these scribes would be sent to do just that.
 - And the text lets us know that this group of scribes are serving in the interest of the pharisaical party.
 - In other words, they represent the Jewish Law, therefore their line of questioning will be bent to that end.
 - So as the scribes of the Pharisees are observing what Jesus is doing and are

witnessing Him interacting with those who deliberately disobey the law, they began their line of questioning.

- And here is what they ask: Check out the later half of verse 16:

“..they said to His disciples, “Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?”

- Understand that the one in whom is in question is Jesus, not His disciples.
 - However, the investigation is looking into the entire movement regarding Jesus and His disciples and followers.
 - And to understand why Jesus is associating with who were considered “The worst of the worst”, the scribes ask the disciples the question.
 - “Why is Jesus (Your Teacher) eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?”
 - Last week, we discussed how the religious leader’s presence at Peter’s home during the healing of the paralytic played as a barrier for him to get to Jesus.
 - **Where grace appears, it is often blockaded by religiosity and pride.**
 - **Jesus fellowshiping with the irreligious was a demonstration of His mercy and grace to those who were considered the least of these.**
 - And if we are to look at this picture for a minute, the reality is that today you and I tend to find ourselves in one of the two categories.
 - In one sense, we are the tax-collectors and sinners; in need of God’s grace and extension of love in our brokenness.
 - **On the other hand, we can become like the scribes at the table, that we have the propensity to prompt up our religion as a badge of honor as if it is our own righteousness.**
 - We have a tendency to think that Christ’s righteousness is our own rather than recognizing that it is Christ who puts His righteousness upon us.
 - We can hide behind bible study and church as a means to protect and guard what we deem is our righteousness.
 - Yet all the long not realizing that we too share in this fellowship of grace at the table because we too are in need of the Love of Jesus.
 - So the scribes ask Jesus’ disciples “Why is Your Teacher associating with “these” people?”
 - And you have to love Jesus because He doesn’t even provide His disciples the time to answer the question.
 - Nor does He give the scribes the joy in relishing trying to “one-up” Jesus in His gathering of grace.
 - Check out how Jesus responds in verse 17.

Mark 2:17 And hearing this, Jesus *said to them, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call

the righteous, but sinners.”

- This is classic Jesus; Straightforward to the point.
 - Jesus begins by saying “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.”
 - Jesus’ response makes a few things clear in the onset.
 - It only makes sense that those who are in need, due to physical ailment, be taken care of by the one whom can bring proper aid.
 - **The only way someone can be made well is if there be a proper diagnosis of their prognosis.**
 - And as we witnessed last week, the prognosis that every human being faces is sin.

Romans 3:9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

Romans 3:10 as it is written,

“There is none righteous, not even one;

- No person in this world is righteous.
 - No one can stake claim to their works, their actions, or their attempt at “being a good person”
 - Romans 3:23 tells us this:

Romans 3:23 or all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

- The religious leaders created their own standard of righteousness and demanded that others live up to their failed level of righteousness.
 - **Friends, even on our best day it still pales in comparison to the perfection of the Person of Jesus.**
 - Recognize that the scribes were considered experts in the Law.
 - The moment that the Law was not abided or regarded, the scribes had legal grounds to call it out as having “missed the standard”.
 - To understand the weightiness of the Mosaic Law, we need to understand the purpose of it.
 - The purpose of the Law was to establish for the children of Israel that God had set aside a people for Himself.
 - And in that, they would be Holy and set apart.
 - It provided instruction for how the people should govern themselves in order to please God.
 - **The Mosaic Law, in other words, set the standard of righteousness and holiness for the people of God.**
 - This is what we know as the written Law also known as the Torah which

contains the first 5 books of the bible; called the Pentateuch.

- In order for the written instructions of God to be understood, rabbis later took the written law and provided commentary.
 - This later rabbinical work became prominently known as the Mishnah and Gemara, which together became the Talmud.
- **The Talmud explains and expounds upon the statutes recorded in the written law (Torah).**
 - The focus of the Rabbis were to teach what was passed down to them.
 - **What began to take precedence within the hearts of the religious leaders is “the more I know, the more righteous I become.”**
- The focus of the religious leaders was “I must work myself to righteousness by what I know”
 - **However, grace tells us that I can never work myself or learn myself to become more righteous.**
- This is why we see Jesus speak up and say what he says regarding the sick needing a physician.
 - **Friends, Jesus is the physician that is able to provide the righteousness that you and I need and that unbelievers need.**
 - Jesus is the One who that leads the unbeliever to repentance and forgives sins.
 - **And Christ is the means through whom grace is made available and that is through faith alone by grace alone.**
- As Paul mentions in Galatians, the Law simply served as a tutor to lead to Christ.
 - Check out Galatians 3:24

Galatians 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.

Galatians 3:24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

Galatians 3:25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Galatians 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

- The only way in which the Law could be fully fulfilled was in Christ perfectly fulfilling it by demonstrating the perfect love of God and being our substitute.
 - Only a perfect person could live and walk out holy and perfect commands.
 - Don't forget that God's standard is Holiness. Meaning that one cannot miss the mark.
 - **Religiosity requires a constantly moving target because the standard always changes, whereas relationship requires perfect love and submission.**
 - And the only one that could accomplish perfection in word and deed was

Jesus Christ, Himself.

- This is why Jesus says “It is not those who are healthy that need a doctor, but those who are sinners.”
 - **Jesus did not come for the righteous because there are none who are righteous.**
 - He came for the sick and the shut-in, the low down and the forgotten.
 - And if you were to be honest with yourself, every believer in Christ fell in that category.
- Don’t get so beside yourself that you forget that if it were not for the righteousness of Christ, we would still be under the weight of sin that leads to death and total separation.
 - I want to draw our attention quickly to Matthew 9:13, because Matthew’s gospel contains some information that the other synoptic gospels don’t.

Matthew 9:13 But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

- Matthew’s gospel mentions a response that Jesus tells the religious leaders that Mark doesn’t include.
 - I believe this is the case because Mark’s gospel is focused on the action of the believer in Jesus.
 - Faith was just made mention of in the previous teaching.
 - However, because Matthew is addressing a primarily Jewish audience, it makes sense that he would include this.
 - Because the Jewish people would have understood the role of the scribes in that time.
 - Remember these were men that prided themselves on learning, teaching, and growing in information.
 - Jesus’ response here is almost as if He is checking them on what they know: It’s a challenge.
 - In other words, “Since you are such learned men, go and learn what the scriptures teach.”
 - We see that this quote that Jesus uses is a quote from Hosea 6:6.
 - Check out what Hosea 6:6 says:

**Hosea 6:6 For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice,
And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.**

- The word for loyalty here is the Hebrew word *hesed*. It means steadfast love, kindness, or faithfulness. It is a loyal love.
 - When this word is used in the Old Testament it is often times manifested by God’s acts of redemption, His mercy and forgiveness (e.g., Numbers 14:19), and His

faithfulness to the covenant with this people.

- Check out Numbers 14:19.

Numbers 14:19 “Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.”

- Jesus lets the scribes know using Hosea 6:6 that God’s steadfast love is visibly demonstrated in following Him through perfect obedience.
 - **Knowledge without true commitment in obedience indeed breeds complacency.**
 - In other words the goal was never intended to use the ceremonial laws as a means to continue on in the pattern of sin.
 - This is why Paul tells us in Romans 6:1

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

- May it never be the case! Having the caveat of ceremonial offering is not the excuse to continue on in unrighteousness.
 - God desired that men and woman would come to personally know the very mercy of God through the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of His Son.
 - **Jesus Christ is the visible embodiment of the Father’s verbal expression of ultimate love for His children.**
 - You want to know the Father and His nature – look to Jesus.
 - You want to know how to obey the Father in all His ways – look to Jesus
 - You want to know how to grow in righteousness – look to Jesus
 - You want to walk in wisdom – look to Jesus
 - You want to know eternal life and abundant life – look to Jesus
 - You want to honor the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength – look to Jesus.
 - Jesus came so that all who were far from Him would come to intimately know Him and to truly see the Love of God.
 - Where the Law seemed to have separated us, Christ paved the way across the chasm.
 - The Father required perfect holiness and perfect obedience; the Law made it evident that no one could.
 - So God who is rich in mercy, condescends by way of His Son so that those in whom He calls may come to know Him and draw near.
 - Luke’s account will provide the means by which this way of spiritual restoration takes root, and it begins with repentance.
 - The only way in which one can put on the righteousness of Christ is if they

repent of their sins.

- Friends, Christ is all in all and He is the only way to the Father.
- Mark shows us here that simply knowing about God and His word does not equate to truly knowing God relationally through His Son.
 - This is why consistently participating in a bible study to grow in knowledge means nothing if you are not living what you know.
 - We can easily be fooled by the outward appearance of people doing good for God rather than being with God.
- Being with Jesus and learning the word of God requires Jesus fellowshiping with you and making Himself known to you.
 - The greatest scholars in academia can have pontificated upon the deep things of God, but can easily miss Him due to a lack of following Him.
 - Means of works can not save a person.
 - Only faith in Christ alone and a repentant heart can inherit the Kingdom of God.
- Next week, we will see how the scribes of the Pharisees will attempt to interrogate the ministry of Jesus regarding the question of fasting.
 - Join us next week as we walk through Mark 2:18-22. Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 2C

Chapter 2:18-22

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- Last week, we saw Jesus recruit His next disciple, Levi, better known as Matthew.
 - Matthew was a tax collector, more specifically a toll official.
 - And at this point, Jesus' recruitment comes by no surprise to the reader and us today.
 - Matthew immediately responds to Jesus' call which moved him to celebrate the occasion.
 - And what better way to celebrate this occasion with more tax collectors and irreligious Jews.
 - So Jesus not only recruits a tax collector but He shares a meal with more tax collectors and other sinners.
 - It wouldn't be before long that the religious leaders began to question Jesus on why He associates with sinners.
 - Jesus reveals that Him being on the scene is the grace that the Father has always demonstrated with the Children of Israel.
 - It has now been fully realized in the second person of the Trinity.
 - We concluded last week that the incarnation of Christ pointed to the reality that God intended to draw near in relationship to His people.
 - It would be the very word of God taking on flesh.
 - Tonight, we will see just how uninformed and self-righteous the religious leaders were in the fact they missed their God standing right before them.
 - Furthermore, we will see how the religious leaders substituted the very word of God for mere words of men.
 - If I were to put a tag on the text tonight it would simply be, "Controversy with the Christ". Pick me up at Mark 2:18-22.

Mark 2:18 John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they *came and *said to Him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

Mark 2:19 And Jesus said to them, "While the bridegroom is with them, the attendants of the bridegroom cannot fast, can they? So long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

Mark 2:20 But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

Mark 2:21 "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results.

Mark 2:22 No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."

- Let's Pray
- In 1490, Oxford professor and personal physician to King Henry the 7th and 8th, Thomas Linacre made an effort to learn the Greek language.

- It would be late in his life that he took Roman Catholic orders and was given a copy of the gospels to read in the original Greek language and not the Latin Vulgate.
 - After reading through the Gospels, Thomas wrote in his diary the following words:
 - “Either this (the original Greek scriptures) is not the gospel or we are not Christians.”
- It became clear to Thomas that the Roman Catholic Church was not presenting the truth of the Gospel.
 - We find a similar situation tonight regarding the religious leaders and the rabbis of Jesus’ time.
 - It became a controversy of tradition and religion versus the pursuit of a true relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- We tend to become so used to traditionalism and taking people at their word, that we miss taking the very word of God as the truth and final authority.
 - Tonight, we will see just how far from the word of God the religious leaders had moved.
 - But above all, we will see Jesus once again make the point that God desires a relationship with His children. Pick me up at verse 18.

Mark 2:18 John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they *came and *said to Him, “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?”

- We are still on the scene at Matthew’s home where Jesus, His disciples, and Matthew’s guests are sharing a meal together at the table.
 - And while here, the text mentions that as others are eating, John’s disciples and the Pharisees are fasting.
 - Mark then tells us that “they came” and asked Jesus a question.
 - The question that is asked is “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?”
 - The use of the phrase “they came” is quite telling to say the least.
 - If you recall from our intro to this gospel, you know that Mark’s gospel is the first documented gospel account and the most brief.
 - The other synoptic gospels (Matthew and Luke) will pull from Mark’s account and fill in the details as the Holy Spirit leads.
 - For example, in Matthew’s account the disciples of John are asking the question whereas in Luke’s account the Pharisees are asking.
 - So, it becomes clear that the question regarding fasting concerns both groups.
 - Another question arises: “Why were the Pharisees and John’s disciples so concerned with Jesus’ disciples not fasting?”
 - It is apparent that both groups asking the same question had a common

understanding as to the importance of fasting that day.

- But, somehow Jesus missed it?
- Clearly, for those who are irreligious, there would be no desire to abide by religious instruction – they never did in the first place!
 - However this is not expected of someone who is a rabbi, such as Jesus.
- If we were to look at Luke’s account, we can begin the process of answering the question we just posed.
 - We can use Luke’s account because generally, Luke presents his account in chronological order.
 - Unlike Matthew’s gospel, where Matthew focuses on emphasizing certain elements regardless of their chronological happenings.
- So as we look at Luke’s account, more specifically the end of Luke 5, we see that this dinner at Matthew’s home is a few days before the Sabbath (Ch.6).
 - Based upon reasonable estimation of Rabbinical Law, the day that Matthew’s dinner is happening is more than likely, a Thursday.
- During Jesus’ time, the rabbis taught their disciples that they were to fast twice a week; On Mondays and Thursdays.
 - However, according to Biblical Judaism (The Torah) the only required fast was on the “Day of Atonement” better known as Yom Kippur
- This was a day in which the Jewish people would fast for 25 hours in seeking repentance from God and others for sins they had committed.
 - This process of cleansing is evident in Leviticus 16.
- Leviticus 16 deals specifically with the purification of the sanctuary, the high priest, and the people.
 - The way in which the people participated in the Yom Kippur would be through self-denial and fasting.
 - It would serve as an outward sign of inner repentance for breaking God’s law (Brongers, “Fasting in Israel,” 15).
- So we see that the Hebrew scriptures (The Mosaic Law) provided the means of instructions whereas the Rabbinical Law established a different precedence.
 - The question becomes, “Why was there such differentiation as to when one should fast and when not to fast, now?”
- The differentiation came about by the misplacing of authority from that of the written law (Mosaic Law) to that of the oral law.
 - The oral law was developed further by the religious leaders, imposing additional, unnecessary burdens on the people.
 - For individuals dedicated to God who wanted to demonstrate piety, the gesture of fasting as a means of sacrifice was the goal.
 - This ritual of fasting became more of a tool to display righteousness outwardly rather than truly being repentant in one’s heart.
- Herein lies where the heart issue was!
 - So, by seeing Jesus and His disciples not only eating with Matthew over dinner

but fellowshiping with other tax collectors and sinners, became a huge red flag for both John's disciples and the Pharisees.

- But what we truly see from verse 18 alone is that the hearts of John's disciples and the Pharisees were set on the Rabbinical Law and not the Mosaic Law.
 - Their hearts were set upon the words of men and their traditions versus that of the very words of God!
- One question that comes to mind is if John the Baptist's ministry was to point people to Jesus, then "Why are John's disciples not following Jesus?"
- It's clear that John's disciples followed the rabbinical tradition of fasting versus that of the Mosaic Law.
 - You can begin to see the tension that is building up here in the text.
- Where the Pharisees and scribes are pointing to the Rabbinical Law, Jesus is pointing them to the Torah, which holds true authority.
 - What holds up is what "Thus saith the Lord" and not what "Thus saith man"
- Moving forward, Jesus is going to use four analogies to illustrate His message and point
 - We see the first analogy in verses 19-20. Let's examine them together.

Mark 2:19 And Jesus said to them, "While the bridegroom is with them, the attendants of the bridegroom cannot fast, can they? So long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

Mark 2:20 But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

- Jesus' first point is going to directly address the issue that the scribes and John's disciples discuss, first; the issue of fasting.
 - Jesus begins His analogy with the backdrop of a wedding.
 - Within this illustration are the following characters:
 - The bridegroom and the wedding guest or the attendants of the wedding.
 - A wedding celebration in a Jewish village normally lasted seven days for a virgin bride or three days for a remarried widow.
 - The activities at a Jewish wedding entailed much celebration, joy, and festiveness.
 - Food, wine, and the like were essential for these events, so for someone to fast during a time like this was not anticipated nor expected.
 - One scholar records that, "Even rabbis were expected to desist from Torah instruction and join the celebration with their students".
 - So, Jesus using this picture of a wedding was huge.
 - We mentioned the characters within this first illustration, the bridegroom and the guest.
 - It is evidently clear within this picture that the bridegroom represents Jesus, both figuratively and literally.

- We see this imagery of Jesus as the bridegroom throughout the scriptures.
- And those who are the wedding guest are those in whom Jesus has invited and called to Himself.
- Now verse 19 becomes a bit clearer as to what Jesus is expressing.
- Jesus lets the scribes and John's disciples know in a few short words, there is no need for His disciples to mourn while He is with them.
 - The Kingdom and its King is before them! This is a time to rejoice!
 - Those who would receive Jesus would receive Him joyfully and not in mourning.
- This was why the proclamation of the gospel of God was so key. It was good news! Praiseworthy not mourn worthy.
 - However, Jesus brings a pivot into the conversation.
 - Check out what verse 20 states:

Mark 2:20 But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

- In verse 19, we see Jesus mentioning that while He is here, there is no reason to fast and mourn but rejoice because He is here.
 - But now we see the pivot from His previous point.
 - He now mentions that, there will come a point in time where the bridegroom will be “taken away” from the wedding guest.
 - And it will be at that time and day that they will fast.
 - So, what's Jesus talking about here? What is He alluding to in relation to this departure of the bridegroom?
 - To understand what Jesus is expressing in verse 20, we need to better understand the wording “taken away” in the text.
 - The phrase “taken away” in the Greek here is *apairo (a-pai-ro)*.
 - It means to be removed or snatched away in the sense of a violent removal.
 - Now, this picture would be quite odd for a wedding party, especially for the host of the wedding festivities.
 - If anyone were to leave a wedding party, it would be the wedding guest.
 - Imagine if you were the host of the party, it would be quite odd for you to abruptly be taken away while things are going so well.
 - So what is Jesus alluding to here?
 - If you remember in Mark 1:14, John the Baptist was in a similar situation facing the opposition of Herod.
 - He is proclaiming the news of the repentance and the Kingdom, and due to this message that brought conviction John faced conflict.
 - I believe that this speaks to a sub-point within the text and that is this: those who proclaim truth will face turbulence in this life.

- The Gospel being preached will cause issue with those who don't want to hear the truth.
- The Gospel will cause many to be in opposition of its message, because it is causing personal internal conflict with their flesh.
- So, we see that within Jesus' analogy of the bridegroom being taken away violently, Jesus is speaking to a future violent taking of Himself.
 - We are able to see this picture a bit more clearly in Isaiah 53:8.
 - Check out what the text says:

**Isaiah 53:8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away;
And as for His generation, who considered
That He was cut off from the land of the living
For the wrongdoing of my people, to whom the blow was due?**

- Jesus' reference to being taken away is Him alluding to the reality that His coming is purposefully leading to His death.
 - The only way in which atonement could be made for the sins of the elect is if there is shedding of blood.
 - Atonement of sins requires the blood of One who is sinless and spotless, and who is a better fit than the Perfect One Himself, Jesus Christ?
 - Jesus' first coming brings joy for the sinner because through His death He provides salvation for many.
 - Understand that Jesus did not take issue with fasting – the Law required it. Jesus had an issue with illegitimate laws created by illegitimate men.
 - The Rabbinical Law was not a substitute or replacement for God's words, however, the rabbis saw differently.
 - In other words, Jesus wanted the religious leaders to get back to the basics: what did my Father say, not the "tradition of the elders or of the fathers".
 - The only authority that was to be followed and obeyed was that of the Mosaic Law (613 commandments).
 - Jesus then moves to the next example. Check out verse 21.

Mark 2:21 "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results."

- The Jewish wedding imagery is now followed by a garment parable that Jesus uses. This is the first use of parables within the Gospel accounts.
 - Notice that although the parable is not connected directly to fasting per se, it does relate to Jesus' ministry of the Kingdom and His purpose, overall.
 - The items discussed are that of unshrunk cloth and old garments.
 - It is important to note that the word unshrunk in the Greek is *agnaphos*.

- It means fresh or new material. It's connected to purity – something not having been defiled.
- So in Jesus' parable, He mentions that no one cuts off the patch of new material and attaches it to an older worn out garment.
- The old garment has more than likely been overused, stretched out, and has shrunk over time.
 - It's like buying a shirt you want to pass as the name brand so you try to exchange the emblem only to realize that the two don't match.
- The result of trying to put these things together will not only expose the differences, but it will ultimately reveal what was always there: a hole.
 - What was Jesus saying here?
- Jesus' method and means to bring the truth of the Kingdom of God was not going to look like what the Pharisees wanted it to be.
 - Nor was Jesus going to modify His mission to satisfy the misalignment of Rabbinical Law as if it were the Written Law.
 - A line was being drawn for the religious leaders – and Jesus wasn't going to co-sign for the religious leaders.
- The Law will not cover the modifications that the oral law has created.
- The newness of the gospel of God would further reveal the holes, gaps, and flaws of the Rabbinical Law.
 - Truth always reveals the gaps of the heart in an effort to point us to the person of Jesus.
 - This is why the writer of Hebrews begins the book the way he did.

Hebrews 1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,
Hebrews 1:2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

- In other words, the traditions and customs of men have caused the people to miss their Messiah.
 - It's the same consistent message from old, just demonstrated in a fresh way.
 - And the way in which God reveals His message of grace and truth, will be fully demonstrated in the very person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - It will be through Jesus that the Law would be fulfilled and made completely known.
 - Paul tells us what Christ fulfilled in His life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. Check out Romans 8:3-4.

Romans 8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

Romans 8:4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

- Jesus continues this train of thought of new versus old in verse 22. Check it out.

Mark 2:22 No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.”

- Jesus mentions here that, “No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins”.
 - In order to work through this analogy, we need to understand what wineskins are.
 - Wineskins were typically the skins of a goat or sheep.
 - These skins would be turned into sacks to hold the wine in an effort to preserve its content.
 - One important aspect of wine being poured into wineskins is that the wine would go through a process called fermentation.
 - This is where the wine would begin to stretch the skins.
 - Over time, the skins would experience the fullest extent of stretching to the point that if new wine would be added to an older wineskin, the sack would burst.
 - Here we have Jesus using this analogy right in sync with this concept of new and old not being able to mix.
 - So, what is Jesus speaking about regarding this “new thing” being placed into this old skin?
 - What we see here is that Jesus represents the new wine. He is the one that provides the freshness of the Law that many could not understand before.
 - To receive Christ and to know Him as the Jewish Messiah required that the expectations of the people conform to the new way that Jesus was establishing.
 - This new way could not be received by an old way of doing things, i.e holding fast to Rabbinical Law.
 - However, the religious leaders wanted to repurpose the written Law in their own way and by their own means in their own authority.
 - Just as a reminder, I want to read Galatians 3:19-25 again in our hearing:

Galatians 3:19 Why the Law then? It was added on account of the violations, having been ordered through angels at the hand of a mediator, until the Seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

Galatians 3:20 Now a mediator is not for one party only; but God is only one.

Galatians 3:21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? Far from it! For if a law had been given that was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

Galatians 3:22 But the Scripture has confined everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Galatians 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the Law, being confined for the faith that was destined to be revealed.

Galatians 3:24 Therefore the Law has become our guardian to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

Galatians 3:25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

- Our measly attempts to modify our own righteousness as a means to appease God will always fail in comparison to that of Christ.
 - Here is where the religious leaders continued to miss it and not understand what Jesus was doing.
 - Their attempt to provide guardrails to the holiness of the Mosaic Law resulted in them redefining the Law of God to best fit what they could do.
 - It's like playing your favorite board game with friends.
 - Everybody has a different version of how they play the game based upon where they have played and who they have played with.
 - Once someone has mastered a “new way” of playing the game, they will take their modified version of the game and use it everywhere they go.
 - Why do we do that?
 - Because naturally, in our human nature, we want to excel and seem as though we got it together, however we fail to realize we never were playing with the original rules.
 - I guarantee you with any board game or card games, the original rules of the game have been modified to fit our preferences.
 - And friends, in this same way, the rabbis and religious leaders took the Mosaic Law in all of its holiness and changed up the rules so that they could better fulfill the Law in their own way, resulting in the Rabbinical Law.
 - And what we just read in Galatians is that there was only one who could fulfill the Written Law (Mosaic Law) perfectly and that was God Himself.
 - No matter how great our attempt today or tomorrow at being a “good person” is, it will always fail the standard of holiness.
 - Works are not the means of appeasing God's standard of holiness.
 - Donating to the cause of the poor does not appease God's standard of holiness.
 - Serving in the local church does not appease God's standard of Holiness.
 - Being a good Christian man or woman does not appease God's standard of holiness.
 - God's standard of Holiness is being Holy for God is Holy.
 - Leviticus 20:7 says this:

Leviticus 20:7 You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am

the Lord your God.

- Holiness is found in the Holy One, Jesus Christ.
 - Friends, when we are in Christ we become a new creation.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us:

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

- Christ is the fresh wine and the New Covenant is the new wine skin.
 - And with His new teachings comes new ways of looking at religious practice.
 - If Jesus were to have conformed to the pharisaical Law it would have completely voided the need to fulfill the written Law.
 - It would have, in other words, caused the new wine to be lost.
 - The New way or this new era that was being made known required a new wine skin.
 - This would soon establish what we now know as the New Covenant.
 - This Covenant would be established through the blood of Christ and the impact of His death, burial, and resurrection.
 - What is interesting to note is when we look at Luke's gospel, Luke mentions something a bit different than what Mark's gospel provides in verse 22b.
 - Check out how Luke documents this account in Luke 5:39.

Luke 5:39 And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good enough.'

- This is, in fact, a similar parable from the previous one with a different point.
 - The previous parable dealt with the wineskins, whereas this analogy deals specifically with old wine versus "new wine".
 - To have a proper interpretation of the end of Luke 5:39 where he says 'The old is good enough', we have to understand this parable in context.
 - The earlier parable is dealing with "New wine being poured into new wineskins"
 - That is dealing specifically with the New Way in which God was bringing about His plan of redemption for His people.
 - And now we see that Luke is using this idea of wine again but with a twist.
 - Jesus uses this analogy to specifically target the theology of the Pharisees.
 - In other words, although the way in which Jesus is teaching is new and profound it is ultimately done to fulfill the Written Law (The Torah)
 - Jesus uses this parable to draw the staunch differences between the Written Law and the Oral Law (Rabbinical Law).

- The Written Law is what Jesus came to fulfill, not the Oral Law. The Written Law is what is good and as Luke documents, “The old is good enough”.
 - So, if this is the case, that means that the “new wine” in this particular context is that of the Pharisaical Law (The Oral Law).
 - Here is what Young wrote regarding the Torah having ultimate authority within the Hebrew scriptures:

“Jesus was telling the people something about his purpose. He came to bring renewal and redemption through the power of the Kingdom of heaven. His purpose was not to destroy the significance of the Torah but to fulfill it. The old wine of Torah is best.”

- The Mosaic Law was the only authority that Christ was to fulfill and obey, not the invented rules and regulations of the religious leaders.
 - Israel’s religious leaders had completely abandoned the very words of God as their authority and guide in exchange for their own words
 - It pointed to the reality that they could not keep God’s words and instruction.
 - And that in essence was the point.
 - You need God to make you Holy and righteous, not changing the rules to elevate your perception of your own righteousness.
 - This was the significance of Jesus reclining and eating with the tax collectors and sinners.
 - His compassion towards the sinner was what He had come to show and in showing compassion it would lead men and women to repentance.
 - In Romans 2:4 Paul tells us this:

Romans 2:4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

- The message that Christ came to proclaim and the New Covenant that He would usher in would completely redefine, in the minds of the Jewish people, God’s Word.
 - It would not be this constant need of sacrifice, but it would be found in the very person of Jesus and having our hearts be made completely new.
 - It would be a new heart of faith that would be birthed in those who would come to know Jesus.
 - The old would pass away through Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, all things would be made right and made new.
 - Look at what the writer of Hebrews says in Hebrew 10:10-18.

Hebrews 10:10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Hebrews 10:11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time

the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;
Hebrews 10:12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,
Hebrews 10:13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.
Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.
Hebrews 10:15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,
Hebrews 10:16 “This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord:
 I will put My laws upon their heart,
 And on their mind I will write them,” He then says,
Hebrews 10:17 “And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”
Hebrews 10:18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.

- Jesus came to fulfill what the Father told him to fulfill – the Torah – so that those who come through Him will be able to be made righteous.
 - We are justified by faith in Christ, not by our works.
 - Or what we know, or how good we fast or how often we fast.
 - You are saved by what Christ has done for you.
 - The reality is you and I could never keep the Law – the only one who could perfectly is Jesus Christ Himself.
 - Friends, what Mark’s gospel has shown us thus far is that Jesus and His works will unfold the Kingdom program in a way never seen before.
 - Growing up, Orthodox Jews are taught little about the Torah and instead focus on the Mishnah and the Talmud, deeming those texts to be authoritative.
 - But the Talmud is simply commentary that the rabbis have put together to make hurdles for people.
 - When Jesus talks of Hosea 6:6, His intent for us was not to sacrifice over and over, but rather see Christ as “taking the hit” for us.
 - There is grace in understanding that because we cannot fulfill the Law, we instead lean heavily on the goodness of God.
 - And God shows us how much He loves us in John 3:16.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes shall not perish, but have everlasting life

- ◦ Everlasting life is not found in our righteousness.
- As we draw people to know who Jesus is, don’t point them to you!

- We don't need to put more barricades in the way like the religious leaders of Jesus' day did.
- Point them to Christ.
- The true Gospel of God is that God loved us enough to want to draw near – and the Messiah says “Here I Am”.
 - As we think back on Mark 2, we can ask ourselves the same question that Jesus wanted the Pharisees to see.
 - Will the people abandon business as usual (tradition/customs) and join in the “new thing” that Christ was doing?
 - Or will they continue with life as usual, missing the opportunity to experience the Kingdom because they want what they want?
 - We will witness throughout the Gospel that the religious leaders' desire for their traditions superseded their desire to know the God they claimed to know and love.
 - And so begins their plot against Jesus.
 - Join us next week as we walk through Mark 2:23-28. Let's Pray.

Citations:

- James R. Edwards, [*The Gospel according to Mark*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 89.
- Bock, Jesus According to Scripture, p.115.



Mark - Lesson 2D

Chapter 2:23-28

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- I want to briefly recap the four analogies that Jesus used in our last teaching, as they will bear weight in the building up of His ministry and teachings.
 - Let's take a look at the graphic. Here are some key points.
 - Refer to Slide 2D-1 for explanations.
 - 1. The Wedding Analogy – Messiah has come to bring salvation, but for that to happen it will require Him to be crushed.
 - 2. The Garment Analogy – The teachings of Jesus and that of the Pharisees are opposing teachings and interpretations, and cannot be mixed.
 - 3. The Wineskin Analogy – The new teachings and new era Jesus brings requires a New Covenant (This covenant will be of a perfect blood sacrifice.)
 - 4. The Old Wine Analogy – The Torah points us to Jesus whereas the Pharisaic law points us to failed attempts of righteousness.
 - Tonight, we are going to see this continual unfolding of the Kingdom program.
 - More specifically, we are going to witness Jesus reaffirm for the religious leaders that He holds the authority and that His Kingdom program exceeds the rabbinical instructions and interpretation.
 - The tag for tonight's teaching is simple – Jesus: Lord of the Sabbath.
 - Pick me up in Mark 2:23-28

Mark 2:23 And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain.

Mark 2:24 The Pharisees were saying to Him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”

Mark 2:25 And He *said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry;

Mark 2:26 how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?”

Mark 2:27 Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

Mark 2:28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

- Let's Pray
- Dr. Sinclair Ferguson in his book: “The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism, and Gospel Assurance – Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters” (pg.94), said this regarding legalism:

“It's commonplace to say that one can have a legalistic head and a legalistic heart. But it's all too possible to have an evangelistic head and a legalistic heart”

- Legalism is the very thing that diminishes the graciousness and mercy of God.

- He exalts the attempts of strained righteousness and diminishes the perfect authoritative work of Jesus.
 - We must come to grips with the reality that legalism is costly whereas God's gift of grace is free.
 - It does not diminish His Power or authority. If anything it exalts Him all the more.
- Tonight, we will see Jesus address the legalistic criticism of the Pharisees as He addresses their failure of perfect righteousness.
 - Let's begin by starting at verse 23 together.

Mark 2:23 And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain.

Mark 2:24 The Pharisees were saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

- The scene has now switched from being at Matthew's home to Jesus and His disciples, now on the move.
 - The text mentions that they were passing through the grainfields.
 - But notice when this is happening. It's happening on the Sabbath.
 - This detail becomes important for us to know because it gives way to understanding, yet again, the Pharisees' dilemma with Jesus and His disciples.
 - The Pharisees see the disciples picking heads of grain.
 - Verse 24 mentions that the Pharisees posed a question to Jesus regarding the disciples' activities in the field.
 - Here was their question: "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"
 - Now, if we simply look at Mark's account in isolation we can surmise, based upon a general understanding of Pharisaical law that there was a problem here.
 - At first glance, we can see a few issues that the Pharisees could possibly have had: For instance:
 - 1. The disciples are passing "through" grain fields on the Sabbath.
 - 2. The disciples are "picking" grains on the Sabbath.
 - Why do I mention these 2 instances?
 - I bring this to our attention because as we have witnessed between Jesus and the Pharisees, there are differences in interpretation of the Law.
 - We will come back to these two observations momentarily so let's put a pin here.
 - As we learned last week, Jesus is focused on the Torah, most importantly the "heart of the Torah": what is God truly instructing and showing us?
 - Whereas, the religious leaders are focused on creating more hurdles and obstacles in an attempt to explain what the Law is saying.

- But at the heart of the issue is, who truly has the authority to rightly and perfectly interpret the scriptures?
- So, what we see at the onset from the last two teachings is that these issues are interconnected. We have two things to consider in today's teaching:
 - 1. What is the purpose of the Law (The Torah)? / Who determines, ultimately, what is lawful vs. what is unlawful (Pharisees or Jesus/ man or God)?
 - 2. What is the purpose of the Sabbath?
- Tonight, we will address these 2 questions in detail as this will be how we will understand Jesus' response from verses 23 to Chapter 3, verses 1-12.
 - Let's begin with the first question: What is the purpose of the Law?
- In one short statement, "The purpose of the Torah is educative, as it teaches man truth about God."
- The Mosaic Law (613 commandments) outlined what was permissible and what was not for God's people.
 - So, when we see the Pharisees ask Jesus the question regarding what, in their minds, seemed unlawful, we need to know what the Law truly said.
- In order for us to do that we need to go to Deuteronomy 23:25 to see what the Law stated regarding picking the head of grain
 - Was this lawful or not? Let's go to the text and see.

Deuteronomy 23:25 "When you enter your neighbor's standing grain, then you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not wield a sickle in your neighbor's standing grain."

- The text makes it clear that no law is being broken regarding the activities of the disciples picking heads of grain.
 - The only exception that the Law makes is that the individual does not wield a sickle in their neighbor's standing grain.
 - To best explain this, it would help to know what a sickle is.
 - A sickle is a short-handled farming tool with a semicircular blade used for cutting grain.
 - So if an individual is hungry, they can take an appropriate hand size for their portion, but don't get greedy and cut the owner's share (snacking portion).
 - The heart of the Law here is really to not be greedy and to only take what is allowed and not to overdo it.
 - This is the Law that Jesus is referring to. This is why it is permissible.
 - Luke's account gives us the reality that Jesus' disciples are hungry and wanted a snack to eat. Pay attention to the details. Check out Luke 6:1.

Luke 6:1 Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain.

- So if Jesus has deemed their need to eat permissible, then why do the Pharisees have such consternation with the disciples' activity at the moment?
 - The answer is found in the second part of the first question and the second question in its entirety regarding the Sabbath.
 - The Pharisees' issue has nothing to do with them being hungry, it has all to do with their man-made regulations and rules placed upon the Sabbath.
 - To understand the depths of the Pharisees' problem, let's first understand what the Sabbath is and what it means.
 - The Sabbath is a day of rest and worship at the end of the seven-day week cycle, lasting from Friday evening until Saturday evening.
 - The major concept of the Sabbath in Judaism is that of the *menuchah* which is the Hebrew word for rest or resting place.
 - We first see the Sabbath mentioned in Genesis 2:2-3. Check out the text.

Genesis 2:2 By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

Genesis 2:3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

- - The word for rested here in Genesis is the Hebrew word *shabbott*. It literally means to cease, stop, or come to an end.
 - God did not rest because He was tired, he simply stopped His work for that time.
 - So the emphasis on the Sabbath is to rest and cease from work.
 - Herein lies the issue that the Pharisees focused explicitly on.
 - They dismiss what Jesus is allowing for the sake of their rules and regulations they set up according to their Mishnaic Sabbath rules of their day.
 - The rabbis came up with nearly 1,500 different rules and regulations concerning the Sabbath derived from the Hebrew scriptures, completely out of context.
 - And they eventually divided them into 39 areas of prohibited work.
 - Due to time, I want us to look at Luke's account again and compare it to that of the 39 acts of labor derived from these man-made rules.
 - Let's see what we find.

Luke 6:1 Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain.

- We are going to focus on the following 4 terms:
 - Passing through some grainfields
 - Picking the heads of grain
 - Rubbing them in their hands

- Eating the grain
- The Pharisees questioned Jesus and His disciples because according to Pharisaical Law they were involved in the following “work” on a Sabbath:
 - Reaping
 - Threshing
 - Winnowing
 - Storing
- Here’s an example of how trivial the Pharisees were regarding human necessity versus rigidity in trying to uphold the law. Here is a brief breakdown from one scholar:
 - When the disciples took the wheat off the stalk, they were guilty of reaping on the Sabbath.
 - When they rubbed the wheat in their hands in order to separate the chaff, they were guilty of threshing on the Sabbath.
 - When they blew into their hands to blow the chaff away, they were guilty of winnowing on the Sabbath.
 - And when they swallowed the wheat, they were guilty of storing the wheat on the Sabbath.
- In the words of Holdcroft from his book “The Four Gospels”, the disciples had:

“four distinct breaches of the Sabbath in one mouthful”

- Check out this description from the Talmud regarding the rabbinical explanation of how even walking in the grass on the Sabbath was costly:

“If someone asked such a rabbi, “What is wrong with walking on the grass on the Sabbath day,” his answer would be, “Nothing. It is permissible to walk on the grass on the Sabbath day.” However, there is a problem. What looks only like a grassy field might have one stalk of wheat growing wild in it. A person walking through the field of grass might inadvertently step on that one stalk of wheat, separate the wheat from its stalk, and become guilty of reaping on the Sabbath day. Furthermore, if his foot came down and twisted the wheat just enough to separate the wheat from the chaff, he would be guilty of threshing on the Sabbath day. If he continued to walk, the outer hem of his garment might cause just enough breeze to blow the chaff away, and he would be guilty of winnowing on the Sabbath day. Finally, once the person had gone, a bird or rodent might see the exposed piece of wheat and swallow it, causing him to be guilty of storing the wheat on the Sabbath day.”

- These rabbinical rules became a “creation of barriers” in an effort to demonstrate righteousness for the sake of being religious.
 - This is why Jesus took issue with them and had to correct them on several occasions.
 - What they were doing now with Jesus’ disciples wasn’t any different than

before.

- Prior to this, the Pharisees created a barrier at Peter's home when the paralytic was being carried by four men to be healed.
 - And the Pharisees asked Jesus' disciples, at Matthew's house, about why they weren't fasting while boasting about their own fasting.
- For the Pharisees, it became more about keeping rules for the sake of looking righteous rather than truly seeking the only One who is righteous and makes us righteous.
 - As believers, we find ourselves in this awkward pendulum swing between legalism and a true relationship with Jesus.
 - We have a tendency to be the "keepers of the gate" in that sense where our words and actions serve as a hindrance to others simply trying to get to Jesus.
 - Understand that this, in no way, condones means of sin or freedom to sin. (See Romans 6:15)
- Our lives should point people to Christ and serve as a means to cause jealousy to the Jew and the Gentile that they may know the Father.
 - Check out how Jesus responds to the Pharisees' remarks.

Mark 2:25 And He *said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry;

Mark 2:26 how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?"

- Notice Jesus' question. He is once again using their rabbinical logic, the *kal v'chomer* (light to heavy).
 - He answers their question with a question.
 - So this means that some type of example is going to be given so that they may draw the proper conclusion on the matter.
 - You have to love Jesus' response because this question He throws back at them is dripping with sarcasm to say the least. "Have you 'never read'".
 - Remember, that the Pharisees and their scribes were committed to reading the scriptures which consisted of the Hebrew Bible.
 - However, as I mentioned last week, toward the end of our time, the traditional teaching of Jewish students has less time in the Torah and more time in the Mishnah and the Talmud.
 - So, Jesus' response is to have them go back to the scriptures (the Torah) and re-read what they have overlooked.
- Jesus recalls, from the Hebrew scriptures, David and a particular instance where he and his companions were in need of food because they were hungry.
 - Check out verse 26 again:

Mark 2:25 ... "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he

and his companions became hungry;

Mark 2:26 how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?”

- Jesus’ example in verse 26 consists of a rather interesting setup.
 - He references a story recorded in 1 Samuel 21.
 - Due to time, I’m going to give us an overview of 1 Samuel 21:1-6.
- David has recently been anointed by the prophet Samuel as the next King, but there is a bit of a dilemma.
 - King Saul is trying to kill David to prevent him from taking the throne.
 - At this point David is captain of Saul’s army.
 - David arrives at the tabernacle with some of his men.
 - Ahimelech is fearful because he is aware of the upheaval that is happening between David and Saul.
 - So David’s presence takes him by surprise.
 - To disarm Ahimelech, David lies and tells the priest that “the king” sent him on a mission for the supplies.
 - David, being in need of food and refuge for rest in the midst of his escape, asks the priest for what he has on hand.
 - The priest lets David know the only thing that was available was consecrated bread (showbread). No ordinary bread was available.
 - The bread of presence (consecrated bread) was set out by the priest once a week for the Sabbath, which means the bread was made on Friday.
 - And it remained in its location until it was replaced or eaten.
 - The most important thing to note is the consecrated bread was reserved only for the priest according to Leviticus 24:5-9.
 - However, the only stipulation the priest gives regarding the bread of presence was that the men be ritually clean – not having engaged in sexual activity while in war.
 - David reassures the priest that he and his men are holy.
 - After the priest was informed that David and his men were ritually/ceremonially clean, he gave David the bread.
 - Here is where we need to lean into the text – the Law did not permit others outside of the priesthood to eat the showbread.
 - And this is the point that Jesus makes using this story, but more than that Jesus is looking to the Pharisees as if to say, “Where was your judgement towards David?”
 - Matthew’s account takes it a step further regarding how the Law was disobeyed, not only by David, in whom they highly esteemed, but also the priest themselves.
 - Check out Matthew 12:5

Matthew 12:5 Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?

- ○ Here are two instances where Jesus calls out the Pharisees on their hypocritical preferences.
 - In the minds of the Pharisees, there was more emphasis on the ceremonial aspect of keeping the Law than the true intent of the Law.
- This is Jesus' point: According to the Law, David broke the Law, but yet David was not condemned nor was the priest, rather God showed mercy towards David's need.
 - This brings about a huge internal dilemma for the religious leaders.
- The Pharisees' understanding and interpretation of the purpose of the Sabbath was completely missed.
- D.A Carson in his book, "Jesus and the Sabbath in the Synoptic Gospels" says this:

“Jesus is not suggesting that every individual is free to use or abuse the Sabbath as he sees fit, but that Sabbath observance in the Old Testament was a beneficial privilege, not a mere legal point—an end in itself, as the Pharisees seemed to think.”

- Jesus uses this situation to draw some parallels to point to the bigger picture. For example:
 - 1) Both Jesus' disciples and David's men have a physical need – both groups have a physical need.
 - 2) Notice who the individuals are that provide the need for their respective groups – both King Jesus and the newly anointed King David.
 - 3) Jesus referencing David (the precursor of Messiah) in this sense is one of several references to Jesus' Messianic role as King.
 - 4) But most importantly it leads us to see that Jesus holds the highest authority above all, even on the Sabbath, because He is Lord.
 - I find it interesting that within Matthew's gospel, he uses the same scriptural reference from Hosea 6:6 in Matthew 12:7.

Matthew 12:7 But if you had known what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent.

- The word “known” here in the Greek is *ginosko*. It means to perceive or to distinguish in a sense of familiarity.
 - Simply put, the Pharisees could not see that God demonstrating mercy all along was always the picture that was pointing to the Son.
 - The purpose was never to have a consistent need for sacrifices, because the reality was, without God, there would forever need to be continual sacrificing.
 - That was not the heart of the Law. The heart of the Law was to point the

people to the One who is able to cleanse us all from dead works.

- As Carson stated, “Human need is a higher law than human ritual”
 - Hebrews 9:13-14 says it this way.

Hebrews 9:13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh,

Hebrews 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

- If our measure of righteousness was always based upon what we do and how good we think we are, we would lose sight of why Christ came to die.
 - The implications of the rules and laws point us to the Law giver, Himself.
 - Jesus is the Only Begotten in whom we are to live through and because Jesus got it right, by Him being our substitute we are being made right.
 - By Jesus perfectly obeying and loving the Father to the nth degree, He was able to love us perfectly and fulfill the law.
 - This is why when the lawyer asked Jesus what the greatest, most important commandment was, Jesus responded this way in Matthew 22:37-40:

Matthew 22:37 And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

Matthew 22:38 This is the great and foremost commandment.

Matthew 22:39 The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

Matthew 22:40 On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

- How we love God is reflective in how we love, treat, and care for those who are around us (Service for the sake of the Savior). This is the heart of the Law!
 - Friends, where do we see this patterned exceptionally well? In the very person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - This pattern of love has been made visibly known through the incarnation of Jesus into this world, that we may behold the very Glory of God in all of His goodness and mercy (John 3:16).
 - Jesus sums up this conversation with the Pharisees. Check out verses 27 and 28.

Mark 2:27 Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

Mark 2:28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

- Jesus provides the religious leaders with this conclusory statement regarding the true purpose of the Sabbath.

- He states that “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for sabbath.”
 - In other words, the rules were not God’s point, it was for the heart to be positioned in the right posture to receive the right person.
- The Sabbath was created to be a blessing, not a burden.
- The Sabbath was to be what the consecrated bread was for David and his companions – a blessing because the Lord provided.
 - However, it became a burden with time as men and their rules became more authoritative and prominent over the very Creator God Himself and His words.
- The point of the Sabbath being made for man speaks to the reality that God has made all provisions, rest, security, etc. through Him.
 - Check out one way in which the Sabbath pointed God’s people back to Him. Check out Deuteronomy 5:14-15:

Deuteronomy 5:14 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.

Deuteronomy 5:15 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day.

- If you notice in verse 15 alone, the wording is very direct and pointing to a person who is solely responsible for the thriving and success of the Israelites.
 - Who does Moses record as being the provider for God’s people?
 - God Himself. And, God uses Moses to meet the needs of the people.
 - Moses is a picture of The Father who, at His appointed time, would provide the ultimate deliverer: Messiah Himself (Christ).
 - It is Jesus who is our Sabbath rest.
 - The author of Hebrews gives us a picture of Christ as our Sabbath rest:

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 4:16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- The only way in which one may enter this rest from works and regulations is if they are in Christ.

- The only way in which we can be justified and made right before our Holy God is if God Himself makes us Holy.
- The burden of the Sabbath came about through the means of men's attempts at their own righteous deeds versus relying and depending upon God.
 - The objective of sabbath is not to necessarily cease from your manual labor, but rather to cease from our need to strive in our own strength.
- For example, Saturdays for my family and I are so enjoyable because as we spend time with one another, it feels like time has stopped in a way.
 - It almost feels as though there is more time to spend with one another.
- In the same way, the Sabbath rest points to a greater time in which we will be with Jesus in His Kingdom where there will be no end of His reign and power.
 - God doesn't need our striving, advice, or suggestions, or personal perceived righteousness. He simply wants our obedience and dependence to Him.
- In Christ, we are able to exchange our burdens for His divine blessing.
 - However, the only way in which one can receive this blessing of eternal rest in Christ and freedom from the wrath of God is through and by repentance and forgiveness of sins.
- What was Jesus letting the Pharisees know in short words: Your striving will never suffice.
 - Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30 says it this way:

Matthew 11:28 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

- Jesus ends in verse 28 stating the following words:

Mark 2:28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

- This statement is yet again a mic drop moment in Jesus' ministry because He uses the term, “Son of Man”.
 - This term “the Son of Man” is interesting, most intriguing is the definite article (the) in front of the phrase. It distinguishes itself from simply saying “Son of Man”.
 - “Son of Man” within Ezekiel refers to a human or man, however when we see Son of Man in Daniel 7:14 it speaks to a unique vocation as the Son of Man with divine authority and power – Jesus Christ the God-man.
 - We can further see this understanding of the Son of Man solidify because right after it is the word “Lord”.
 - The Greek word for Lord here is *Kyrios*. It means one who is in charge by virtue of possession. They are the Owner.

- So what better way to deem your authority over the Sabbath than by letting the Pharisees know that the reason the sabbath is made for man is because I (God) made it to be so. (Genesis 2:2-3)
 - Jesus' very words, dominion, and authority transcends time itself and establishes the true understanding and instruction of the Law (*Halakah*).
 - Jesus establishing His authority in this way confirms what we discussed last week regarding this "New Era" this New Covenant.
- This is where we evidently see Jesus' use of the "lesser to greater".
 - If the Pharisees could violate a divine prerogative, then Jesus could most definitely violate their man-made prerogatives. He is God!
- Not only is Jesus the servant of God that meets the needs of His people, but He is the Savior and King who will usher in a new way that was always promised.
 - Jeremiah 31:1-4 speaks to what God was unfolding through time all along. Check out the text:

Jeremiah 31:31 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, **Jeremiah 31:32** not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. **Jeremiah 31:33** For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. **Jeremiah 31:34** And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

- Indeed a greater day was coming where the Law of Christ would soon be written upon the hearts of the Father's children.
 - From the beginning (Genesis 1:1-2), this was designed.
 - This New Era, this new way, this new wine, this new wine skin, would be what the Hebrew scriptures had always pointed to: Culmination (Fulfillment) in Christ
 - As we move into Chapter 3 of Mark, we will see that Jesus' assertion of authority, even over the Sabbath will begin the plot to end His very life.
 - I pray you join us next week as we explore Mark 3:1-6.
 - Let's Pray

Citations:

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Mark - Lesson 3A

Chapter 3:1-6

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- Tonight, we have a continuation from last week’s teaching regarding the heart of the Sabbath and its true meaning.
 - We discussed last week that the goal of the Law (Mosaic Law) was to point us to the very person of Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus made it evidently clear towards the end of our teaching last week that He is “Lord of the Sabbath”
 - If you recall, the focus of the Sabbath was to enjoy God and His provisions as the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.
 - The religious leaders are fixated on the idea that their Rabbinical instructions and religiosity are the golden standard of God’s Law.
 - They are more concerned about being religious and righteous rather than demonstrating true compassion and care towards others in need.
 - We saw in Jesus’ reference to Hosea 6:6 in Matthew’s Gospel that “God desires mercy rather than sacrifice.”
 - Meaning that the goal was never to develop dependence on constantly sacrificing.
 - For as we read in Hebrews, the offering of the blood of bulls and animals could never satisfy the wrath of God and His righteous judgment.
 - The only thing that would satisfy God’s wrath was Jesus Christ dying, once for all, for the sins of the people (The Elect).
 - Jesus’ point in restating the authority of the Mosaic Law is the fact that the Father always had provision for the sins of His people.
 - And that provision is solely found in Christ alone, by faith alone, in grace alone, to the Glory of God alone, not by human striving and works.
 - It’s not based upon the works of religious men and their perceived goodness. It is based upon the righteous works of a Holy God in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - And tonight, Jesus’ point will be reiterated, only this time it will reveal the path in which the Son would willingly walk to His death to provide salvation for those who would believe.
 - Turn with me to Mark 3:1-6 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Mark 3:1 He entered a synagogue again; and a man was there whose hand was withered.

Mark 3:2 And they were watching Him closely to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

Mark 3:3 He *said to the man with the withered hand, “Get up and come forward!”

Mark 3:4 And He *said to them, “Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?” But they kept silent.

Mark 3:5 After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He *said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Mark 3:6 The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with

the Herodians against Him, as to how they might put Him to death.

- Let's Pray
- One of my favorite shows to stream on Netflix is Criminal Minds.
 - It is a show about several FBI BAU (Behavior Analysis Unit) agents who are sent around the country to solve criminal cases of the highest degree.
 - The reason why I enjoy this show is because of the methodology that the BAU agents implement in an effort to find the perpetrator and save the victims.
 - What is most impressive, however, is the interrogation period. This is where they begin to question the suspects to get a confession.
 - It is in these scenes where you can witness the intense pressure that is applied to the perpetrator.
 - Pressure will always reveal the true intentions of the heart.
 - What is hidden, concealed, or painted as one thing, over time, will reveal the hidden truth.
 - We find Jesus tonight, applying Holy pressure to the dead religious and pious Pharisees as they seek to trap Jesus in the synagogue.
 - What they think to be a game of checkers, is simply a game of chess to Jesus.
 - And the evidence of their wickedness is found in their actions and rooted in their hearts.
 - Jesus will see their failed attempt at trapping Him as an opportunity to unveil the reality of their broken and false religion guided by a hardened, wicked, and dead heart.
 - Pick me up at Mark 3:1-2 as we see this scene unfold.

Mark 3:1 He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered.

Mark 3:2 They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.

- Mark continues within his account by mentioning that Jesus entered a synagogue on the Sabbath. Luke's account tells us that Jesus was teaching in the synagogue.
 - And while there, "They" were watching Him to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath so that "they might accuse Him"
 - It becomes clear at this point of the text, especially after last week's teaching, who "They" are.
 - At this point, the Pharisees and religious leaders are gathered in the synagogue watching to see if Jesus would heal the man with the withered hand.
 - But notice their reasoning: They want to see if Jesus would attempt to heal him on the Sabbath.
 - They are waiting and watching to bring about accusations of Jesus healing on the Sabbath.

- We will look at the original language regarding this word “watching” later tonight.
- But before we move too quickly, check out what the text says at the beginning of verse 1 of Mark 3.
 - Mark states that “He entered again into a synagogue...”
- Remember that every detail that scripture contains is there for a particular reason.
 - So, to rush over the word “again” here wouldn’t be beneficial to our understanding of the text.
- The question here that we should be asking is “Where was Jesus at in the synagogue on the Sabbath before, regarding matters of healing on the Sabbath?”
 - This would give us critical insight into the disposition of the religious leaders and their seemingly scrupulous demeanor.
- The original language used in verse 2 brings to light a very familiar issue that the Pharisees and religious leaders have with Jesus.
 - The wording that Mark uses in verse 2 regarding how the Pharisees are observing Jesus is that “They were watching Him”.
- The word for watching, here in the Greek, is *paratereo* (pa-ra-te-reo). It means to lie in wait for or to observe scrupulously.
 - The way in which the Pharisees were watching Jesus at this moment with a man with a withered hand before him was quite telling.
- The imagery here for lying and waiting is that of a predator carefully observing a prey to find the “moment of opportunity” to pounce and attack.
 - This is what the Pharisees were doing waiting for the perfect “Ah ha...We Gotcha” moment.
- The scene has been perfectly set in the center of the synagogue on the Sabbath while Jesus is teaching and here, in the crowd, is a man with a withered hand (dried up/paralyzed).
 - Imagine the scene, Jesus is coming into the synagogue.
 - The man with the withered hand is sitting down, next to or around by the religious leaders in the area.
 - The religious leaders are panning the synagogue knowing that Jesus frequents the synagogue on the Sabbath.
- The moment has finally arrived where the Pharisees see Jesus and they lock eyes on Him.
 - And as Jesus is teaching, He sees the man with the withered hand. Jesus sees a need!
- The Pharisees now lean in because this scene is a rather familiar scene.
 - There has been an instance before where Jesus entered a synagogue on the Sabbath and was faced with someone who was paralyzed on the Sabbath.
- If you remember, I mentioned last week about John 5.
 - That was the previous encounter where the Pharisees were up in arms about Jesus healing on the Sabbath.

- It would be in Jerusalem around one of the pilgrimage feasts that Jesus goes into the synagogue and sees a man that has been paralyzed for 38 years.
 - Typically, when Jews talk about a feast without the mention of its name, they are referring to the Feast of Passover, the most important feast on their calendar.
- It is there that Jesus will ask this man “Do you want to be healed?”
 - The man responds with uncertainty and excuses because for so long he wasn’t able to get to this “pool” where he was told he could be healed.
 - The hopelessness of being healed because of the deception of powerless religion had overtaken him for 38 years.
- So, Jesus tells Him to “Get up, take up his mat and walk”
 - It is at that moment that the man was healed.
 - However, who do you think took issue with this Sabbath healing? None other than the Pharisees.
 - Check out the Pharisees’ response in John 5:15-17.

John 5:15 The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

John 5:16 For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

John 5:17 But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”

- So we can surmise that Jesus’ return to the Galilee would be faced with issues regarding His disregard for the Pharisaical approach to the Sabbath.
 - The religious leaders had their set of rules and interpretation whereas Jesus had His own as the very “Lord of the Sabbath”.
 - Jesus is the *Kyrios*, the Owner and Lord of the Sabbath.
 - He is and holds the authority by which things are done for His good pleasure and Glory!
 - In one instance our previous teachings dealt with this growing frustration and consternation of the religious leaders regarding the Sabbath.
 - And at this point the Pharisees and Jesus have become quite familiar with one another to say the least.
 - However, their staunch differences have proven to be unrelenting at best.
 - The Pharisees want Jesus to conform to their rabbinical teaching and instructions regarding the Sabbath.
 - Whereas Jesus wants the religious leaders to recognize the authority of God’s words demonstrated through the authority of the Son.
 - And relinquish their failed attempts at righteousness, to repent, and turn to their Messiah who is right before them (Jesus Christ).
 - And thirdly to realize that He as Messiah is the Sabbath rest.

- Yet what we have witnessed time and again from the religious leaders is this unwillingness to repent and turn to truth.
 - So here is where we now see the religious leaders waiting for yet another opportunity to discredit and accuse Jesus for the sake of being right in their own eyes.
- One thing that we can witness from just these 2 verses alone is the dangers that pride causes within the lives of human beings.
 - The boastful pride of life is clearly evident within the lives of the religious leaders and yet they can not see it.
- I caution us as believers to remain humbly submitted to the Lord in all of our ways as well because pride can easily beset us all if not yielded to the Spirit.
- As I mentioned in our opening last week, we can know a lot about God intellectually yet fail at knowing Him intimately.
 - Knowing Jesus relationally and serving Him customarily are two completely different things.
 - It's like the individuals that say, "I don't go to church but I'm spiritual!"
- The Pharisees, if anything, teach us that familiarity with God intellectually, means nothing if God does not know you relationally.
 - The actions and the disposition of the religious leaders consistently show us throughout the Gospel narrative that they are spiritually bankrupt.
- So where Jesus is seeking to demonstrate the love and the mercy of God in action and deed, the Pharisees are demonstrating, externally, the rigidity and wickedness of the hearts of men.
 - Check out how Jesus responds to this scene set in the synagogue.

Mark 3:3 He *said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!"

Mark 3:4 And He *said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent.

- Jesus gives an imperative to the man with the withered hand, like what He did with the paralyzed man at the pool in the synagogue on the Feast of Passover.
 - It is here that we see Jesus engage "the bait" that the Pharisees have before the crowd as they anxiously anticipate Jesus' response.
 - Notice Jesus' response here: He knows the hearts of these men. It is an attempt to trap Him.
 - However, the religious leaders' sense of trickery is really Jesus' opportunity to demonstrate His authority and power despite the opposition.
 - So as you can imagine, amongst everyone in the synagogue, Jesus tells the man with the withered hand to "Get up and come forward"
 - The Greek word for "Get up" is *egeiro* which means to rise, get up.
 - And the Greek word for "come forward" is *mesos* which means in the midst or in between.

- So if we were to piece together these two Greek words, it would literally read, “Rise up from amongst the midst of the people.”
 - The Greek structure of this phrase provides the reader with the understanding that this man would be the object of the demonstration.
 - But more specifically that Jesus’ power would be acting upon the object of demonstration to display His power and authority over the situation.
- In other words, what Jesus is doing, in essence, is saying “Watch Me Work!”
 - For Jesus this was not a “Cat’s got mouse” type of trapping as if you were watching Tom and Jerry, the cartoon.
 - Again, Jesus is aware of the Pharisees motives and through this demonstration, He will let them know that their misguided understanding of the Sabbath is atrocious.
- And it will be in verse 4 that we witness the start of Jesus’ demonstration.
 - Do you see how He begins the demonstration? He begins with a question.
- Jesus asks this question: “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?”
 - Understand that what seems to be one question, in structure, is actually two questions.
- These are the two questions in place:
 - 1. Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath?
 - 2. Is it lawful to save a life or to kill?
- Again, this line of questioning should be familiar from our previous teachings. Jesus is using the *Kal v’ Chomer*.
 - Again, Jesus is able to read the minds of the religious leaders, so He knows what they are thinking. (Luke 6:8)
 - As they are trying to catch Jesus in an act of healing on the Sabbath to accuse Him of breaking the Sabbath which was not breaking Sabbath at all according to Mosaic Law.
- The question that comes to the forefront that may be pulsating through the religious leaders’ minds is: “By who’s authority is Jesus under to heal on the Sabbath.”
- This connects right back to the question from our previous teachings – Who’s interpretation of the Law is authoritative and binding – Man’s or God’s?
 - The religious leaders are frustrated with the fact that Jesus is not falling in line with Rabbinical Law as it pertains to healing on the Sabbath.
 - For example, according to Mishnaic Law, first aid was deemed permissible to prevent an injury from worsening, but efforts toward a cure were regarded as work and must wait the passing of the Sabbath
 - However, watch what Rabbinical Law says about a “withered hand” in the same scenario.
 - The Mishna states “A withered hand was obviously not life-threatening and did not qualify as an exception to the Sabbath rules.” Indeed, “they may not straighten a deformed body or set a broken limb [on the

Sabbath]” ([m. Shab. 22:6](#)).

- So what are the implications here from the previous question that we surmised from the Pharisees?
- Better yet, what is the aim of Jesus’ questions from verse 4?
- Jesus asking them these two separate questions is linked to one specific thing: Is the purpose of the Sabbath to do good (benefit) or to do harm (injure)?
 - To bring a bit more clarity to this question, Matthew’s gospel provides Jesus’ line of questioning with more of a pointed focus.
- It brings us to the heart of the issue. Check out Matthew 12:11-12.

Matthew 12:11 And He said to them, “What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?

Matthew 12:12 How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

- Verse 12 of Matthew Chapter 12 brings us to the heart of the issue for Jesus regarding the Sabbath.
 - It deals with doing good and showing mercy to your neighbor by doing the right thing.
 - As Jesus alluded to referencing Hosea 6:6; ‘mercy’ takes precedence over ‘sacrifice’
 - If humanity was created in the image of God, how much more is God’s desire to demonstrate mercy and compassion towards His creation through means of grace.
 - As Edwards states in his commentary of the Gospel of Luke:

“A Litmus test of true versus false religion is its response to injustice.”

- ○ Jesus’ use of illustrations was purposeful because it illuminates the intent of what it means to truly know God, love God, and love your neighbor.
- We can’t just pick and choose who we want our neighbors to be or how we want to love others, but we must love others as a testament of the love shown to us.
 - James 4:17 says this:

James 4:17 So for one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, for him it is sin.

- ○ The discussion that is raised here is what is deemed legal and most humane in the sense of what is morally correct? (What is right)
 - Micah 6:8 tells us this way:

Micah 6:8 He has told you, mortal one, what is good;
 And what does the Lord require of you
 But to do justice, to love kindness,
 And to walk humbly with your God?

- ○ It is after Jesus puts the religious leaders on alert that the Pharisees responded in silence (admitting their guilt) yet without concern.
 - Check out verse 5 and let's read Jesus' response to their silence.

Mark 3:5 After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He **said to the man, "Stretch out your hand."* And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

- Mark tells us that Jesus became angry at the Pharisees for their "hardness of heart".
 - The question here becomes, what has brought about this anger?
 - We see that the anger comes right after Jesus is "looking around" at the religious leaders.
 - The word for "looking" here in the Greek is *periblepo*. It means to see clearly or to look intently.
 - This looking is not simply gazing as with no purpose, but rather Jesus was looking for a proper response from the people.
 - It becomes clear from Jesus' emotional response, that there was no response that indicated brokenness from the Pharisees.
 - This is what draws about the anger of Christ.
 - Now, I want us to understand the source of the anger that Jesus is feeling here.
 - This word anger in the Greek is *orge* which means wrath or anger.
 - And wrath is the punitive outworking of God's righteous indignation at sin.
 - So understand that this anger was not brought about because of a "one and done" incident. No, this anger has progressed over a period of time.
 - As a matter of fact, we can chronologically track this built-up wrath from the Hebrew scriptures to this point. This is righteous indignation!
 - This issue of historical hardened hearts and complete disregard for doing right by our neighbor and honoring God is not new.
 - This is why Jesus is so angry; He continues to see the state of humanity in regards to sin and its continuing corruption of creation.
 - Although the condition of the Pharisees' lack of compassion for what is right angered Jesus, notice that at the same time, His heart grieves for them (He's saddened).
 - The calloused hearts of the Pharisees was a result of unrepentant sin and an unwillingness to relinquish their preferences.
 - Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:18 this about hardened hearts:

Ephesians 4:18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

- How in the world could men that were so knowledgeable about God be so far away from Him?
 - This brings about an important point within the text.
 - Loving God is not an intellectual exercise, it is a participatory experiential journey.
 - It is one that God draws you to as you engage relationally with the God of heaven and earth.
 - Ultimately, our Love for God is visibly demonstrated in how we truly love our neighbors.
 - We see Christ demonstrate His Love for the Father by giving His life for us. Love always finds the need and meets it.
 - And we see Jesus doing just that here before the religious leaders and others gathered to witness a demonstration of Jesus' power and authority.
 - Check out the last half of verse 5.
 - Mark says that Jesus told the man to stretch out his hand.
 - And in complete obedience to Jesus, the man responds by stretching out his hand and the text tells us "his hand was restored".
 - You must truly appreciate the wording of Mark's gospel here because, remember, this issue of healing has to do with "working on the Sabbath".
 - Notice what the text says: Jesus heals the man's withered hand without even touching the man.
 - Jesus simply speaks and what was once dried up and frail is now made completely whole.
 - What great power and authority is this that Jesus has demonstrated before the people? It is in fact the very Power of God!
 - Not only has Jesus declared that He is Lord of the Sabbath, but by simply speaking, He exhibits the very authority as the agent of creation!
 - One can only imagine that the Pharisees' disposition moved from silent sarcasm to frustration and outrage.
 - This demonstration of Jesus in the synagogue was not just a mere demonstration of healing, but rather a demonstration of divine authority.
 - If this wasn't a white glove slap in the face moment, I don't know what is!
 - The Pharisees' calloused hearts could not see past their own self-righteousness that they missed, once again, their Messiah.
 - It would be these unresponsive hearts that would eventually lead to Israel, nationally, rejecting their Messiah which opens the doors for the Gentiles.
 - Jesus was becoming more and more of a threat to the religious leaders because of His rejection of Rabbinical Law claiming to be authoritative.
 - And what is even more interesting is just how frustrated the Pharisees

became. Check out verse 6 in the text.

Mark 3:6 The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

- Mark tells us here that the Pharisees immediately began to plot how to destroy Jesus with a political group of Jews, known as the Herodians.
 - Now at first glance, one would assume that the Pharisees were simply connecting with another group of people to succeed in the fall of Christ.
 - However, in order to get a fuller picture of what's really happening here, we need to understand who the Herodians were.
 - The Herodians were a Jewish political party that sympathized with the rulers of the Herodian dynasty.
 - “The reign of the Herodian rulers extended from the first century bc through the first century.” ad.
 - The political associations of the Herodians is directly linked to Herod Antipas, the one in whom would be the cause of John the Baptist's death.
 - So on one hand we have the Pharisees who are wholly committed to their pharisaical teachings and interpretation of the Law.
 - And their primary aim is to maintain their authority as “gatekeepers” and authoritarians of Judaism.
 - And on the other hand, we have the Herodians who are solely focused on their political interest and Roman oversight over the Jewish people.
 - If you aren't scratching your head by now, something is seriously wrong.
 - These two groups have absolutely nothing in common regarding shared interest or aspirations.
 - However, the only thing that seems to be of common value to both parties is the fact that they are threatened by the very presence of Jesus and His authority and fame.
 - This issue of Jesus' fame and notoriety as a man of authority becomes so pressing that in Mark 6 we will see Herod Antipas struggling with the idea of killing John the Baptist for fear of losing credibility.
 - Friends, what we have here is two opposing teams, teaming up for the sake of preserving their personal pursuits.
 - The Herodians and Pharisees hardly ever saw eye to eye on any matters or issues.
 - In one sense the Pharisees rebuked and scolded the tax-collectors for their getting into bed with Rome, however they are willing to compromise for the sake of their religious comforts.
 - Do you see just how blinded these men truly were?
 - It makes sense why Jesus was both angered and grieved by their lack of understanding and unwillingness to see the truth.
 - This reality is quite telling for us even today.

- A lack of surrender to Christ is indicative of the condition of one's heart.
- This is why the new birth and understanding what it means to be born again is so vitally important.
 - Because one truly experiences a new mind and heart, in the sense that your desires and affections shift from your allegiance to complete allegiance to Jesus.
- And it becomes clear from the Pharisees' response in partnering with the Herodians that their minds were made up, they had to get rid of Jesus.
 - And it is here, in Mark's gospel, that we see the first explicit reference to Jesus' death.
 - The text tells us that both groups got together on how to "destroy" Jesus.
 - It literally means to kill, demolish, or ruin.
- These political and religious leaders' rule and authority were on the line, and their pride could not handle the thought of being overhauled by the carpenter from Nazareth.
 - What began as the withered man's hopeless situation became a glimpse of hope.
 - And the hope that Christ brought through His ministry would eventually point to the eternal hope for all who would come through Jesus.
- But the only way in which this hope could be fully realized is if Jesus were to be killed.
 - As Jesus' notoriety continues to increase so will the growth of the religious leaders' animosity towards His ministry.
 - I pray you join us next week as we walk through Mark 3:7-12. Let's pray.



Mark - Lesson 3B

Chapter 3:7-12

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- We will begin by reading the scripture for tonight as our section of text will lead us into a summary over what we have witnessed thus far in our study to-date.
 - The text tonight will be a bit of a transitioning and summarizing point regarding Jesus' ministry, as we will see next week, that leads to the selection of the twelve Apostles.
 - However, tonight, Mark will take time to reflect on what events lead Jesus to this moment.
 - So with that being said, pick me up at Mark 3:7-12.

Mark 3:7 Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and also from Judea,

Mark 3:8 and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him.

Mark 3:9 And He told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him because of the crowd, so that they would not crowd Him;

Mark 3:10 for He had healed many, with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around Him in order to touch Him.

Mark 3:11 Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, "You are the Son of God!"

Mark 3:12 And He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was.

- Let's pray.
- In previous teachings, I made mention that Mark's gospel account is one of brevity.
 - The way in which it is structured is like short summary snippets that contain what I would consider a "big picture" focus (similar to Cliff notes).
 - For Mark's audience, who are primarily Roman believers in the midst of oppression from Nero, there is no time for lengthy, drawn out details.
 - Rather, there is a need for a large summary format that crystalizes the centrality and authority of Christ and His work.
 - One could compare Mark's gospel to that of a movie trailer.
 - It provides short clips of action packed information that further draws the reader into greater desire of God's gospel, first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. (Romans 1:15)
 - The objective of a movie trailer is quite simple.
 - It is to capture the attention of its audience in an effort to draw them to the actual movie.
 - The trailer does not provide the full experience of the picture, it simply provides glimmers of anticipation which leads to full enjoyment in the experience.
 - If we were to imagine for a moment: thus far in our study, we have experienced several "trailers" or glimpses of the fullness of Jesus' person and work.
 - Each trailer provides us with yet another dimension of Jesus' authority, power

to heal, exorcise demons, etc.

- So, it provides both the reader then and the reader now with these glimpses of glory of our Great God while experiencing His humanity.
- It will be here in Mark 3:7-12 that Mark provides a bit of a parenthetical pause to reflect on the growing influence and greatness of Jesus' ministry.
 - This pause in the passage gives way to some growing conflict and adversity that Jesus faces which lands us where we left off last week.
- At this point in our teaching, I want to do what we'll call a "textual recap" of what we have discovered about Jesus' ministry, person, and work thus far.
 - If you recall, we began with what I'd call our thesis statement for this gospel found in Mark 1:1.
- Mark explains at the top of this gospel account that this very gospel begins with one man.
 - It begins with the God-man. The Son of God whose name is Jesus Christ.
- We learned that this reality of Jesus as the Son of God was not just a New Testament phenomenon.
 - Jesus Christ as the Son of God is a matter of eternity.
 - Christ has always existed and has always been and forever will be.

John 17:5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

- ○ He was with the Father from the very beginning. (John 1:1-4,14).
- Jesus being the very incarnational reality of the very Word of God was always a part of God's redemptive plan regarding salvation for men and women.
 - Hebrews 1:1-3 tells us this way:

Hebrews 1:1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

Hebrews 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

- Mark proves this by providing a combined quotation mainly rooted in the book of Isaiah of Messiah's coming within the Hebrew scriptures (Mark 1:2-3).
 - It was in Isaiah that the prophet mentioned by the power of the Holy Spirit that there would be a forerunner of the Messiah.
 - We then found out that immediately after that excerpt, that John the Baptist was the one in whom the prophet had foretold would be the forerunner of Messiah.
 - John the Baptist comes on the scene and begins to proclaim the very message

the Father gives which is “Repent for the Kingdom is at hand.”

- This message began to grasp the attention of many in the surrounding areas as many came to be baptized to accept whoever John pointed to as the promised Messiah (v. 7-12).
- It is then in Mark 1:9 that Jesus arrives on the scene and is baptized by John.
 - And John receives both a verbal and visual confirmation that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah.
- At this point, Jesus is thrust into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted, ultimately proving that He is the perfect, spotless, God-man.
 - It is after Jesus leaves the wilderness that His ministry would begin to come forth, more specifically, after the arrest of John the Baptist.
- This becomes a *kairotic* (exact) moment within the redemptive timetable as Jesus’ teaching ministry lifts off.
 - From this point, Jesus begins the recruitment of His first hand pick of what will soon become His Apostles.
- As Jesus’ ministry continues to gather some recognition, it becomes more appealing to others in the synagogue as He teaches with authority like no other.
 - This appeal of authority accompanied with demonic exorcisms began what Peter would consider as the “bread and butter” of Jesus’ ministry.
- All of these works that Jesus begins to do leads to other opportunities of healing others and meeting needs by way of compassion.
 - And it would be through these healings that the religious leaders would move from their observant state to a more interrogative state.
- This reality is further realized in Mark 1:40 where the first Messianic miracle is performed.
 - Jesus heals a Jewish leper.
- And as one could imagine, news of this magnitude began to spread like wildfire.
 - If that healing wasn’t enough, Jesus continues in His healing crusade by healing a paralytic man at Peter’s home.
 - This scene, as you can recall, was quite intriguing because Jesus speaks first to the spiritual needs of the man and not his physical needs.
- Ultimately, outlining that Jesus’ coming was meant to provide the way for men to first be made right with God rather than being made right physically to benefit self.
 - It is these rising actions in the text that leads to Jesus becoming the target of more incessant investigation and aggravation.
- And as all of this continues to grow, Jesus continues to hand pick men to follow Him.
 - These men, as mentioned before, are not scholarly in the least bit.
 - Rather, these men are ordinary fishermen, tax collectors, and the like.
- In other words, Jesus is not willing nor wanting to look for men that feel qualified in the sense of their works.

- But, He rather takes men who are nothing in the eyes of society and makes them something by His power and by His authority.

1 Corinthians 1:27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

- ○ We will see this in much more detail next week.
- Towards the end of Mark 2, Jesus begins to push the envelope in direct opposition to the religious leaders.
 - Jesus brings to light the goal of the Sabbath versus the traditions of men.
 - In Mark 2:27, Jesus makes the jaw dropping statement that “the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”
- We now arrive to where we left off from last week in Mark 3:1-6.
 - This is where Jesus’ demonstration of what it means to be Lord of the Sabbath became the primary cause of conspiring to end Jesus’ life.
- It would be because of the growing hardness of hearts from the Pharisees, that they would include the Herodians into their plan to “destroy” Jesus.
 - We made mention last week that up to this point the Herodians were not mentioned by Mark.
 - When Jesus and His growing influence in the region was made known, to the point that it impacted social and political matters, it became the Herodians’ problem as well.
- Jesus’ teachings, influence, authority, and power was becoming all the more gravitational, and from the looks of it there was no stopping His mission.
 - The only way in which this could be done was to kill the emerging, yet eternal existing King.
- If there was to be a section of our current study thus far that would summarize the growing frustration and consternation of the Pharisees, it would be Mark 2:21-22.
 - This is how it reads:

Mark 2:21 “No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results.

Mark 2:22 No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.”

- This new way that Jesus was proclaiming, teaching, and demonstrating confronted and exposed Pharisaical Judaism and false religion square in the face.
 - And would pave the way for the New Covenant, or New Era, and would cause the shadow of the old covenant to pass away and be fulfilled.
 - Salvation would not be through means of having to constantly sacrifice.

- It wouldn't be through empty righteous deeds.
- Nor would it be through pride and arrogance.
- But it would be provided through, in, and by the Suffering Servant and King – Jesus Christ dying once and for all and placing upon us His divine righteousness.
 - The response from the Jewish religious leaders and the Herodians would be a foretelling of what would lie ahead for Jesus; and that was death.
- But, despite the conflict and controversy amongst the Herodians and Pharisees, Jesus' ministry continues to increase in following.
 - Check out how much growth Jesus' ministry experienced in verse 7-8.

Mark 3:7 Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a large multitude from Galilee followed, and also from Judea,

Mark 3:8 and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard about everything that He was doing and came to Him.

- It is after Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees in the synagogue regarding the matters of healing on the Sabbath, that Mark tells us that Jesus withdrew to the sea with his disciples.
 - However, Jesus withdrawing does not come without the immense following of men and women from throughout the region.
 - The text mentions to us that "a large multitude" from several regions are in the company of Christ.
 - From the location of the synagogue to the Sea of Galilee, scripture does not provide details on travel time or from what direction Jesus is coming from.
 - Nor is Mark's focus here on which synagogue Jesus is coming from, but rather the locations of where people are coming from in their efforts to follow Jesus.
 - Two things become evidently clear thus far in our study:
 - 1. Jesus' ministry has become a threat to both the religious and political leaders.
 - 2. Jesus' ministry following has not been stifled despite the combative efforts of the Pharisees and scribes of the Pharisees.
 - As we witnessed from last week's teaching, Jesus' reasoning for withdrawing back to the Sea of Galilee was not of His own prerogative.
 - It was in Mark 3:6 that we saw the very reasoning for His withdrawal.
 - Check out the text.

Mark 3:6 The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might put Him to death.

- It only makes sense that if one's life is in grave danger that to prevent a premature killing, you would withdraw to a safer area.

- And in this case that area was the Sea of Galilee, close to the town where He is headquartered.
- What becomes of great encouragement here in the text is that although the pressure is on regarding the mission, the ministry of Christ still goes forth.
 - What may look to be a withdrawal from the pressure of external parties, upon the furtherance of the Gospel of God, became an expansion of the message.
- The question can become “Just how far reaching has Jesus’ ministry become at this point in His ministry?”
 - Mark 3:7b into verse 8 gives us a look into the areas in which Jesus’ ministry has spread by word of mouth.
- Here are the areas of ministerial impact which has lead to such a large following:
 - Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon.
 - Here is a map so that you can see the widespread impact of Jesus’ ministry. (Refer to slides)
- As you can see, you would typically have Jews coming from Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem.
 - Then you would have a mix of Jews and Gentiles from Idumaea. This was the homeland of Herod the Great.
 - It is also to be noted that Idumaea played an important role in the military conflicts of the Second Temple period.
 - The text also mentions beyond the Jordan.
- This region according to our map would put East of the Jordan river to be a region known as Perea – which was another mixed area of both Jew and Gentile.
 - This area was also most notably known to be ruled under Herod Antipas.
- Lastly, the text mentions the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon which is located North West in the region known as Phoenicia.
 - This area was a strictly Gentile area.
- So, here we have a mixture of: strictly Jewish, an area with Jews and Gentiles together, and then an area explicitly for Gentiles.
 - Why would Mark and the gospel writers include these particular regions according to their populations and in this specific order?
- Well, we are able to see our answer a bit more clearly in Matthew’s gospel regarding what God is redemptively at work doing.
 - Check out Matthew 12:15-21:

Matthew 12:15 But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. Many followed Him, and He healed them all,

Matthew 12:16 and warned them not to tell who He was.

Matthew 12:17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:

**Matthew 12:18 “Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen;
My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased;**

**I will put My Spirit upon Him,
And He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles.**

Matthew 12:19 “He will not quarrel, nor cry out;

Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

Matthew 12:20 “A battered reed He will not break off,

And a smoldering wick He will not put out,

Until He leads justice to victory.

Matthew 12:21 “And in His name the Gentiles will hope.”

- Matthew’s gospel provides a shift in this Kingdom proclamation by quoting from Isaiah 42, which foretold the Messiah’s rejection.
 - It moves from Jesus proclaiming who He is and the Kingdom that He has come to bring, to now becoming a Kingdom program to roll out.
 - And Matthew’s gospel mentions that the program will move forward without Israel for a time and commence with the Gentiles.
 - Remember, the gospel was first given to the Jew, but yet we are seeing “nationally” it was rejected by the leaders for a time.
 - This eventually led to what we now know as the “Age of the Gentiles” or the “Church Age” which we see in the Book of Acts.
 - Here is the beautiful thing, Israel was not going to be forsaken for their rejection because the Messiah will win them over in His timing.
 - Within Isaiah 42, he uses two euphemisms to explain Messiah’s grace and mercy to Israel.
 - Notice verse 20 he says the Messiah wouldn’t break off a battered reed nor would Messiah put out a smoldering wick.
 - Both phrases refer to making something out of nothing.
 - Notice, that a battered reed is useless just as much as a smoldering wick is. Both would naturally be given up on and replaced.
 - This would be what some would have assumed would be the case, however, Isaiah says Messiah will make something out of nothing.
 - Just as Jesus will bring the light to the Gentiles and make them His people, He will do the same for the chosen people of Israel.
 - If you don’t see it by now, this is the very demonstration of grace and compassion that the religious leaders could not understand.
 - But yet, Jesus representing both Israel and humanity overall demonstrates grace and compassion towards the least of us all.
 - This, friends, is grace redemptively realized!
 - So, these regions in which Mark describes is a foretelling of not just how far word about Jesus has spread.
 - But, it will also show how far Jesus will go to redeem those in whom the Father has called and that reach goes beyond the Jew.
 - It is through Jesus’ amazing acts of power, teaching with authority, and healings that has drawn so many people.

- If you haven't been walking with us through Mark's Gospel thus far, you might be asking "What could possibly stir up such interest regarding the desire to follow Jesus?"
 - Here are just a few things that we have witnessed in our study thus far.
 - 1. Mark 1:21-28, Jesus teaches like one with authority. The way in which He explains the scriptures is like none the people have heard.
 - In those same verses, Jesus exorcizes a demon out of a man therefore exhibiting His authority and Power over the demonic realm.
 - 2. Mark 1:29-34, Jesus not only heals Peter's Mother-in-Law from a chronic illness, but He continues healing those who are sick and demon possessed.
 - 3. Mark 1:35-45, We witness Jesus continuing to heal those who are demon possessed as He continues to share the Gospel of God with the people.
 - 4. Mark 1:40-45, Jesus heals a Jewish Leper, which had never been done before as this was the first demonstrated Messianic Miracle.
 - 5. Mark 2:1-12, Jesus heals a Paralytic man who has been carried to Peter's home by four men.
 - 6. Mark 3:1-6, Jesus heals the man with a withered/dried up hand on the Sabbath, which stirred up the anger of the religious leaders of that day.
- So, as you can imagine, as word-of-mouth travels fast, Jesus' whereabouts would be of primary importance, especially for those who are physically in need.
- Although a part of Jesus' ministry contained healings and exorcizing demons, it was not the "bread and butter" (purpose) of His ministry.
 - You may recall from Jesus and Peter's brief exchange in the wilderness where Jesus went out to pray in Mark 1:35-39.
 - Peter and the earliest recruited disciples are exhausted after looking around for Jesus as He has withdrawn to pray to the Father.
- At that time, Peter believed that Jesus was wasting His time praying as this unique opportunity of growth was emerging in Jesus' ministry.
 - To Peter, the purpose of Jesus' ministry was to focus on the healings, exorcisms, and the like.
 - However, Jesus reminds Peter what is of the utmost importance and that is "Preaching the Gospel of God"
 - For Jesus declares in verse 38 of Mark Chapter 1 "...for that is why I came out..."
- Jesus' message of "why He has come" is asserted as more important than "what He can do".
 - And here is where we discover a pertinent question: "What is one's cause for following Christ?"
 - The deeper question is "What truly distinguishes a true believer from someone moved by an emotional response?"
- The issue that we face in the "Big C" church today is we believe that everyone who attends a church service is saved.

- We tend to equate church attendance with being true followers of Jesus.
- However, that quantitative number can equally reflect people who simply want to know Jesus for what He can do for them.
- For some, Jesus is merely a genie in whom they solicit help or advice because of His great teaching yet they refuse to recognize Him as Lord and King.
 - But for those in whom the Lord calls, it is an unwavering drawing to the King.
 - We will see this reality more in next week's teaching.
- So, as this large following of people follow Christ, there are some who are following Him because they believe His message and there are some that see what He can do.
 - To better articulate how many people are following Jesus, the next few verses will paint a quantitative picture.
 - Check out verses 9-10.

Mark 3:9 And He told His disciples to see that a boat would be ready for Him because of the masses, so that they would not crowd Him;
Mark 3:10 for He had healed many, with the result that all those who had diseases pushed in around Him in order to touch Him.

- Mark's account makes it apparent from the previous verses that the multitudes that are coming to be healed, whether for physical ailments or relief from demonic torture, have great need.
 - The crowd here in the text becomes a barrier of sorts for those who are in need versus those who are simply spectating.
 - This may sound a bit familiar. We witnessed this same issue with the paralyzed man in the last chapter.
 - There was an issue regarding a great need that was being impeded by a great crowd.
 - The only resolve here in this case was for Jesus to get on a boat so that He was not physically overwhelmed and crowded.
 - This type of boat was not a typical boat used to gather fish or the catch of the day.
 - The Greek word for boat here is *ploiarion* (plu-air-rion). It is a small boat or a skiff. This type of boat would be similar to that of a rowboat.
 - In order to better grasp the intense sense of crowding that was happening that would cause Jesus to get on a boat, we need to look at the Greek language.
 - This sense of crowding is beyond waiting in line at the theme park and being surrounded by people packed in the lines like sardines.
 - No, the word for crowd here in Greek is *thlibo* which means pressing or crushing.
 - "Falling upon" is the weight in which this word carries.
 - There is a desperate need waiting to be met from a multitude of people.

- Understand, however, that this pressing and sense of desperation is not a demonstration of faith but rather a need of relief from the pain people are in.
- One could almost sense the need for help that Jesus would have needed in His humanity to take care of this multitude of needs.
 - I find it interesting that a few verses later, in verse 13, that Jesus selects 12 men who will be His apostles.
 - The leadership of this Kingdom program would need to expand beyond just Jesus.
- Jesus would be the object of attention and affection. He would be the chief leader over what would eventually be the church.
 - These men would need to be commissioned to do the work of ministry.
- This Kingdom program would require participation and not spectating.
 - And might this be the problem with the “Big C” church today?
 - That very few want to participate while others simply spectate from the sidelines.
 - You did not get saved to sit. You got saved to be sent.
- As the demand for relief and needs to be met grows, it will require leadership to be shared.
 - Let's keep moving. Notice in verses 11-12 that we see, again, another run in with more unclean spirits.

Mark 3:11 And whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, “You are the Son of God!”

Mark 3:12 And He strongly warned them not to reveal who He was.

- Remember that demonic spirits inhabiting men and women in that time was not unfamiliar.
 - We witnessed Jesus’ handling of this situation the first time in the synagogue in Mark 1:21-28.
 - Not only did Jesus demonstrate His authority in His teaching, but He demonstrated His authority over the demonic realm.
 - What we dove into a bit further was the reality that the demons knew exactly who Jesus was.
 - After the demonic spirits saw the very authority and power that Jesus demonstrated to the people regarding His person, the demons recognized Him.
 - And for some people, the question could be “Why would the demons recognize Jesus before the people did?”
 - Well, simply put, the demons witnessed the very glory and splendor of the pre-incarnate Christ in the presence of the Father before their fall to earth due to rebellion against God.
 - Those demonic spirits understood that standing before them was the second person of the Trinity and that He was fulfilling the very word of God.

- There was true fear they displayed. James 2:19 tells us this:

James 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

- This is why the statement that the demonic spirit made in Mark 1 was so key to understand.
 - Mark 1:24 states these very words:

Mark 1:24 saying, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!

- The unclean spirits knew that Jesus has the authority to destroy them once and for all, however Jesus, like before, commands them to say nothing.
 - And we see a similar response here in our scriptures tonight.
 - Jesus’ rebuke of the unclean spirits and forbidding them to speak yet again demonstrates His divine authority over the demonic realm.
 - Although the unclean spirits knew the truth about Jesus, their testimony was of no credit to Jesus’ person or mission.
 - Unclean spirits are in no way good character witnesses.
 - What becomes an interesting take away from this tonight is that although the demons recognized Jesus’ authority as God, those in whom Jesus is interacting with don’t see it yet.
 - They see the miracles, they see the authority, they see the demonstration of His power, but they don’t see Him as Messiah.
 - And what is key to recognize is those in whom Jesus has called to Himself don’t see it yet either.
 - It’s like my mom used to say when I would look for things in the pantry.
 - The item could very well be before me, but I would always miss it.
 - In her words, “If it was a snake, it would have bit you!”
 - As Jesus’ disciples continue to follow Him, we will see that what is concealed, for a time to others, will be discussed in detail with the apostles.
 - For they will ultimately come to the realization that the man they have been walking with all this time was God Himself.
 - And this is the evidence that you too receive tonight. Jesus proves Himself time and time again.
 - And now we have timeless, historical documentation that points to this truth!
 - Next week we will see that God’s sovereign calling of His children requires an active, inward working that brings us to full knowledge of Him and His handiwork.
 - It requires a sovereign election, a divine illumination, and participatory transformation.

- I pray you join us next week as we explore Mark 3:13-19.

Citation:

- Andrew J. Kelley, [“Idumea,”](#) ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).



Mark - Lesson 3C

Chapter 3:13-19

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- Last week we summarized the various events that Mark has communicated thus far in his Gospel account regarding the person and works of Jesus.
 - We began in Mark 1:1 and ended in verse 12 of Mark 3.
 - Tonight, we arrive to Jesus' selection of the apostles, which Mark will notate as the "the Twelve" for the majority of his account.
 - What we will see tonight in the selection of the Twelve, is that it required laboring in prayer, an unyielding call, and a divine commissioning.
 - This very work of calling the twelve was only a work that God could begin and complete.
 - With that being said, let's read the text together.

Mark 3:13 And He *went up on the mountain and *summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him.

Mark 3:14 And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach,

Mark 3:15 and to have authority to cast out the demons.

Mark 3:16 And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter),

Mark 3:17 and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges (Boan-er-ges), which means, "Sons of Thunder");

Mark 3:18 and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot;

Mark 3:19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him.

- Let's Pray
- In middle school, during free time, my classmates and I would always engage in an intense game of 5 on 5 basketball on Fridays.
 - The selection process of who would be on whose team would always begin with the top players in the class as team captains.
 - The objective of team selections was obviously to get the best guys on your team before the other team got them first.
 - Each team captain would proceed in drafting the top picks from the group.
 - This ultimately resulted in the weaker, less skilled players being drafted last or not at all.
 - Unlike that game of 5 on 5 basketball in middle school, we will see in our text today, Jesus selects a team of rather interesting individuals to say the least.
 - Tonight, we will witness Jesus select 12 ordinary, unqualified, and untrained men who will eventually lead this new era, under the authority of Christ, which we now know of as the Church.
 - We will see the following:
 - 1. What it took to select these men.

- 2. What qualified these men to be selected.
- 3. How these men would accomplish the task of moving the Kingdom program forward.
- With that being said, pick me up at verse 13 of Mark Chapter 3.

Mark 3:13 And He *went up on the mountain and *summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him.

- Sometime after Jesus' teaching at the Sea of Galilee, in a small boat, to a multitude of people, Mark now tells us He is going up a mountain to select what would be His 12 apostles.
 - There are three important words that we see here in verse 13 that must be carefully considered. Those three words are as follows:
 - Went Up
 - Summoned
 - Came
 - As we walk through these verses, I want us to keep these 3 words in mind.
 - They will play a vital role in the establishment of not only "the Twelve", but will express the means by how men and women can be saved.
 - Notice that the text tells us that Jesus went up the mountain to appoint twelve men to follow Him in ministry to further the Kingdom program.
 - Jesus moves from the lowlands of the Galilee seaside to the hills of the Galilee.
 - Here is an image of the terrain of Capernaum currently, and as you can see from the lay of the land the hills rest in the backdrop of the image.
 - This provides us some insight as to, potentially, the distance between where Jesus and His disciples were to where Jesus would have gone for solitude in prayer.
 - As we walk through the Gospel of Mark, we will see that Jesus "going up the mountain" is quite revealing.
 - "Mountains, in Mark's account, are sites of revelation or significant junctures in Jesus' ministry as they are sites of revelation in the Old Testament".²
 - We see these instances in the following scripture references: Mark 3:13; 6:46; 9:2; 11:1; 13:3; 14:26.
 - This notion of going to the mountains or hills would ring into the ears of the reader of the Hebrew scriptures.
 - Jesus ascending the mountain to call the Twelve could be seen as a parallel to Moses receiving instruction from God at Mt. Sinai (a mountain).
 - Here is a weighty moment for Jesus to make a grand decision of whom He will choose to spend close time with regarding the Kingdom program.
 - These men would be the very leaders of the New Testament church, establishing it!

- With that in mind, Luke’s account tells us that Jesus did something quite important.
 - We see in Luke 6:12-13 an interesting detail is omitted from Mark’s account, more than likely, for the sake of brevity.
 - Check out the text with me:

Luke 6:12 It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

Luke 6:13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

- Before Jesus calls up the disciples to the mountain to choose His twelve, Luke’s account tells us that Jesus goes up alone to pray.
 - Notice how long Jesus went up to pray regarding His decision on who would be considered Apostles: “He spent the whole night praying.”
 - This decision was not made on a whim. The text tells us that Jesus labored in prayer all night to link the Father’s desires with His desires.
 - **His communion with the Father preceded the calling of the Twelve.**
 - Here is yet another example of Jesus demonstrating true servant leadership within the synoptic Gospels. Here is what He shows us:
 - Life in Christ requires consistent communication with the Father.
 - We cannot make adequate decisions without consulting the King.
 - We cannot lead effectively if we do not consult the King.
 - We cannot be strengthened and commissioned to do the work if we do not consult the King.
 - **If the text tells us the Son of God, Himself, submitted His will to the Father, how much more should we?**
 - I love the fact that the text brings to light the reality of the unity and community of the Trinity being in one accord.
 - **Three distinct persons, co-equal and co-eternal yet fully submitted to the Father for the Glory of God.**
 - Let’s examine the second word from the text in verse 13 – **Summoned**.
 - The text tells us that Jesus, after having prayed and communed with the Father, that **“He summoned those who He wanted, and they came.”**
 - This language should be familiar to us at this point.
 - This imperative is different from Jesus’ summons of the disciples to “Follow Him.”
 - The Greek word for “follow me” as we discovered in previous teachings is *akoloutheo* (*ak-ol-ou-theo*) which means to come after me or follow me in the sense of being Jesus’ disciple.
 - However, the word “summoned” here in the Greek is *proskaleo* (*pro-ska-leo*).
 - It means to authoritatively communicate a demand for the presence or participation of someone (a particular person).

- This type of calling is an unrelenting draw. You have no option but to submit to the calling of the King.
- It is a sovereign call from Holy God.
- This summons demonstrates that Jesus has determined for you the call that you will take.
 - So, it only makes sense that at the end of verse 13, Mark states our third word, “and they **came** to Him”.
- It’s like when I tell our kids it’s time to go to bed, it’s not a suggestion or an opportunity for you to submit your particular petition.
 - **It's time to get into the bed and you follow suit willingly. You abandon your desires and my command now becomes your desires.**
- In this same way, the disciples that have been called by Jesus, and have been following Him, have now come to Him.
 - It is upon this call that Jesus appoints these twelve men for a commissioned task under His supervision.
 - Check out verses 14 and 15.

Mark 3:14 And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach,

Mark 3:15 and to have authority to cast out the demons.

- Mark states at the top of verse 14 the following phrase “And He appointed twelve”.
 - This phrase, in English, does not do justice as to the authority and control in which Jesus displays His divine direction for these men.
 - The word “appointed” here in the Greek is *poieo* (*po-ie-o*).
 - The Greek language conveys this sense that it is God who “has made the Twelve.”
 - This would mark the start of what it will mean to be made “new” in Christ Jesus. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul says this:

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

- Culturally speaking, this sense of being called by the Rabbi was not typical for men during this time.
 - Typically, it would be the desiring disciple who would seek out the rabbi (teacher) to faithfully submit themselves under his authority and teaching.
 - However, this is not how Jesus chose to go about His selection process. His process would be rather unorthodox.
 - And doing things in an unorthodox manner was nothing new to Jesus and His ministry.
 - Rabbis would commit themselves to teaching and tutoring to model for their

students what they would one day become.

- **However, Jesus does not bring up this sense of equivalency with His person.**
- For not even Jesus would speak to such matters as equality with God something to be grasped for people.
- Check out what Paul states in Philippians 2:6:

Philippians 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

- **As these men followed Jesus, the goal was for them to be transformed by His person and into His likeness.**
 - This is how one became a disciple.
 - A disciple simply means “a student or a learner.”
 - Before these men became the Twelve, they were all simply followers and learners of Jesus.
 - Eventually, these men would move from simply spectating and following Jesus on occasion to eventually giving up their lives for the sake of following Christ.
 - **This summons moved these men from mere learners to empowered participators.**
 - Clearly put: **Jesus draws those in who He wants by an emphatic call.**
 - In recognizing the Twelve being called by Messiah to the work of the Kingdom, these men have no stake to what they will be given the authority to do.
 - This calling goes beyond what these men bring to the table. Remember, these men bring no religious credentials or astonishing accolades.
 - **As Edwards stated: “The question is what Jesus can make of His disciples, not what they can be on their own.”**
 - Verse 14 continues in explaining what these twelve men would now be appointed and empowered to do. Check out these three things:
 - 1. They would be with Him, meaning they would follow Him wherever He went (Relationship).
 - 2. They would be sent to preach (Commissioned).
 - 3. They would have authority to cast out demons (Empowered).
 - **Edwards mentions in his commentary on Mark this profound statement: “Discipleship is a relationship before it is a task; a “who” before a “what.”**
 - Before the disciples are sent with the extraordinary task, they must recognize that what they will do for God can only come from God.
 - I love what Dietrich Bonhoeffer stated in his book “The Cost of Discipleship”:

“The work of God cannot be done without due authorization, otherwise it is devoid of promise.”

- So, they must first be men who are committed to Jesus' words and work, which means they must spend deep committed, quality time with Jesus (relationship).
 - **The Twelve will be and must be men that are marked by the Messiah.**
 - The next thing that verse 14 mentions is that Jesus will **send** them out to preach.
 - The word "send", here in Greek, is *apostello*.
 - This word is the root word for which the word *Apostolos* or Apostle comes from. It means "to be sent".
 - The Twelve will be sent out to proclaim a message, and that message will contain the one in whom has both made them and has sent them.
 - As followers of Jesus, it is key to recognize that the message in which the apostles proclaimed throughout the world is the same message we proclaim.
 - That message is to preach Christ and Him crucified so that men and women may come to believe the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
 - The Apostles were not proclaiming themselves or their own self-interest like many false teachers today.
 - The primary aim for the Twelve was to make known that Messiah had come, died, and was raised so that those who would believe would have eternal life.
 - Acts 5:42 points to the object of the Apostle's message:

Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

- Check out the third thing that Jesus sent them to do: to have authority to cast out demons.
 - This supernatural ability that is given to them by God is used to demonstrate God's power and to authenticate His message.
 - And one of the ways in which people knew that these twelve men were Jesus' commissioned men was by way of casting out demons.
 - It begs to be mentioned that although healing is not included here, due to brevity, later on in Mark's Gospel, we will see the Apostles healing sickness as well.
 - This authenticated who were truly Apostles versus those who were perpetrators.
 - In one instance you may recall the Sons of Sceva in Acts 19:11-20 where seven sons of a Jewish high priest tried to attempt to exorcize a demon.
 - However, these sons did not have the authority nor the power to do it and the evil spirits knew it too.
 - Check out their encounter with this unclean spirit:

Acts 19:13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims."

Acts 19:14 Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this.

Acts 19:15 But the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?”

Acts 19:16 And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

- Understanding what it means to be an Apostle consists of knowing that it is only something that Jesus Himself called these 12 men to.
 - No more. No less. So, when we hear of people calling themselves Apostles today, we can rest assured that no authority nor position has been bestowed upon them.
 - We will discuss this further a bit later on.
 - We now arrive to the list of the Twelve.
 - These men will share in both Jesus’ works and His sufferings for the sake of the New Covenant community known as the Church.
 - Check out the text:

Mark 3:16 And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter),

Mark 3:17 and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, “Sons of Thunder”);

Mark 3:18 and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot;

Mark 3:19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him.

- It is here that Mark provides the reader with the names of the twelve that are selected as Jesus’ Apostles.
 - A question that may arise for some is “What is an Apostle, and who is qualified to be an Apostle?”
 - The word apostle is derived from the verb “to send out” or “the sent out ones.”
 - An apostle was someone that was with Jesus the whole time, from John’s baptism to when Jesus was taken up, based upon Acts 1:21-26.
 - So, for those who claim themselves to be Apostles today, they would be out of sync with scripture and quite old.
 - It is important to note for our understanding that **it was an apostle that carried the authority of the sender.**
 - This was not the case for a disciple.
 - Now, before we dive into the names of these men who were summoned by Jesus, we need to look closely at the beginning of verse 16.
 - The text states “And He **appointed** the twelve”. This phrase repeats twice. Once in verse 14 and once in verse 16.

- **This speaks volumes because it alludes to the reality that God's calling you into this loving fellowship with Him is less about you and more about Him doing the producing in your life.**
 - Jesus determines the call.
 - Jesus determines the appointment.
 - Jesus determines the sending out.
 - And Jesus determines your coming in.
- And it will be through the life of the Apostles as well as the lives of believers that will point to the proclamation of Christ and Him crucified.
 - **Friends, this is the purpose and focus of Discipleship.**
- You and I are being made and shaped into the very image of Christ that makes much of His person and work and we abandon all our desires for His.
 - **Discipleship is never about us.**
 - **Discipleship is not about becoming a better you for you. Discipleship is about being more Christ-like because He is working gloriously in you!**
- And the way in which Jesus would make this happen in their lives is by them giving up their lives for the sake of following Him.
 - **Discipleship comes with a great cost!**
- Discipleship will cost you comfort and convenience, thereby receiving and accepting the call of the Caller.
 - And these twelve men would be on a path that helps them discover this reality, except for one, Judas Iscariot.
- Here is the list of the twelve that Jesus calls:
 - Simon (Whom He gave the name Peter)
 - James (son of Zebedee) – Sons of Thunder
 - John (son of Zebedee) – Sons of Thunder
 - Andrew
 - Philip
 - Bartholomew
 - Matthew
 - Thomas
 - James, son of Alphaeus
 - Thaddaeus
 - Simon, the Zealot
 - Judas Iscariot
- Let's take a closer look at the twelve in whom Jesus handpicked. We will begin with Peter.
 - **Peter was the first named of the Twelve. He had three names from three different languages.**

- His Hebrew name was Simon whereas his Aramaic name was Cephas and his Greek name was Petros.
 - All three of these names are associated with a stone or rock.
- It would be Peter who became the leader of the early Church and the spokesperson of the Twelve.
- **Next is James and John, the sons of Zebedee, the 2nd and 3rd of the twelve.**
 - James and John, like Peter and Andrew, were both fishermen.
 - We were introduced to these two earlier in our Mark study.
 - James' name within the original manuscripts is rendered as Jacob which means "heel-grabber".
 - He is also noted by scholars to be called James "the greater" to distinguish him from James "the lesser" who we will get to later on.
 - John is the third of the twelve listed. His name means "YHWH is gracious".
 - Both brothers are given the nickname *Boanerges (Boan-er-ges)* which means the "Sons of Thunder".
 - A related Arabic word means "thunder", which suggests a sense of rage or agitation.
 - This nickname seems to be fitting for both brothers, as we will discover within the synoptic Gospels, there is a moment in which they respond in anger towards hindrances they come across while advancing the gospel.
 - For example, check out Mark 9:38:

Mark 9:38 John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us."

- We can also see this sense of agitation in Luke's Gospel, more specifically, Luke 9:54.

Luke 9:54 When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

- It is without dispute, that these brothers' hasty and violent reactions show Jesus' naming of them was spot on.
- **Next is Andrew – the 4th of the twelve.**
 - The text does not give us much detail regarding Andrew and his background; however, scripture does give way to Andrew at a time being a part of the inner circle with the first three of the twelve named.
 - This happened in Mark 13:3:

Mark 13:3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him (Jesus) privately,

- This questioning on the Mount of Olives dealt with future events that were to come regarding the last days and the return of Christ.
- **Next is Philip and Bartholomew, the 5th and 6th of the twelve.**
 - Not much is given to us about Philip with the exception that he played an instrumental role in the calling of Nathanael.
 - We see this highlighted more clearly in John 1:43-51 where Philip tells Nathanael that they have found the Christ, the promised Messiah.
 - We must acknowledge that this Philip is not to be confused with Philip the evangelist, who explains the scripture in Isaiah to the Ethiopian eunuch and baptizes him.
 - Now for Bartholomew, also known as Nathanael.
 - His name means “gift of God”.
 - The name Bartholomew is an Aramaic patronym.
 - A patronym simply means a “surname”.
 - For example, in Matthew 16:17 where Peter is called “Simon Barjona” that surname or title simply means Simon “Son of Jonah”.
 - You may recall in John’s gospel that Nathanael came to follow Jesus after a skeptical dialogue with Philip announcing Jesus as Messiah.
 - It would not be until Philip encouraged Nathanael to “come and see” that Nathanael believed that Jesus was who He claimed to be (Messiah).
- **Next, we have Matthew and Thomas, the 7th and 8th of the twelve.**
 - Matthew, as we discovered in our previous teachings, is a tax-collector.
 - His name as documented in Mark’s account before coming across Jesus was Levi.
 - This name, Matthew, in which Jesus gives Levi is confirmation of what we previously discussed.
 - That the name Matthew is Levi’s conversion name.
 - The name Matthew means “the gift of YHWH”.
 - Next is Thomas.
 - Within Mark’s account, up to this point, Thomas hasn’t been mentioned.
 - In John’s Gospel account you will see Thomas’ name in Greek was Didymus.
 - Thomas often is labeled as “Doubting Thomas” because of his reluctance in believing Jesus was raised.
 - Thomas is noted as refusing to believe this truth unless he himself, along with his own two eyes saw and with his own two hands felt and experienced this reality.
 - We see this confirmed in John 20:25-28, check out the text.

John 20:25 So the other disciples were saying to him, “We have seen the Lord!”
 But he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and

put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

John 20:26 After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus *came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.”

John 20:27 Then He *said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

- Before we move on, one interesting fact based upon Thomas’ transliterated name in both Hebrew and Greek means “twin”.
 - This means that Thomas was a twin brother of someone in whom the text does not mention.
- **Next, we have James, the Son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus – the 9th and 10th of the twelve.**
 - As we discussed in previous teaching, James the Son of Alphaeus is not related to Matthew, as Alphaeus was a common name in that day.
 - Throughout church history, this James has been called “James the lesser” therefore being distinguished from James, Son of Zebedee, also known as “James the greater.”
 - Thaddaeus was the 10th Apostle (of the Twelve).
 - Thaddaeus was the brother of James the lesser.
 - Thaddaeus also went by another name – Judas.
 - Judas was the Hellenized form of Thaddaeus’ name.
- **We now arrive to the 11th and 12th apostles, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, the one whom betrayed Jesus. Let’s first look at Simon the Zealot.**
 - He is the 11th Apostle. Some translations have called Simon, “Simon the Canaanite”, however this is a misreading of the Greek text.
 - In Hebrew-Aramic, the term “Zealot” is *Ha-Kanai* which transliterated into Greek is misread as “Canaanite.”
 - The proper rendering here is Zealot, which connects Simon the Zealot to the Zealot Party.
 - The Zealot Party held to an extreme position of Pharisaism, believing in an active resistance to Roman rule.
 - This resistance eventually gave way to the First Jewish Revolt (AD 66-70).
 - There was an unrelenting commitment to restore “the purity of Israel, the people’s faith, and the temple” according to Hengel’s book, *The Zealots*.
- **And lastly, the 12th apostle, Judas Iscariot.**
 - The name Judas was a common name in the First Century Judaism.
 - As a matter of fact in the gospel of Luke and Acts, Thaddaeus is named Judas, son or brother of James.

- To further see how common the name Judas is, the author of the book of Jude can be transliterated as Judas as well.
- Iscariot means “a man of the town Kriyot” which was a town located in Southern Judah.
 - This makes Judas Iscariot the only non-Galilean amongst the other apostles.
- There are some that suggest that another Aramaic form of the root means “strangulation” which points to Judas Iscariot’s end, according to Matthew 27:5:

Matthew 27:5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

- So, within this group of 12 are some fishermen, tax-collectors, a nationalist, and other workers in varying professions. Notice what this group is not.
 - There are no scholars, no theologians, no religious leaders, no political leaders, no learned men.
 - There is nothing spectacular about this group of men that spring from the pages of scripture.
 - You would think that the men in whom Jesus would choose to be the establishment of the New Testament Church would be men of learned taste.
 - No. As a matter of fact, they are far from it.
 - And could this be the point? Could the reality be that Jesus chose these men in order to make a point?
 - That these men could do nothing nor bring anything to the table to somehow stake claim to the reasoning for them being selected.
 - Could it be that Jesus’ sovereign election of these men were in fact a divine call and commission and that these men could not stake claim to what would be done through them?
 - Absolutely! The one making these men ready and equipping them for the work is none other than God Himself, through the person of Jesus.
 - Looking at this list of men, no one could say in their right minds, “Oh yeah, this group is the crème de la crème.”
 - No one in their right mind would say that, why? Because the reality is these men, at best, are a motley crew of misfits.
 - Jesus is forming a new community of people in a completely unorthodox way.
 - And He happens to choose the most imperfect people to become a people that He is sovereign over.
 - And as believers in Jesus, you too have been elected and chosen by God to follow Him as a learner.
 - Know that He is the one who has called us, and He is making us conform into His very image by the inward working of the Holy Spirit, today.
 - Join us next week as we walk through Mark 3:22-30. Let’s Pray.

- Last week we dove into the laboring process, if you will, as to Jesus selecting amongst His followers, those who would become the twelve.
 - And we discussed the significance of Jesus secluding Himself in prayer in order to develop a group of men who would help Him expand the Kingdom message.
 - It would be after Jesus praying all night that He would be given the twelve that He would select.
 - And we concluded the teaching by speaking to each man selected by Christ for the work of the Kingdom program.
 - Tonight, we will explore the growing and mounting pressures of ministry that Jesus was feeling at this point.
 - But most importantly we will discuss one of the most controversial topics within Christendom and that is the matter of the “unforgivable sin”.
 - My prayer for us tonight is that we approach this issue with fresh eyes opened to the scriptures and not the whims of “social media experts” or YouTube preachers.
 - With that being said, turn with me to Mark 3:20-30.

Mark 3:20 And He *came home, and the crowd *gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.

Mark 3:21 When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, “He has lost His senses.”

Mark 3:22 The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.”

Mark 3:23 And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan?

Mark 3:24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mark 3:25 If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

Mark 3:26 If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!

Mark 3:27 But no one can enter the strong man’s house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

Mark 3:28 “Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter;

Mark 3:29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”—

Mark 3:30 because they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

- Let’s Pray.
- Burden of proof plays a critical role in the law, but most importantly the success of a case.
 - Legally, it is required to present evidence to the court that proves or defeats a claim

that is made against a particular individual.

- And in other cases, the amount of proof that one has helps in achieving this goal as well.
- But what do you do when you have provided proof after proof and verifiable evidence time and time again, but yet the proof doesn't hold up in public.
 - Time and time again throughout Mark's gospel account we have witnessed miracle after miracle, and healing after healing.
 - The proof is in the pudding however, for the Pharisees, that proof is not good enough.
- They continue to find ways in which to discredit and disparage the works of Jesus.
 - As I mentioned earlier, this situation will eventually lead to what has been known throughout church history as "The unpardonable sin".
- This sin has caused much worry throughout churches and followers of Christ for years.
 - We begin in verses 20-21 of Mark 3. Here's what the text reads:

Mark 3:20 And He *came home, and the crowd *gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.

Mark 3:21 When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses."

- Mark mentions that Jesus heads back home after His time of calling the twelve to Himself in preparation for the Kingdom program.
 - We can assume from our previous teachings that Jesus' return home is none other than His place of headquarters, Capernaum, more specifically, Peter's home.
 - It is evident that Jesus' ministerial demands continued to increase.
 - One indication to that fact is that the crowd was so large and in need that Jesus and His disciples "were not even able to eat a meal".
 - However, this would not be the last time that Jesus and His disciples would be delayed in eating a meal.
 - We see another instance within the scriptures regarding an immense need from the people.
 - In Mark 6:31, Jesus visibly acknowledges the need for His disciples to rest amidst such great burdens of the people. Check out the text.

Mark 6:31 And He *said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)

- Friends, understand that this type of reaction is no different from how we approach

tasks we hold dear or deadlines that are fast approaching.

- It's like someone who is intently focused on a project deadline.
- They lose track of time thereby missing opportunities for food and bathroom breaks, all for the sake of what is before them.
- Someone from the outside looking in would be a bit worried or concerned to say the least.
 - I know personally, if I have not taken a break from my studies or sermon prep my wife has to remind me to drink water or take a mental break.
 - Because I too can become consumed in what I am doing.
- And in the same way, this particular group was very concerned for Jesus' well-being.
 - Verse 21 says "When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him."
 - We're going to get to this term "custody" momentarily, but I first want to examine who is coming to see about Jesus.
- If we were to look at the phrase "His own people" in v.21, it's one word in Greek.
 - It is the word *autos* which transliterated means relative, someone related by marriage.
 - Now, let's look at what Jesus' relatives are coming to do upon arrival.
- It's important to note that Mark's wording here does not allude to a simple visitation or check in from family.
 - The sense of the language here regarding "taking custody" of Jesus by His family was literally an attempt to restrain Him from Himself.
- Apparently, towards the end of verse 21, the text lets us know that Jesus' relatives were saying "He has lost His senses".
 - Somehow Jesus' ministry work and duties became so much that He was considered a "fanatic" by those closest to Him.
- It cannot be possible that Jesus missing one meal, up to this point, makes his family have such an over-reaction as to restrain Him from Himself.
 - Or even for that matter suggest that He was being a fanatic.
 - If serving the Lord consistently and continually makes us a fanatic, count me in.
- Clearly, something else, something of greater concern or urgency has prompted the response of Jesus' family to come from Nazareth to get a hold of Him.
 - And in the same breath something is prompting Jesus in His tireless pursuit of fulfilling His mission.
 - So let's examine the scene thus far.
- Jesus has previously selected the twelve whom will accompany Him with this Kingdom proclamation.
 - He is continuing to be pressed by the crowds because of their great need and from what we see at v.20, the demand of His ministry did not decrease.

- Here is the question we must ask ourselves: “Why has Jesus become more fixated on the Kingdom program at this time?”
 - We will see later on in tonight’s teaching that this generation was about to commit a sin that could not be forgiven (The unpardonable sin)
- So as one could imagine, the pressure is mounting for Jesus, and He is becoming extremely intent on the mission even before His own physical needs.
 - We can now gather that Jesus’ family’s expression of Him “losing His mind” was a complete misinterpretation of His actions.
 - What seemed as a fanatical response in continuing his ministerial mission was actually a buildup for yet another Kirotic moment.
 - Jesus doesn’t overreact! And as His mission furthers, those around Him will not truly understand what His coming will cost Him.
- A question still lingers in the background: “What is the true cause of the concern from Jesus’ family and relatives regarding Jesus?”
 - Jesus missing one meal, up to this point could not have possibly caused such concern. Something must have occurred!
- Something much greater has prompted this response and this urgency.
 - And we can see from Matthew’s gospel what caused the concern.
 - Check out Matthew 12:22

Matthew 12:22 Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

- Matthew’s gospel seems to fill in a time gap whereas Mark’s gospel seems to skip over the nuances of this event. (We will cover more later in this teaching)
 - It would be through Jesus expelling a demon, that had caused a man to become blind and mute, that created even more attention towards His work and mission.
 - Expelling the demonic spirit inhabiting a blind and mute man established the second Messianic Miracle.
 - So picture, if you will, what is being placed before us so far.
 - Jesus is continuing in His healing crusades, meeting the ministerial needs of others.
 - All the while, His focus on the ministry becomes more and more intense.
 - Then after the selection of the twelve, He expels a demon from a blind and mute man.
 - Understand that the expelling of a blind and mute demon-possessed man has never been done before by any Jewish exorcist.
 - This news, once again, would gain the attention of the scribes, Pharisees, and other religious leaders around the region.

- We can assume that these events have caused private concern for Jesus' family while at the very same time, causes much celebration for the religious leaders to publicly humiliate Jesus.
 - You could almost hear Jesus' unbelieving relatives at that time saying, "Can Jesus ever just be normal?!"
 - "We can never be left alone without being the brunt end of these 'Jesus Jokes'".
- So Jesus' family is going to make their way to where He is because, to them, the more He ministers, the more trouble seems to come His way.
 - This should be encouraging for us as believers because we too will experience suffering and ridicule for what we believe.
- What we can witness from Jesus' relatives in their reaction to Jesus' behavior and work is that His own relatives did not believe He was Messiah.
 - We see this in John 7:5

John 7:5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

- So having this brief glimpse into Matthew's gospel helps the reader understand why the response of the scribes in Jerusalem was what it was in v.22-23.
 - Check out v.22-23 with me.

Mark 3:22 The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

Mark 3:23 And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?"

- Although Mark's account does not provide us with proper context for what seems to be a gap in information, as mentioned earlier, Matthew fills in the missing pieces.
 - We will see that Matthew 12:22-37 provides the backdrop that Mark seems to omit.
 - So as we walk through the next few verses in Mark 3:20-30, we will rely heavily upon Matthew's account.
 - Mark states that the "scribes came down from Jerusalem."
 - One question that arises here is why? "Why do the scribes descend down to the regions of the Galilee?"
 - Obviously, whatever has moved them from their self-righteous throne to the lowlands of the Galilee, there must be something of great interest stirring.
 - And indeed, there is something juicy happening!
 - Remember, Jesus at this point has performed yet another Messianic miracle which was expelling a demonic spirit in a blind and mute man.

- We will go into detail in a few regarding this Messianic miracle in the coming verses.
- But for now, know that this Messianic miracle has grasped the attention of the religious leaders.
- This will officially move their investigation from an internal private matter to a more public forum.
 - Here's the big question: "What do you do when you have verified worthy claims that Jesus is who He claims to be, but yet your very authority and influence would be in jeopardy?"
 - You do the next best thing: You control the narrative and create a scene that discredits the threatening opponent.
- So it is upon the arrival by the scribes on the scene in the Galilee that they begin to pile on more "concerning and slanderous" allegations on top of what Jesus' family has already been informed about.
 - If you look at the word "saying" in the first line of v.22, that word is in the imperfect tense.
 - This suggest that the scribes' comments and allegations they were speaking were more of a "campaign of vilification" towards the Victor Himself, Jesus Christ.
- This further confirms the scribes' agenda which was to sabotage and discredit Jesus' character and ministry.
 - To attempt to put the icing on the cake regarding Jesus' hyper focused scene of events and performing of the second Messianic miracle, the scribes credited this charge to Beelzebul.
- A question that comes to mind which should be obvious in observation is: "Who is Beelzebul?"
 - Without hesitation, Jesus answers our question, in a way, in v.23. Check out the text again:

Mark 3:23 And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?"

- Beelzebul was considered the god of Ekron and later as a satanic entity in the Hebrew scriptures.
 - We first see a form of Beelzebul's name in 2 Kings 1:2-3.
 - Beelzebul's name is oftentimes synonymous with a name of a Semitic deity tied to an agent of Satan, and in most cases, Satan himself.
 - The religious leaders were attempting to correlate Jesus' expelling demons and fanatic behavior to somehow Him being demon-possessed.
 - And at worst practicing witchcraft.
 - This accusation from the religious leaders was not just an attack against His very

person, but a direct attack against the outworking power of God through the Holy Spirit.

- And Jesus begins to peel back the layers of the scribes' accusations and publicly addresses their off-base statements.
- And His rebuttal begins with "How can Satan cast out Satan?"
- It is here that Mark tells us that Jesus begins the use of parables.
 - As we will see more closely in Mark 4, the use of parables will serve to succinctly identify outsiders (rejected) versus insiders (drawn by God).
 - But most importantly it will be a defining moment for Jesus' teaching ministry which we will see later on.
- We see a bit of an explanation regarding the use of parables in Mark 4:10-12. Check out the text.

Mark 4:10 As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables.

Mark 4:11 And He was saying to them, "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables,

Mark 4:12 so that while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven."

- Let's keep moving. Here is what v.24-26 says.

Mark 3:24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mark 3:25 If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

Mark 3:26 If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!

- In order to truly appreciate the weightiness of what Jesus is saying here, we need to understand the nature of this miracle and its significance.
 - Remember, this situation is dealing specifically with matters of exorcism.
 - Just as a brief recap, the first Messianic miracle was the healing of a Jewish leper which no man could do but Messiah, Himself.
 - Now, Jesus has casted out a demonic spirit from a man that has made this man, blind and mute.
 - A question that we could ask at this time regarding the miracle is: "What made this miracle of casting out a demon so different than Jesus' other exorcism?"
 - It was not uncommon for Jewish exorcists to cast out demons.
 - These men were trained to do this for a living. Which begs the question, again, what's so different with this situation?

- During this time period, Jewish exorcisms were provided with “specific rituals that had distinct steps.”
 - One of the steps required was “establishing communication with the demon who would have to use the vocal cords of the person under their control.”
- In Twelftree’s book, “Jesus the Exorcist”, he explains that many extra-biblical material, such as, “The Testament of Solomon” discusses the engagement between the exorcist and the demon.
 - For your hearing (or reading), here is an excerpt from the Testament of Solomon:

“Solomon asks a demon its name and he answers; “If I tell you his name, I place not only myself in chains, but also the legion of demons under me.”

- So, by providing a name, the Jewish exorcist had the ability to cast out the demonic spirit.
 - But remember the demonic spirit that Jesus is expelling has caused the man to become blind and mute.
 - So there could be no communication established between Jesus and the demon-possessed man.
 - However, the only one that could have been able to accomplish this was none other than Messiah Himself.
 - Friends, might I suggest this is why the people in Matthew’s gospel are so amazed.
 - Matthew 12:22-23 gives us their exact responses:

Matthew 12:22 Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.

Matthew 12:23 All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, “This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?”

- The people’s response, in amazement, ends in a question. That question is: “This man cannot be the Son of David, can He?”
 - If you have followed the ministry for any span of time, you know that the title “Son of David” is a Messianic title.
 - It pointed to the reality that God’s promised Messiah would come through the line of David and here it is; the minds of the people are percolating.
 - Can you begin to see it? People are beginning to connect the dots as to who Jesus is and what He truly represents, in a sense.
 - Then we have the religious leaders who carry notable influence in their own right yet are threatened by the very sight and presence of Messiah.

- They, like the rest of the people, both hear and see that what Jesus is doing is unlike what they have seen before.
- You cannot unsee or unhear what Jesus has been doing consistently throughout the region.
- However, the religious leaders refuse to accept it, and their primary aim will be to persuade the people away from their promised Messiah.
- Although there were some that could evidently see the truth, they would not answer for themselves what they had witnessed. (See Dr. Fruchtenbaum's works)
 - Reason being is during biblical times, the Jewish people operated under a "leadership complex".
 - Simply meaning, whatever the leadership says, we will follow.
- As you can imagine this had to be extremely frustrating to one extreme for Jesus yet at the same time their response was not unexpected.
 - And I believe this speaks to the point we made earlier in our study, we come to know Jesus personally not collectively.
 - Meaning, Jesus draws you personally into a relationship with Him. Not through your friends, family members, or loved ones.
 - Jesus is hand picking you out of the bunch and you must come to the grips of His claims for yourself, not your neighbor.
- So if the Pharisees choose to reject Jesus as Messiah, because of His failure to accept Pharisaic Judaism, then the majority of the Jewish people would follow suit.
 - Luke's account in Luke 23:2 provides the Pharisees' eventual verdict after the proof they are shown from Jesus' ministry. Check it out:

Luke 23:2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."

- So with understanding this Messianic miracle and the Pharisees' accusations, we can now dive into the point that Jesus is making in His parable.
 - Here is the parable once again for our hearing:

Mark 3:24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mark 3:25 If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

Mark 3:26 If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!

- At this point, the Pharisees have charged Jesus with sorcery.
 - And the religious leaders' explanation for Jesus' great authority over the blind and mute demonic spirit was said to have come from Satan.

- This can potentially explain the orthodox Jewish hesitation towards them seeing Jesus as their Messiah.
 - The Rabbinic leader's portrait of Jesus as a magician is stated to be ingrained into Jewish thinking to this day, according to one Messianic Jewish scholar.
 - The claim is that somehow Jesus was attempting to lead the Jewish people astray and away from their true God and the Torah.
- Check out a brief excerpt from Robert E. Van Voorst from his book, "Jesus Outside the New Testament" based on the Toledot Yeshu:

"The main Jewish tradition originated in the first century, carried through Rabbinic Tradition and adapted for popular use in the Toledot Yeshu, is that Jesus is a magician and deceiver. He founded and led a movement that tried to lead Israel away from the one true God and his Torah. He used deception and magic in miracles worked by an alliance with evil."

- So Rabbinical teaching pushed their narrative of lies and deceit and to make Jesus out to be this crazy man for the sake of keeping their false religion.
 - Check out, through this parable, how Jesus defends Himself.
 - If you notice, there is one word that is consistently repeated throughout these 3 verses.
 - That word is divided.
 - The first defense Jesus makes is: If what the religious leaders are saying is true, then that means Satan is divided against himself.
 - We see this statement fully realized in Matthew 12:25-26.

Matthew 12:25 And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand.

Matthew 12:26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?

- Jesus uses these metaphors as a means to demonstrate that there are two kingdoms at play here.
 - The two kingdoms in this parable are that of the Kingdom of God and that of Satan and the kingdom of darkness.
 - It would make no sense for one particular kingdom to fight in and within itself.
 - It's like two opposing sports teams representing their respective teams with their respective jerseys on.
 - However one of the teammates on the team score points for the opposing team.
 - It makes no sense to do that! And this is the point that Jesus is making.

- Jesus is showing how inconsistent and bogus the logic of the pharisaical leaders was.
- In one breath, the religious leaders are claiming Jesus is using Satan's powers to cast out demons, but yet the Pharisees cast demonic spirits out as well.
 - So by who's power are they doing such things?
- The reality was that the rabbis of that day taught that "exorcism was only possible by God Himself."
 - To further expound on this, Jesus never challenged rabbinic exorcism nor its effectiveness.
 - And we should find that quite interesting because what this ultimately does is exposes the weakness of the religious leaders' arguments about Jesus.
 - Therefore, it would strengthen Jesus' position and make His defense plain to see.
 - However, as we discovered, the "leadership complex" that the Jewish people had at that time superseded the truth even if it meant Jesus' death in the end.
- Here is the truth of the matter: Jesus expelled this demonic spirit by the Power of the Holy Spirit.
 - The same Holy Spirit that descended upon Him like a dove at His baptism is the same Spirit that empowers Him to expel demonic spirits.
 - The question on the table for those that were witnessing this would be: "Who will you believe?"
- The proof is in the pudding and Jesus always proves to be the Victorious One in every battle and circumstance.
 - Check out how Jesus accomplishes this, look at verse 27.

Mark 3:27 But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

- What was Jesus speaking about here?!
 - Simply put, Jesus is refuting the accusations of the religious leaders by properly expressing in words what is truly fact.
 - Within this analogy we must understand that Satan is the strong man and "His house is the realm of sin, sickness, demon possession, and death within this world".
 - Jesus is the One who comes into Satan's home (this broken world) and Jesus plunders Satan's possessions by freeing men and women from His curse.
 - Therefore we can confidently conclude that Jesus is actively binding Satan up now and will, in the end, bind Him up for all eternity.
 - The Jewish people in that time missed the opportunity to witness the Kingdom come in that time because of their refusal to see the truth and receive their Messiah.

- What a moment of blessing completely missed all because hardened hearts of men fueled them more than receiving their King.
- However, what a blessing it has been for the Gentiles in the Church age.
- This reality cost that generation greatly, and we will see why in our last 3 verses. Check out v.28-30.

Mark 3:28 “Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter;
Mark 3:29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”—
Mark 3:30 because they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

- We now arrive to one of the most debated and most concerning pieces of scripture in scripture.
 - And that deals with what is known as “Blaspheming against the Holy Spirit” (The unforgivable sin).
 - Much confusion comes about regarding the unforgivable sin and it is my prayer that clarity will be made known today by the Spirit of God.
 - In order to truly understand this “unpardonable sin” we must first define terms in proper context.
 - So let’s begin by looking at the term blasphemy.
 - Blasphemy means to slander, profane, or revile God’s word, work, and/or character.
 - And it becomes clear in verse 28b that blasphemy falls under the category of sin.
 - And according to the passage here blasphemy can be forgiven.
 - So the sins of humanity, personally, can be forgiven through Christ and His atoning work on the cross that forgives sins (past, present, and future).
 - Throughout the scriptures we see the means of forgiveness clearly, for example, check out Colossians 2:13-14.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,
Colossians 2:14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

- If that wasn’t enough, knowing that we have been forgiven and that there is no back door “gotcha” moment, Paul states this in Romans 8:1:

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- So if sins of the Children of God can be forgiven, then what is this particular sin that stands in a category all by itself?
 - The unforgivable sin that Jesus speaks to here is the “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit”.
 - And this term is what Jesus uses as it relates to Israel’s (national) rejection of Jesus as their King and Messiah.
 - Israel blasphemed the Spirit’s testimony at work in Jesus’ life and ministry.
 - Israel rejecting its King resulted in the King rescinding the offer of the Messianic Kingdom to that generation of Israel.
 - At this point, Jesus has demonstrated who He was by miraculous works and means to His people, and they saw Him face to face yet they did not accept Him.
 - Literally, if Israel’s leaders would have accepted Jesus as Messiah, the Kingdom would have come immediately!
 - With all of the evidence and proof before their eyes, they missed the opportunity.
 - And unfortunately for that generation in Israel, their sin of refusing Jesus face to face, as King, was unforgivable.
 - This is why part b of verse 29 says this: “but whosoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin.”
 - Matthew’s account mentions the timetable of this sin in this way:

Matthew 12:32 Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

- It’s like someone telling you, “I have an offer that you can’t refuse.”
 - And they lay that offer down and provide you with facts, proof, and valid information which all points to their offer.
 - However, because you believe that what you have is much better, you miss out on the opportunity of a lifetime.
 - It’s at that point that the individual tells you, “Once I leave, the offer is no good at this point”
 - And with the utmost confidence, you look at them square in the eyes and say, “I’m good. No, thank you.”
 - This was the case for Israel, (nationally), however, by God’s grace, there would be a remnant reserved that would have their eyes open to see Messiah and move beyond the blindness of Israel’s leaders and that generation.
 - Although the nation would face judgment for their rejection of Messiah and the Kingdom, those in whom the Father was calling (remnant) would still be drawn

in the midst of that judgement for the nation.

- As we mentioned earlier in our teaching in verse 23, here is where Jesus' use of parables will commence in His teachings.
 - The reason being is because up to this point Jesus was demonstrating who He was by the Power of the Spirit.
 - However, now that Israel was rejecting the offer to accept Messiah and the Kingdom, it resulted in Jesus' methods of teaching to change.
- From this moment on, Jesus would begin to speak in Parables.
 - His message would become more secretive and less apparent, and the disciples would eventually pick up on the change.
 - Check out Matthew 13:10-16

Matthew 13:10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

Matthew 13:11 Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.

Matthew 13:12 For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

Matthew 13:13 Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

Matthew 13:14 In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive;

Matthew 13:15 For the heart of this people has become dull,
With their ears they scarcely hear,
And they have closed their eyes,
Otherwise they would see with their eyes,
Hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart and return,
And I would heal them.'

Matthew 13:16 But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

- So while Israel's national rejection of Messiah causes a damper on their ability to experience the Kingdom then, it makes way for the Gentiles.
 - So as we wrap up tonight, I want to answer a question that some may ask; Is it possible for a believer to commit the unforgivable sin? No it's not.
 - Why? Because the unpardonable sin deals specifically with Israel (nationally) rejecting Jesus, face to face and accusing Him of being Satan.
 - They were made aware of the truth, had seen it for themselves, but yet hardened

their hearts from it.

- This sin was a “national” sin and not a personal sin. You can breathe and rest in knowing that you as a believer have not committed the unforgivable sin.
- You can also rest in knowing that this sin was committed by only a specific generation and no other nation or generation can commit this sin.
 - May you rest in the truth of scripture tonight and continue to seek Jesus all the more daily.
 - Let’s Pray.

Citation:

- Twelftree, Jesus the Exorcist, p.20. For further discussion on the need to name demons, see: *ibid.*, p.22-23; and Ronald H. Isaacs, *Ascending Jacob’s Ladder: Jewish Views of Angels, Demons, and Evil Spirits* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1998)
- Verseput, *The Rejection of the Humble Messianic King*, p.224
- John D. Grassmick, “[Mark,](#)” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 117.



Mark - Lesson 3E

Chapter 3:31-35

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- Last week, we took some time to walk through one of the most controversial topics in scripture and that is “The unpardonable sin.”
 - We discovered that this sin is something that was specific to a generation and a particular nation and not something that believers can commit today.
 - If you still have particular questions regarding the unpardonable sin, I encourage you to read our ministry article in the Q&A section of the website regarding “Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.”
 - We realized that this eternal sin was beget from Israel (nationally) rejecting their Messiah and King.
 - The reality was that if they would have received Jesus as their Messiah as He had demonstrated time and time again, the Kingdom would have arrived at that time.
 - However, because they credited Jesus’ powers regarding the second Messianic Miracle to Satan, they forfeited their opportunity to the Kingdom for that generation forever.
 - It would only be by God’s grace those who were being called by God, in His remnant, who would have the opportunity to experience the Kingdom.
 - This moment completely redefined Jesus’ teaching ministry as it began to weed out those who had eyes to see and ears to hear versus those who didn’t.
 - He would begin to use parables as a means to separate the outsiders from the insiders.
 - Tonight, we will find verses 31-35 closely connected to the beginning of our study from last week, more specifically, verses 20 and 21.
 - If I were to put a tag on the text tonight it would be: Jesus’ True Family.
 - Pick me up at Mark 3:31-35 as we read the text together.

Mark 3:31 Then His mother and His brothers * arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him.

Mark 3:32 A crowd was sitting around Him, and they * said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.”

Mark 3:33 Answering them, He * said, “Who are My mother and My brothers?”

Mark 3:34 Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He * said, “Behold My mother and My brothers!

Mark 3:35 “For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

- Let’s Pray
- Growing up I would always hear this quote used, “Blood is thicker than water.”
 - To provide context, it would be used regarding relationships and loyalties of blood relatives as much stronger than relationships from “outsiders.”
 - However, as I grew older, I began to struggle with that proverb.
 - It created this false narrative that somehow earthly familial connections outweighed external relationships.

- And this could not be further from the truth!
- **The reality is that within scripture, the power of the Gospel completely redefines relationships to the fullest extent.**
 - The gospel takes people from different backgrounds, countries, native tongues, cultures, and the like and through Jesus Christ makes us all one.
- And sometimes through these Christian communities, they often prove to be more family oriented than even earthly biological families, themselves.
 - Tonight, we will see that through Jesus' words and actions just how the Gospel of God is making a new community of believers like never before.
 - And that this relationship and new community goes beyond biological or ancestral familiarity and into an eternal family.
- Jesus' dialogue regarding who His true mothers, brothers, and sisters are will unfold in the following ways:
 - **1. A familial request**
 - **2. A familial retort**
 - **3. A familial recalibration**
- Check out the first two verses, verses 31 and 32.

Mark 3:31 Then His mother and His brothers * arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him.

Mark 3:32 A crowd was sitting around Him, and they * said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.”

- As we approach the last few verses of Mark 3, we face what seems to be a pick up from last week's teaching.
 - If you recall, last week we discussed the unpardonable sin as I mentioned in our recap.
 - That teaching began in v.21-22 where Jesus' family received word that Jesus was behaving a bit different than before.
 - There seemed to be a lack of Him eating and a sense of hyper focus on ministry and meeting needs.
 - What seemed as Jesus being distressed, to the point of not eating, was really another pivotal moment in Jesus' ministry.
 - It would be assumed by Jesus' biological relatives that He was somehow “losing His mind.”
 - And as a result of this misunderstood assumption, Jesus' family makes the decision to travel from Nazareth to take custody of Jesus in the Galilee.
 - It was at this point in the narrative that Mark pauses the scene and switched over to the scene which led to discussions of the unforgivable sin.
 - We now arrive to verse 31, where Mark resumes the scene that began earlier in v.20-21.
 - And Jesus' family has arrived to the Galilee with the intention to take custody

of Jesus, based upon the news they have received.

- The text tells us in verse 31 that “His mother and His brothers arrived...”
 - This phrase simply confirms the line that Mark uses in verse 21, where he says “His own people heard of this.”
- What is interesting to note in Mark’s account is that he doesn’t begin his account with Jesus’ family lineage.
 - Within Matthew and Luke’s gospel accounts, both include genealogical information of sorts that speak to Jesus’ familial connections.
 - However, Mark chooses to begin his account omitting familial lineages and ancestral connections.
 - And I find that reasoning to be purposeful in my personal assessment.
- The reason being is because at the start of Mark’s gospel, more specifically, Mark 1:1, he begins the account by saying: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”
 - **I believe this starting point plays a key role in understanding gospel priority for Jesus and His ministry.**
 - And we will see this idea of gospel priority will be key throughout the next few verses.
- We arrive to our first section of the text that deals with what I call the “**Familial request**”.
 - Notice the wording that Mark uses in part b of verse 31.
 - It states, “**and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him.**”
- The use of the word “standing outside” plays a very crucial role here.
 - It is clear that Mark is making a distinction of placement between where Jesus’ relatives are versus where Jesus, the Twelve, and the other disciples (followers/learners) are.
- Remember, that the context of verse 20 and 21 must be considered for us to understand, potentially, why this distinction is happening and what it is addressing, specifically.
 - The context in verse 20 begins with the fact that there is a large crowd of people who are with and around Jesus, presumably while He is teaching.
 - So, with this crowd surrounding Jesus, there seems to be a barrier that prevents Jesus’ mother and His brothers from getting to Him.
- On one hand, there is much amazement from those who have heard about what Jesus has done and some are wondering if He is in fact the “Son of David.”
 - Most assuredly there is growing wonder regarding the person and works of Jesus.
- But on the other hand, He is not only being defamed and His character assassinated by the scribes and Pharisees,
 - **But, His own family members think that He has lost His entire mind.**
- If anyone was to be considered cheerleaders for Jesus and His ministry, one would expect it to be Jesus’ family.

- If not His brothers, most assuredly it would be Mary.
- For she has been visited by angels who have informed her that her very Son will be called “Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:32).
- However, Mark 3:31 seems to allude to the reality that either the family, especially Mary, was in fear for Jesus’ life, or there was not complete certainty into His true person as King and Messiah.
 - In one way, Jesus’ family and the Pharisees see Jesus in one particular light, whereas those who are following Him, including His disciples, see His uniqueness and His works.
 - The evidence and His claims are visible and worth following Him to know and learn more.
- This distinction between who has eyes to see and ears to hear is made ever so clear in v.23 of Mark Chapter 3.
 - This is where Jesus’ teaching approach drastically changes due to Israel (nationally) having rejected His claims and proof that He is Messiah.
 - However, not every Jew in the area has rejected His person and work for there are many who still seem to follow Him.
- From this point on, Jesus speaks in parables.
 - Just as a reminder, this is what Mark 4:10-11 says regarding the significance of parables versus the teaching Jesus was doing before.

Mark 4:10 As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve disciples, began asking Him about the parables.

Mark 4:11 And He was saying to them, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but for those who are outside, everything comes in parables,

- As you can see, the use of parables for Jesus in His public teaching would distinguish the “outsider versus the insider.”
 - Parables would be used to “denote those privileged with the mysteries of the Kingdom versus those in whom it was not given at that time” (Mark 4:11, Matthew 13:11, Luke 8:10).
 - So we can safely assume, Mark’s use of the phrase “outsiders”, twice, goes beyond a simple means of physical proximity, but rather it speaks to revelatory proximity.
 - In other words, those who are “inside” and close to Jesus represent God’s revealing work by His Spirit as those who follow and learn more from Him.
 - **There is reception of this Kingdom revelation by way of the King Himself!**
 - Although their understanding is not fully realized, there is an **openness of their hearts to receive this knowledge and new way of life that Jesus offers.**
 - One more observation that we can see from the text regarding outsider versus insider is the actual language Mark uses both in a literal and figurative sense.
 - For example, in verse 31, Mary and Jesus’ siblings are “standing” outside whereas those following Jesus are “sitting” around Him.

- This simply confirms that the learner, the one who's heart is open to the Kingdom program, is spending time at the very feet of Messiah to learn.
- Most importantly it shows the results of how the Father draws men and women to Himself. It moves them from spiritual blindness (outside) to spiritual clarity (inside).
- Check out verse 32.

Mark 3:32 A crowd was sitting around Him, and they * said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.”

- As we arrive to verse 32, notice the distinction between those outside versus inside is further expressed.
 - We now see that those who are inside, sitting around Jesus, share with Him that His mother and brothers are looking for Him.
 - If you can imagine for a moment, the crowd is so large and so compact that Jesus' family has no physical way to get in.
 - So, the only best option to get word to Jesus that they have arrived is by sending a message to Jesus by word of mouth.
 - This scene, upon initial reading, should cause a bit of confusion, and at best it would seem problematic on a familial level.
 - You would think that Mary, being Jesus' mother, would have had instantaneous access to her baby boy.
 - Maybe a red carpet of sorts would have been rolled out for Jesus' mother to make her way to Jesus, her Son.
 - It's this idea that because someone is related to you on a personal familial level that it gives them complete and total access to you.
 - Something like a VIP pass is owed to them or something. “Jesus, because I'm your mother, you should let me in to see you.”
 - However, this is not the perspective Jesus has. We will see later on tonight as we proceed to the remaining verses.
 - Really quickly, if you recall the Wedding at Cana, Jesus did not give His mother the benefit of familial favoritism based on her request of Him turning water to wine.
 - Check out John 2:3-4.

John 2:3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus *said to Him, “They have no wine.”

John 2:4 And Jesus *said to her, “What business do you have with Me, woman? My hour has not yet come.”

- In verse 4 of John 2, Jesus uses a Jewish idiom.
 - To best translate what He said in English would be to say “Your concerns are not my concerns.”

- In other words, the temporal concerns of this wedding feast have nothing to do with the eternal purpose for His earthly ministry.
- Jesus' miracles always pointed to His message and that was for people to see Him as Messiah and to repent to receive the Kingdom of God.
 - Mary's purpose in her son turning water into wine was focused on a temporal need and not God's eternal plan.
 - So, we see Jesus flex His authority as deity in this situation with His mother to let her know what the gospel priority truly is and provides proper rebuke.
 - Yet, at the same time with her request, Jesus still fulfills it to obey His mother and not sin Himself.
- So, as Mary and Jesus' brothers call out for Jesus seeking to see where He is, as word gets to Jesus, His response in verse 33, comes as a bit of a shock.
 - Check out the text.

Mark 3:33 Answering them, He * said, "Who are My mother and My brothers?"

- We now arrive to the "Familial Retort."
 - The text tells us that upon receiving word that Jesus' family is looking for Him that He speaks verbally and says "Who are My mother and My brothers?"
 - Some scholars suppose that this may have been something that Jesus mutters to Himself as if a soliloquy. This could be the case.
 - However, I am of the belief that if these are the very words of Jesus and that Mark is documenting the Apostle Peter's experience with Jesus, that these words were heard verbally to those near Jesus.
 - One would have to imagine that with this message circulating in the crowd there potentially could have been several individuals letting Jesus know the exact message.
 - Matthew's gospel lets us know it was one person who directly tells Jesus His mother's request.
 - So, from receiving the message loud and clear from those around Him, Jesus asks a question: "Who are My Mother and My brother?"
 - Clearly, there was a recognition of Mary and the brothers being related in an earthly sense.
 - **However, Jesus' line of question brings about a challenge of what has been deemed an urgent familial matter at hand.**
 - Jesus knew who his family was; however, He was making a clear distinction regarding true spiritual family versus earthly family.
 - Understand that within Jewish culture, there was much emphasis on valuing natural (earthly) family relationships.
 - **However, it seems that Jesus' priorities here have placed importance on another set of "family values."**
 - It seems as though Jesus is making a point here through His question.

- Alistair Begg mentions in his teaching on Mark that Mary and the family, in a way, reflect the very mentality of the average Jew in that day.
 - That because they are descendants of Abraham (Matthew 3:9) somehow they have “primary (VIP) access” to God.
- However this is not the case, and this, I believe, is the point that Jesus is making in stating this rhetorical question aloud.
 - **That just because you are related in an ancestral sense doesn’t give you access to God or a free pass from hell.**
 - And, in that same way, Jesus is letting those around Him know that His own family does not have precedence over this spiritual family that He is establishing.
- **Our relationship with Jesus Christ is solely based upon the Father opening our eyes by the Holy Spirit and not any sort of earthly (temporal) bonds or familial connection.**
 - In other words, although earthly familial relationships are important, they do not supersede the eternal bonds of our spiritual family.
- Recognize that when we leave this world as believers of Jesus, we will see those in whom are our spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ here.
 - Check out how Jesus brings this understanding of Kingdom focus and priority to a head. Here’s our last 2 verses for tonight.

Mark 3:34 Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He * said, “Behold My mother and My brothers!

Mark 3:35 “For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

- Notice Jesus’ answer to the question He posed earlier to those within this crowd,
 - He tells them “Behold My mother and My brothers.”
 - **To put it another way, “Those of you whose hearts are open to who I Am and the will of God are my family!”**
 - Once again, Jesus makes this emphatic point, that those earthly temporal relationships do not equate to eternal ones.
 - It is those who have eyes to see and ears to hear and become doers of His word, those people are His true family.
 - This relational demarcation is fully explained in verse 35.
 - Jesus states, **“For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister, and mother.”**
 - Really quickly, in Luke’s account there is a scene where a woman complimented Jesus by complimenting His mother.
 - The compliment was in the sense of a natural (earthly connection) but check out how Jesus responds:

Luke 11:27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd

raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.”

Luke 11:28 But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”

- We get even more understanding of what doing the will of God means in Luke 8:21.

Luke 8:21 But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.”

- The word “hear” in the Greek is *akouo* which means to hear with intention and to follow carefully based upon what has been received.
 - **So who are those “whoever”?**
 - **Those who see the revealed truth and power of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit’s illumination and respond in faith.**
 - Jesus’ words in Luke’s account tells us in a few short words that obeying the Father is doing what’s in His word (James 1:22).
 - And this can only come about by God Himself giving us the ability to believe the Gospel and to respond.
 - Whereas, those who do not respond to the Gospel message are unbelievers because there is no response.
 - This distinction of the outsider versus the insider points to a reality of the very Gospel of Jesus Christ, itself.
 - **The Gospel makes clear distinctions! There is no room for men and women on the fence.**
 - **There is either belief or unbelief and as we will see next week, true belief will render fruit.**
 - Once again, Jesus makes it clear that those who are of the spiritual family exceed any earthly and temporal relationship.
 - And this distinction transcends even relational “earthly” boundaries.
 - If you don’t believe me, read the text for yourself in Matthew 10:34-36. This is what it reads:

Matthew 10:34 “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

Matthew 10:35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

Matthew 10:36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

- Here is the reality, if one has earthly relatives who are not believing, your relationship ends with them eternally once you die.
 - However, those who are your brothers and sisters in Christ, those relationships go

beyond this life and into the next.

- The fundamental question that comes to bear as it pertains to your relationship with Jesus Christ is: “Where and in whom does your identity lie?”
 - Is it found in Him simply being a “good teacher”, “great healer”, but that’s as far as it goes?
 - Can you only see Him as what those in Nazareth saw Him as: “Simply the carpenter, whose mother is Mary,” according to Mark 6:3?
 - Maybe you identify Jesus only as the historical figure who stirred up much controversy in the Galilee who claimed to be Messiah.
 - **Or is your identity found in Christ as your Suffering and crucified King who in Him reigns full deity, perfect humanity, and glorious power!**
- If you do not know Jesus as Messiah, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the better Adam, the Holy One of God, then you have misunderstood who He is and are not in the family.
 - **Here is where we see the familial recalibration.**
 - There is a cost that comes in following Christ versus following the world. Are you doing the will of God or the will of man?
- Remember what the disciples gave up for the sake of following Christ?
 - But, most importantly, that God Himself was drawing them to make them His people.
 - These men gave up their careers, they left their fathers and family all for the sake of following Jesus.
 - They left what was familiar for who was eternal, even when they didn’t fully realize it yet. There was this compelling draw to Jesus!
- Matthew’s gospel provides this sense of abandoning the familiar for the eternal. Matthew 10:37-39:

Matthew 10:37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Matthew 10:38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Matthew 10:39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

- **Doing the will of God by obeying His word (the Gospel) is how those who are of God stand out from those who are not, and that obedience yields fruit.**
 - And, it is clear that doing His will comes with great cost.
 - When my wife came to faith in Christ years back, her life was dynamically changed.
 - Growing up in her home she was raised as a Jehovah's Witness.
 - As a matter of fact, her family was deep within this religious organization, so much so that her grandfather was a high ranking elder.
 - When the Lord opened her eyes, her family cut her off and completely distanced

themselves from her.

- Her decision to follow Jesus and making it known to her family cost her greatly.
- To throw fuel on the fire, when she married me, it made matters worse.
- By God's grace, between the time my wife came to faith in Christ to the time we got married, my wife had grown close to an entire community of believers who became her true family.
 - They took her in, loved on her, and became the very family she needed.
 - These believers to this day remain her big brothers and sisters in Christ and will continue to be in her life now and in the life to come.
- To the world, my wife being alienated from her family would be considered an outsider situation, however to the family of God she was truly an "insider."
 - The reality is there is much risk with being an insider. It comes with great cost.
- We see this reality, as well, with the rich young ruler who was seeking to obtain eternal life.
 - He failed to realize that eternal life is not found in what you can do or what earthly relationships you have or possessions you flex.
 - **But, truly coming to know eternal life is in fact losing one's life to find it and it can only be found in Christ alone.**
- Jesus makes it known that your family ties do not secure you a spot in the Kingdom.
 - **Only repenting before Holy God, recognizing you are a sinner, and turning to the Only One that can forgive you of sins, Jesus Christ, is the only means by which one can be saved.**
 - And this reality can only become reality if you have personally been drawn to Christ by the Father and the Spirit having opened your eyes.
- And our text shows us tonight that Jesus' own family at that time did not fully see the truth of who He truly was.
- They were so close to Him in a familial sense but yet could not see who He truly was.
 - It's not until after Jesus' resurrection that His brother James believes and becomes a great leader in the early church.
 - **Knowing Jesus and His person can only be revealed through personal encounter and not familial connection.**
 - And along with this divine revelation comes a draw to obedience to His word and His works.
 - The true mark of Kingdom family is their response to their King in the here and now.
 - And the reward in it all is that those in whom you serve alongside now, who are in Christ, will be those in whom you will serve with in the Kingdom that is to come.
 - **The question is: which group are you?**

- Are you the “outsider” trying to pull the family card because a friend from work or a loved one has a personal relationship with Jesus, but not you?
- Or are you the “insider”, the one who is sitting at the very feet of Jesus so that you may be taught and to grow in your love of His word in obedience to His will and way?
 - Next week, we will observe just how this process of being inside versus outside truly plays out in a practical way as we learn about the parable of the sower.
 - Let’s Pray.



Mark - Lesson 4A

Chapter 4:1-12

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- Last week we explored Jesus' explanation of what it means to be His true family.
 - We witnessed that Jesus' true family was distinct from that of His earthly family in that He placed much emphasis on His spiritual family.
 - Jesus mentioned that His spiritual family (insiders) are those who both hear the word of God and do the word.
 - I believe the words "hear" and "do" will speak volumes into the greater understanding of this parable in which we will see tonight and in the next teaching.
 - Due to the depth of this parable and the length of verses we are going to break this up into two separate teachings (Part 1 and 2).
 - I believe that laying a foundation of the parable of the soils will give us greater understanding of Jesus' other parables regarding the Kingdom Program.
 - We will also see that this concept of insiders and outsiders will continue into tonight's teaching and provides us great context for tonight.
 - With that being said, pick me up at Mark 4:1-12 as we dive into the teaching of the Parable of the Soils: Part 1.

Mark 4:1 He began to teach again by the sea. And such a very large crowd gathered to Him that He got into a boat in the sea and sat down; and the whole crowd was by the sea on the land.

Mark 4:2 And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching,

Mark 4:3 "Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow;

Mark 4:4 as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up.

Mark 4:5 Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil.

Mark 4:6 And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

Mark 4:7 Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

Mark 4:8 Other seeds fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."

Mark 4:9 And He was saying, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Mark 4:10 As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables.

Mark 4:11 And He was saying to them, "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables,

Mark 4:12 so that while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven."

- Let's Pray
- Whenever tax season comes along and our tax documents are being prepared, our tax

representatives request that we validate the information to confirm for final approval.

- In doing so these documents are done through a safe and encrypted portal which requires a password or access code of some sort.
 - This code provides an extra layer of security for our tax documentation in the event that if an email is sent out containing our info, that no one else can access it.
 - The only way that one can have access to the information is if the one with the access codes provides access.
- In other words, hidden information can only be revealed if access is given by full cooperation of the one who holds the code.
 - In a similar way, we will see tonight that as Jesus is teaching on the Kingdom of God, the secret of the Kingdom is hidden in the parable.
 - And the only way in which someone can know the mystery of the Kingdom is if God Himself provides this divine access.
- Tonight, we will see just how this hidden mystery of the Kingdom will be made known to men and women in the world.
 - With that being said, pick me up in verse one of Chapter 4.

Mark 4:1 He began to teach again by the sea. And such a very large crowd gathered to Him that He got into a boat in the sea and sat down; and the whole crowd was by the sea on the land.

- So we have, at this point in Mark's gospel, witnessed Israel (nationally) reject the offer of the Kingdom by rejecting their Messiah.
 - On top of that there has been some familial conflict regarding who Jesus' true family is.
 - He makes this designation in Mark 3:33 stating "Who are my mother and brothers?"
 - He then states in the next breath, those who do my Father's will are my mothers, sisters, and brothers.
 - Jesus makes it known in Luke's account that it is those who both hear and do the word of God who are considered His true family.
 - **In other words, what is rightly believed about Messiah and rightly lived out to the Glory of God are the marks of a true follower of Messiah.**
 - It is displayed in obedience to God and His word. Not merely in word only, but also in deed.
 - It is from this point that Mark's gospel moves to Jesus' teaching by the Sea of Galilee.
 - Notice that after much persecution and misinformation from both Jesus' family and the scribes that Jesus presses on in His earthly ministry and mission.
 - If I may interject for a moment and speak to Jesus' leadership, I believe it serves us well to see Him in action here.

- Jesus did not stop teaching the Gospel of God after having been rejected and defamed by His own.
- He remained faithful to doing the will of the Father and did not throw in the towel on His mission.
- **May this be every believer's disposition in the face of adversity and tribulation as well.**
- Keep persevering and enduring even when the going gets tough because that is the mark of true faith in Jesus. We will see this further explained in the teaching as well.
- So we see that Jesus' teaching ministry and following continues to grow despite the grumbling and persecution of the religious leaders.
 - Check out the description given regarding the size of the crowd:
 - "Very large"
 - The "whole" crowd
 - Mark makes it clear that His followers have increased in quantity.
- The increase is so much so that Jesus had to get into a boat in the sea to continue teaching the crowd.
 - If you remember in Mark 3:9, Jesus and His disciples have a boat ready for when crowds became too pressing.
 - The need for the boat here simply confirms for the reader then and now that there was immense growth in Jesus' following.
- It's important that as we see the crowd increase that we ask the question: "Who is included within this crowd of people?"
 - Are these all men and women who believe in Jesus' claims as Messiah or not?
- Remember that at this point in Jesus' ministry there are a smorgasbord of people following Him.
 - Recall for a moment the healing of the paralytic man at Peter's home. Within that crowd were the scribes and not just all "interested parties".
 - So we can assume that the crowd was comprised of a diverse group of people such as:
 - 1. Followers and those committed to Jesus as Messiah
 - 2. Traveling skeptics and critics (scribes and others)
 - 3. Individuals solely interested in their own particular interest (i.e. healing, miracles, and other miraculous signs and wonders)
- Whatever the heart intentions of these men and women may be, Jesus' teaching method will weed out the outsiders from the insiders.
 - Notice what Mark says in the very next two verses.

Mark 4:2 And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching,

Mark 4:3 "Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow;

- So here we have Jesus, as promised, teaching this large crowd in parables.
 - Again, a parable is a figure of speech which uses something common and familiar in our lives and it correlates that with something moral, ethical, or provides spiritual truth.
 - In this case and context for Jesus' use of parables, it is in regards to the Kingdom Program.
 - And within proper context, Mark is moving the reader into Jesus answering this question regarding the Kingdom of God and how one enters.
 - Remember our last two teachings were hinged on the reality of Israel having had rejected their King.
 - And because of their refusal of the Kingdom right then and there the offer was rescinded, and their hearts were hardened.
 - The question becomes "How does the Kingdom program move forward and with whom will it be given to now?"
 - The only reasonable answer we come to is what Jesus says in Mark 4:9, that the Kingdom will be revealed to those in who "Have ears to hear and eyes to see"
 - We will see in greater detail tonight how Jesus' teaching in parables is simply a fulfillment of scripture.
 - With that being said let us turn to the parable that Jesus will share regarding how men and women will come to know the kingdom and who will be in the Kingdom.
 - The parable that we come across today is known as the Parable of the Soils.
 - As we read in our opening reading of the text together, there seems to be three things in this parable:
 - 1. Sower
 - 2. Seed
 - 3. Soils
 - We will take our time in part one of this teaching in understanding some background regarding this parable to have clear context.
 - Let's begin with verse 3, "Listen to this! Behold the sower went out to sow;"
 - Jesus begins this teaching with a declarative announcement. One could imagine with much emphasis Him saying "Listen to this!"
 - The word "listen" here in the Greek is *akouo*.
 - It is this idea of hearing with intention so that those who are able to receive understanding can truly perceive with true spiritual insight.
 - And after He grasps their attention, He says "there was a sower that went out to sow."
 - As we read from the top of the night, there are 4 soil conditions that the sower throws seed to.
 - Let's walk through the four conditions of the soils by reading those passages again.

Mark 4:4 as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came

and ate it up.

Mark 4:5 Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil.

Mark 4:6 And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

Mark 4:7 Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

Mark 4:8 Other seeds fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.”

- So what we can gather from just a general read of the parable is that it is reflecting that of an agrarian life within the first century in Palestine.
 - Farming was a common thing during the first century and its methods to produce crops was not unfamiliar to the reader at that time.
 - As a matter of fact farming was essential and the means of food was dependent upon those with farmland.
 - The goal for the sower/farmer is that their seed would produce a harvest that yielded well.
 - According to this parable there is a sower who is indiscriminately throwing out seed among the field.
 - There seems to be a sense of random scattering without a care as to where the seed is landing.
 - This is key to note because this parable does not place much emphasis upon the sower. Simply what the sower does, and that is sow seed.
 - We will come back to this point in detail in our next teaching for part 2.
 - Let's now move on to the soils themselves.
 - The first soil that we see is in verse 4.

Mark 4:4 as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up.

- The first soil is said to have landed “beside the road”. Apparently, the seed fell on what would have been considered a “hard-packed road” or trail.
 - If you could imagine these dirt paths were created in that day so that people would not walk through the grain fields causing destruction to the field.
 - So with this constant walking on the trail whether by bare feet or with sandals, the path would have become beaten over time.
 - So for seed to have the opportunity to penetrate the soil was impossible.
 - The seed would simply sit on top of the soil and as a result, would be devoured by birds.
 - So here is the summary for the 1st soil condition:
 - 1. Hard-compacted soil

- 2. Impenetrable
- 3. Seed can't be planted
- So because of these conditions, Jesus says the seed is stolen away by the birds and cannot produce more crop.
 - This is the first soil.
 - Let's look at soil #2.

Mark 4:5 Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil.

Mark 4:6 And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

- So with soil #2, Jesus says that the ground is “rocky ground” and this ground does not have much top soil.
 - He then mentions that in this soil condition there happens to be immediate growth but later, because of its shallow top soil, when the sun rises the plant withers and dies.
 - In order for us to better understand this soil condition, it requires some topographical understanding of the region of Palestine.
 - Rocky ground is a type of soil in the mountainous regions of Palestine.
 - For those native to South Texas, you are familiar with this type of soil.
 - This type of soil contains a thin topsoil and right underneath it is a layer of limestone rock.
 - With the topsoil, there is loose soil available which makes the sowing of the seed very easy.
 - This also allows for the water to penetrate the topsoil without hesitation, therefore the seed can quickly germinate overnight.
 - This is why verse 5 tells us “Immediately it sprang up”.
 - So with this immediate growth and this particular soil condition, the growth that occurs is only short lived. Notice verse 6.

Mark 4:6 And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

- Jesus states that once the sun rises, the plant becomes scorched, withers, and then dies.
 - And Jesus says that this happened because the plant had no roots to sustain the plant itself.
 - So to summarize soil #2, we see the following:
 - 1. Thin topsoil layer with no depth of roots.
 - 2. Immediate (enthusiastic) growth for a time.

- 3. Once the sun rises, the plant withers away.
- This is soil #2. Let's examine soil #3.

Mark 4:7 Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

- Jesus tells us here that soil #3 seems to have a decent amount of soil and enough depth of soil for plants to survive.
 - We come to this reality because presently there are thorns and weeds that are growing in this soil, therefore we can conclude there are some deep roots.
 - However, within this soil condition, Jesus says that as this seed is growing, the thorns are growing and choking the seed's growth.
 - Notice that the seed does not wither up nor does it die, it's simply being choked.
 - The word for "choked" in Greek here is *sympnigo* (*sym-pn-igo*).
 - It means to press up closely against, in the sense of constricting someone's throat to prevent them from breathing.
 - **In other words, although there is growth happening, the seed isn't able to produce more seed (fruit).**
 - So here is what we see in soil #3:
 - 1. The soil here is capable of supporting and sustaining life. (Growth is happening)
 - 2. The seed is able to grow itself and is alive internally (deep roots), however its focus is on trying to survive amidst the suffocating growth of things around it.
 - Lastly, we have soil #4.

Mark 4:8 Other seeds fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."

- Jesus tells us that soil #4 is the good soil.
 - This soil is so good that the seed is able to grow, increase, and yield fruit (more seed).
 - The growth is so evident that the crop that has been produced from the seed scattered in this soil produces crop of 30, 60, and 100-fold.
 - Clearly, this soil is deep, rich in nutrients, and ready for a good harvest.
 - From what we can tell this soil doesn't have any contaminants within its immediate vicinity.
 - **In other words, nothing is choking out its growth and it is able to withstand the scorching heat because its roots go deep.**
 - So these are the four soil conditions within Jesus' parable.

- **And right after sharing these conditions, Jesus tells the crowd in verse nine, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”**
- It’s clear that the parable itself was straight forward descriptively, however Jesus’ statement gives way to suggest that there is something much deeper at play here.
 - Remember, Jesus is using parables moving forward as His teaching method which means there are some spiritual implications that are out of reach for those who He does not give the ability to understand.
 - We can tell the perplexity of this moment because immediately after, Mark tells us this regarding the scene. Check out verse 10:

Mark 4:10 As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables.

- Mark lets us know that the moment Jesus is alone, “His followers and the twelve” began inquiring about the parable.
 - Now, observing the first half of this verse, we can assume that the larger crowd or the “outsiders” themselves have left after the teaching.
 - Maybe Jesus has concluded His teaching for the day and has dismissed the crowd.
 - And maybe these individuals go back to their homes or places of work to continue their days as usual.
 - However, there is a smaller group that remain who inquire to know more about this parable.
 - This smaller group, according to Mark, is Jesus’ followers (disciples) and the selected “twelve”.
 - It’s important to note that the synoptic accounts document different groups of individuals present upon Jesus explaining this parable.
 - Luke states it’s just the twelve, and Mark and Matthew state the disciples and the twelve were a part of this group who had the parable explained.
 - I believe this difference in documentation is no reason to be up in arms about the accuracy of the text or even the canon for that matter.
 - I believe that the documenting of either the disciples and the twelve within this text speaks to our teaching from last week.
 - It reinforces the understanding of those who are outsiders versus insiders.
 - **In other words, Jesus is not going to explain to anyone outside of those who the Lord is drawing to the Son.**
 - It would defeat the purpose of using parables in the first place.
 - **So we can surmise that this group who will have the parable explained are those in whom are being drawn all the more to the Son.**
 - These will be the ones that have the ability to see and hear.
 - **Friends, this ultimately reveals that the illumination of truth within the heart of men and women is only accomplished by the Power of the Holy Spirit.**

- The Holy Spirit is the revealer of all truth from God.
- Check out what the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:11-14

1 Corinthians 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

1 Corinthians 2:13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

1 Corinthians 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

- The Apostle Paul lets us know here that the way in which men and women come to faith in Christ is by their eyes being opened to the truth of the Gospel.
 - Non-believers cannot comprehend the spiritual realities of Gospel truth unless the Spirit of God who searches the deep things of God reveals it.
 - This knowledge cannot be mustered up by intellectualism.
 - The Kingdom truth is hidden from those who have not been given the ability to see it or to know it.
 - Let's keep moving. Check out verses 11-12 regarding this "mystery of the Kingdom".

Mark 4:11 And He was saying to them, "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables, **Mark 4:12** so that while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven."

- Well if it was not clear then it is extremely clear now. Jesus lets the "inside" group know that this mystery of the Kingdom has been given to them.
 - Jesus then makes another distinctive statement which is: the insiders will see and understand things in which the outsiders, on their own, will not see or understand.
 - Jesus then follows up by quoting from a shorter citation of Isaiah 6:9-10.
 - To provide full context to the scripture Jesus is quoting, I want to read it in context.

Isaiah 6:9 He said, "Go, and tell this people:
'Keep on listening, but do not perceive;
Keep on looking, but do not understand.'

Isaiah 6:10 “Render the hearts of this people insensitive,
 Their ears dull,
 And their eyes dim,
 Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
 Hear with their ears,
 Understand with their hearts,
 And return and be healed.”

- So Isaiah provides the reader with understanding 3 imperatives here regarding his commission to ministry.
 - And the three imperatives that Isaiah speaks to regarding what would seem to be an unsuccessful ministry for Isaiah are the following:
 - 1. Fatten the hearts of the people: And as a result they would lose all sense of working of divine grace.
 - 2. Their ears would be made heavy: resulting in them not being able to listen.
 - 3. Shutting of eyes: They would not be able to see properly.
 - If you notice in Jesus’ quotation of Isaiah, He leaves out a particular imperative.
 - He includes both the people’s failure to see and their inability to hear, however, **he doesn’t include the fattening of the heart.**
 - **Noting this difference plays to the significance of the parable itself.**
 - **The parable is speaking to the matters of the heart.**
 - This parable reveals how the mystery of the Kingdom of God unfolds upon the hearts of men and women.
 - That there will be some who will receive it and yield much fruit and there will be those who will hear and not respond.
 - Men and women who hear the very Gospel message cannot come to the full truth of the Gospel because of their hardened hearts.
 - Because of man’s inability to come to that truth on their own. It renders them spiritually dead.
 - And therefore, they cannot bear any fruit of the Kingdom nor possess its bountiful beauty and grace.
 - The kingdom of God is a mystery because it is God that moves its message from being hidden to revealed.
 - It is God that moves hardened hearts to soften and become receptive hearts.
 - Hardened soils to “good” soils.
 - What we can gather from tonight’s teaching on the parables of the soil is that, clearly, the soils represent the heart and how well it receives and responds to the seed.
 - Which begs the question: “What is the seed representing in this parable?”
 - As we prepare for next week, I will give you a sneak peak as to what the seed represents in Luke’s account: Luke 8:11.

Luke 8:11 “Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.

- We are going to dive deep into Jesus’ explanation of the parable next time, and I encourage you all to read v.13-25 in preparation for the next teaching.
 - Let’s Pray.



Mark - Lesson 4B

Chapter 4:13-25

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- In our last teaching of the parable of the soils (Part 1), we went through the parables' agrarian example of sower, seed, and soil.
 - We went through 4 soil conditions that rendered a different result for seed dispersed in that particular condition.
 - And we broke down each soil condition to understand them both individually and collectively.
 - Tonight, we will hear from our Lord and Savior as He explains in detail what this parable truly means.
 - Let us sit at the Master's feet tonight and hear what He has to say in Part 2 of the Parable of the Soils in verses 13-25.

Mark 4:13 And He *said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?

Mark 4:14 The sower sows the word.

Mark 4:15 These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.

Mark 4:16 In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy;

Mark 4:17 and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.

Mark 4:18 And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word,

Mark 4:19 but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Mark 4:20 And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.”

Mark 4:21 And He was saying to them, “A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand?

Mark 4:22 For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light.

Mark 4:23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Mark 4:24 And He was saying to them, “Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides.

Mark 4:25 For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.”

- Let's Pray
- What will they see? Who will they see? How will they see?
 - Jesus tells His close followers and the Twelve about the mystery of the Kingdom of

God and He does this in parable form.

- The mystery of the Kingdom would entail the unfolding of the Kingdom of God both partially now and eventually in its full consummation.
- This news of the coming Kingdom begs some questions:
 - 1. What do the citizens of the Kingdom look like?
 - 2. How do the citizens of this Kingdom behave?
 - 3. How does one come to the knowledge of the Kingdom and its future glory?
- We witnessed in Part 1 of the Parable of the Soils that the knowledge of the Kingdom of God is revealed in the hearing and accepting of the word of God.
 - The hearing and acceptance of this truth is only realized because the Spirit of God opens up the hearts and minds of men and women to know and respond.
- You will know those who will have accepted this grace gift of salvation and come to the reality of this eschatological unveiling by the fruit they bear.
 - Jesus has just taught the disciples and the Twelve the reality of the Kingdom and those who will possess it.
 - However, in telling them the parable, they will need further explanation in their hearing of the Gospel of God so that they may come to full knowledge.
- We will take a peek behind the veil to witness the very unfolding of the mystery of the Kingdom of God.
 - He who has ears to hear let them hear. Pick me up at verse 13.

Mark 4:13 And He *said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?”

- We see at this point of Jesus’ teaching the disciples and the Twelve this parable that there seems to be some sort of confusion as to what Jesus just said.
 - We see this clearly in the questions that Jesus poses here in verse 13 to His disciples and the Twelve.
 - You can almost sense that Jesus believed these men should have known what the parable meant.
 - Perhaps there was some non-verbal communication happening at this point.
 - Maybe the looks on the disciples’ faces were a bit perplexed as if crickets were going off and their heads tilted in utter confusion.
 - Plainly put, the disciples did not understand the parable that Jesus gave, which is what would have prompted Jesus’ questions in the first place, but more specifically, His 2nd question:
 - “How will you understand all the parables?”
 - We can safely assume as we inferred in Part 1 of our teaching through the Parable of the Soils that this parable would be the easiest to understand.
 - This would be the parable in which all the rest would be built upon. So knowing this parable was key to understanding the rest.

- So in what seems to be a bit of Jesus' frustration, He moves to provide the interpretation of the parable so that clarity and understanding could be given.
 - And it's in verse 14 that Jesus begins to provide the explanation. Check out the text.

Mark 4:14 The sower sows the word.

- If you recall in Part 1, we discussed that this parable was agricultural in nature and most connected with that of farming.
 - In that we were given 3 specific items with the parable:
 - The Sower
 - The Seed
 - The Soils
 - And with that, from Jesus' opening line of explanation in verse 14, He tells us that the sower/farmer sows the seed.
 - As we read in Luke's account last time, the seed in the parable is the word of God (the Gospel) according to Luke 8:11.
 - And it's here that Jesus gives clear distinction as to the role of the sower.
 - Again, not much emphasis is given to the sower except for the reality of what they do.
 - Simply put, the sower sows the word of God.
 - The sower, from what we can tell, is faithful to sow the word of the Gospel.
 - And what is most encouraging is that the sower sows the seed despite the varied soil conditions.
 - At every opportunity given, regardless of the soil's condition, the sower indiscriminately sows the seed.
 - Could this be why the Apostle Paul mentions these words in Romans 10:14-17? Check it out with me:

Romans 10:14 How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

Romans 10:15 How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!"

Romans 10:16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- In order to know and benefit from the power of the Gospel, the message of the Gospel must be preached. It must be heard!
 - Jesus will now move to explain each soil condition. Check out verse 15.

Mark 4:15 These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.

- So what we see from soil condition #1 is that the individual does in fact hear the word of God.
 - However, because of the type of ground that this soil is in, the seed has no opportunity to root itself in the hearts of the individual.
 - Therefore, because there are no spiritual roots, there is no spiritual fruit.
 - In other words the message of the Gospel goes in one ear and out the other.
 - Jesus tells us this happens because Satan, the moment that the word is heard, takes up the word.
 - So we have a hearer of the word but no reception of the word, which means there is no fruit.
 - Therefore, we can conclude that this individual is not a believer and is not saved.
 - Let's look at verse 16-17

Mark 4:16 In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; **Mark 4:17** and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.

- As we approach condition #2, I want to make us aware that at face value this condition can be misleading, therefore we must approach it carefully.
 - Notice again that this person hears the word as well.
 - And what can potentially catch someone off guard regarding condition #2 is how the individual reacts to what they hear.
 - The text tells us that when the word is heard, they immediately receive it with joy.
 - One could look at this and be elated for this particular hearer.
 - Joy should be the result of every hearer!
 - However, Jesus' explanation of this condition does not end here. We must continue reading.
 - As we continue reading in verse 17, you'll notice that this individual has "no firm root" within their hearts.
 - If you think this is confusing, keep reading on in the same verse.
 - The text tells us, because there is no root in this person, "their ability to remain is only temporary."
 - Or as the ESV records "they endure for a little while."

- The moment that tribulation or persecution comes knocking at their door on account of the Word, this individual “falls away.”
 - This word “fall away” in the Greek is the word *skandolizo*.
 - It is used 29 times in the New Testament and of those 29 times, 15 are used in the passive tense, of which this one is.
 - And the passive tense carries the sense of falling away into apostasy.
- In other words, the immediate joy of this individual is fleeting and temporary.
 - Their measure of joy is not rooted in an everlasting hope, but rather it is rooted in false belief.
- The “immediate joy” springs forth from what can be benefited from knowing Christ rather than what it means to be fully satisfied knowing Christ alone.
 - This person’s hope rests not upon the supremacy and sovereignty of Christ but rather a “name it and claim it” mentality.
 - The moment that the healing doesn’t happen or the moment that the “blessing” doesn’t come, they abandon the faith.
 - Ultimately revealing their hearts were never rooted in Christ of the Scriptures.
- 1 John 2:19 tells it in this way:

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

- One that does not endure with a Christ it claims to love is a heart that never held to the Christ of Scripture.
 - The believer truly rooted in the faith is anchored not only to what was heard and first received, but they are anchored to the One in whom the content, of what was heard, is all about – Jesus Christ.
 - Friends, a crucified Christ points us to the reality that we too will face suffering; He points us to a carrying of our own crosses.
 - Seeing and knowing a resurrected Jesus provides the hope of knowing that we too can and will endure to the end despite the suffering.
 - The Word Faith and Prosperity Gospel movements are confusing thousands of people into believing that Christ is here to benefit their bottom line or for their best life.
 - But that type of gospel brings no true satisfaction and a genie for a type of christ.
 - Only a suffering and crucified Christ can bring complete and total joy, because in Him on account of His word, our souls must be anchored in the Lord.
 - Let's keep moving to verses 18 and 19.

Mark 4:18 And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word,

Mark 4:19 but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

- Condition #3 if you recall was the soil where the seed was sown among thorns.
 - Notice, again, we see that this person hears the word as well.
 - Most importantly, we must pay close attention to the response of the seed in this soil.
 - It is in Jesus' explanation here that He flushes out what the thorns represent in this parable.
 - The thorns, Jesus explains, are:
 - 1. The cares of the world
 - 2. The deceitfulness of riches
 - 3. The desires for other things
 - Jesus states that these are the proverbial thorns that choke the Word, therefore causing unfruitfulness.
 - Notice that this person does have the word of God rooted in their hearts, which means they are believers.
 - However, their affections and attention are towards the things of this world rather than them having eyes for eternity.
 - In other words, this person hears the Word but does not yield fruit of the word.
 - I love Luke's account on Jesus' explanation of this parable as it provides us with clear spiritual insight.
 - Check out Luke 8:14 quickly:

Luke 8:14 The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

- Did you notice the ending of verse 14? It's quite revealing isn't it?
 - "...and bring no fruit to maturity."
 - The person that falls into the Condition #3 category is one who the word of God has set root in their hearts, however they are distracted with the world around them.
 - They seek for temporary satisfaction rather than attaining eternal rewards.
 - The deceitfulness of this person's riches provide a false sense of security and comfort.
 - This is why scripture speaks to the reality that the love of money is the root of all evil.
 - It's not that money is bad, it's the motive behind the money that leads to further steering from the main thing.

- I love what Paul instructs young Timothy to teach and instruct to those in whom he is leading. Turn with me to 1 Timothy 6:17.

1 Timothy 6:17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

- Friends, our joy and pleasure, affections and attention, our work and our aim should be solely to and for the Glory of God.
 - The goal is not to store up your treasures in a world that is perishing.
 - The goal is not to focus on 401K and other investments, all the while depriving your spiritual health and maturation.
 - Although money and careers, and things of this nature aid in accomplishing certain familial obligations, they do not and should not supersede the priority of the Kingdom program.
 - The true goal is Gospel fruitfulness which renders eternal rewards and effectiveness for the Kingdom.
 - Let's move to the last condition. Verse 20.

Mark 4:20 And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.”

- This soil condition couldn't be any clearer than what the text presents. As my mom would say, if it was a snake it would bite you.
 - It is evident that this person has received the gospel message and has embraced and is growing in maturity and bountiful beauty.
 - Jesus says here that the word was heard, it was accepted, and it bears fruit.
 - Seems to be that this heart is a receptive heart that moved from simply hearing to effectual doing.
 - One could assume from an agrarian perspective that a harvest that doesn't produce fruit/crop is unfruitful.
 - Whereas a seed that produces a harvest renders itself fruitful.
 - And in the same way the gospel proclaimed produces within the receptive heart, spiritual transformation and spiritual blessing.
 - Bock, in his commentary on Matthew and Mark, states that the varying yield of crops indicates the different levels of productivity.
 - In other words, when the Gospel roots itself in the hearts of men and women, it produces transformed and fruitful lives.
 - Paul says these words to the people of God in Colossae. Check out what he tells them in Colossians 1:5-6.

Colossians 1:5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel
Colossians 1:6 which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth;

- The question and answer that is screaming to be asked and answered here is: What does the gospel do within the prepared hearts of the hearer?
 - It bears much fruit!
 - Jesus points to this reality that the gospel demands a proper response in your life as well as mine.
 - If one has truly been drawn by God, there will be external evidence (fruit) to show for what dwells in you richly (the word of God).
 - It is important to note here that the fruit of your life is not the measure by which one is justified by God.
 - Salvation is not based upon what you do for God but rather what God has graciously done for you.
 - We are justified by faith alone in Christ alone not by works.
 - Therefore, the proper response that reflects glorious gratitude for the grace God has freely given you and I in Salvation, is a life that wholly reflects His glory!
 - This is why Jesus says in Matthew 5:16 the following words:

Matthew 5:16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- ◦ Watch how Jesus provides a proper illustration of what a life captured by the Gospel looks like. Check out verses 21-23.

Mark 4:21 And He was saying to them, “A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand?

Mark 4:22 For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light.

Mark 4:23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

- It is here that Jesus further works out his explanation with proper illustration.
 - This particular illustration that Jesus uses is one that was extremely relatable to the 1st century reader and audience.
 - Notice that Jesus is speaking about a lamp and a lamp stand.
 - This may seem to be a simple detail, but it makes the most potent point.
 - For a source of light to be placed in a home during the 1st century, it required the pouring of oil into an oil lamp.
 - As you know there were no electrical grids or power sources of that caliber

during that time as we have today.

- It's not like how my kids freely leave on the light as if they pay the electric bill every month.
- The value of having to burn oil for light was so costly that knowing where in the home this light would be placed was of great importance.
 - So because of the value of the light and the cost it took to purchase oil, it would be a waste of time, money, and resources to put the light under a basket or a bed for that matter.
- The purpose of the light is to be made visible and to illuminate every dark corner in the vicinity.
 - Light illuminates the dark areas and reveals what is hidden.
- In the Hebrew scriptures, lampstands serve as a symbol of people's connection with Yahweh and the anticipation of His full light shining upon them.
 - In other words, the way in which people know what is within you will be seen in what comes out of you!
 - The Christian should be known and marked by what they believe, and it should be visibly evident in how they live.
- Hear me when I say this: this is not performance Christianity. This is simple spiritual maturity!
 - Are you maturing in the faith or are you still on the same spiritual level as when you first came to faith in Jesus?
 - The Gospel demands a whole-life response!
- Check out what Martyn Lloyd-Jones said in his book, "What is an Evangelical?"

"There is no purpose in having a basis or a confession of faith unless it is applied. So we must assert the element of discipline as being essential to true life of the church. And what calls itself a church which does not believe in discipline, and does not use it and apply it, is therefore not a true church."

- Notice what Jesus says in v.23. He states that "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."
 - Recognize that Jesus has just explained the parable to them.
 - He is now drawing those closest to Him to lean in and pay close attention to what He has said and is saying to make a point.
 - The Greek word for "hear" is *akouo* which is in the present, active imperative.
 - Meaning this goes beyond simply hearing to hear, but rather the hearing translates to doing.
 - The idea is that you listen to obey and that the more you listen, the more you obey.
 - Check out how the last two verses provide the key to the point of hearing and obeying.

Mark 4:24 And He was saying to them, “Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides.

Mark 4:25 For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.”

- Jesus begins to wrap up His point with the staunch reality of the light of the Gospel and its implications upon the hearts of men and women.
 - The purpose of the light is to be made known and to reveal areas of darkness so that you may know the way and know the truth.
 - It’s like driving a car in the dark on a two-lane road in the middle of nowhere.
 - You are unfamiliar with the area and the only way to know where you are going is to have your headlights on.
 - The moment that you turn on the lights, everything becomes visible and you become informed of what is around you and before you.
 - In this same way, Jesus is making known the importance of the truth which has been revealed to the disciples.
 - But most importantly, what must be done with the information that has been revealed.
 - Once the headlights are on it makes no sense to turn the headlights back off.
 - You now must grow with the illumination and information that you have.
 - This is why Jesus tells them, “Take care of what you listen to...”
 - I love how the New Living Translation reads in this verse.

Mark 4:24 (NLT) Then he added, “Pay close attention to what you hear. The closer you listen, the more understanding you will be given—and you will receive even more.

- To put it another way, as you grow in spiritual maturity in obedience to Christ which leads to more fruit, the greater your rewards will be in the Kingdom.
 - Your fruitfulness is measured by your obedience, and your obedience reveals your affections.
 - The efforts that we put towards this world should be put into the work that we do for the Kingdom of God because of the Light of life we know in Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus sums up His point of the last two soils at the end here in verse 25.
 - He mentions that just as those who bear more fruit bear more reward in the Kingdom, he mentions the opposite for the believer that bears no fruit.
 - Check out part b of verse 25, “whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.”
 - Condition #3 Christians fall into the consequences mentioned in part b of verse 25.
 - For the believer who keeps their lights under the bowl; hide their witness in

the world because of their love for this world, Jesus makes it clear that their rewards will be few to none in the Kingdom.

- Check out what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:9-15.

1 Corinthians 3:9 For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.

1 Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it.

1 Corinthians 3:11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

1 Corinthians 3:13 each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work.

1 Corinthians 3:14 If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

1 Corinthians 3:15 If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- ○ The Condition #3 Christian will have nothing to account for what is within them because their rewards will have all been burned up rather than stored in the incorruptible Kingdom that has no end.
- So what do we see Jesus speaking to here in the Parable of the Soils?
 - We see that C1s are completely lost and without hope.
 - C2s have a false sense of belief and simply need to come to know the true and living Savior.
 - C3s are Christians who need to move from spiritual immaturity to spiritual maturity and abandon their need for worldly things.
 - And lastly C4s are Christians who are mature and growing in eternal rewards.
 - Here’s the question on the table tonight: “Which condition do you fall under?”
 - Are you the C3 Christian that needs to, as the Lord God says in Jeremiah 4:3:

Jeremiah 4:3 For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem, “Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns.

- The idea of breaking up the fallow ground and not sowing among the thorns speaks to this need to remove the weeds and thorns that hinder the harvest so that room can be made for fruitful growth.
 - God’s desire for the C3 Christian is that they move from fruitlessness to fruitfulness.
 - And by God’s grace through obedience and prayer the distractions of life can

wane in the background so that the Glory of God may be made evidently known.

- Here is the good news here for the C3 Christian, you can be fruitful, simply begin the work of breaking up the fallow ground.
 - Make yourself available to the Lord and as David said in the Psalms, “Create in me a clean heart that I might not sin against thee.”
 - There is hope, simply submit and obey.
- Let’s Pray.

Citation:

- Chad Michael Foster, [“Lampstand.”](#) ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016)



Mark - Lesson 4C

Chapter 4:26-29

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- Last week we ended our time together discussing Jesus' explanation of how each soil condition responded to the seed it received.
 - The seed itself, we now know, is the word of God or to put it another way, it is the Gospel message.
 - The message of this good news serves as the light that has come into the world to be made known to all men.
 - Those who respond to the gospel of the Kingdom of God as we witnessed last week are those who ultimately respond with deep roots and produce fruit.
 - This created a bit of an issue for the Condition 3 individual.
 - This person is saved; however, they have no mature fruit to show for the life they have received in faith and need to mature in Christ.
 - This eventually leads to the bigger question: What is the result or evidence of the Gospel message having been received?
 - The only proper response that can come about is that the seed must bear mature fruit.
 - Therefore, we can assume that the intended purpose for all who fall under the Condition 3 category is for them to move from fruitlessness to fruitfulness in time.
 - We discussed that this growth and maturity of fruit comes with time by breaking up the fallow ground conditions in the life of the Condition 3 individual.
 - The reality is, if this individual has truly responded to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there will eventually be unhindered light and abundance of fruit.
 - Tonight, we are going to witness the powerful yet invisible growth of the seed (word of God) within the hearts of men who respond to the Gospel.
 - Along with that we will witness the ever growing Kingdom of God and its unfolding.
 - I invite you to turn your Bibles to Mark 4:26-34 as we dive into the Parable of the Growing Seed and the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

Mark 4:26 And He was saying, “The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil;

Mark 4:27 and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know.

Mark 4:28 The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head.

Mark 4:29 But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

Mark 4:30 And He said, “How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it?

Mark 4:31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil,

Mark 4:32 yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest

under its shade.”

Mark 4:33 With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it;

Mark 4:34 and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.

- Let's Pray
- Do you remember where you first heard the message of the gospel preached?
 - What about when the message of the gospel took root in your heart?
 - Did you experience an immediate change within you?
 - A burst of blended joy and light propelling you into an everlasting relationship with an infinite God who has illuminated your heart to the goodness of His grace.
 - Do you remember that moment?
 - This gift of the gospel could not be experienced without first being proclaimed and in its proclamation came spiritual regeneration and transformation.
 - As we mentioned last week, when the gospel is heard, there are only two responses that are rendered:
 - Either a genuine response to God's grace or an utter rejection of His Glory.
 - To best understand where we are within our study of the Gospel of Mark tonight, it requires that we recall some relevant information.
 - Understanding this timeline to this point, will provide us with proper context to this parable.
 - So we will begin with an opening question as posed in prior teaching.
 - That question is: What moved Jesus to change His method of teaching about the Kingdom from being open and public to now being in parables?
 - If you recall, the use of parables by Jesus is the result of what was witnessed in Mark 3:22-30.
 - It is here where Israel's religious leaders, due to their wicked and hardened hearts, contribute Jesus' second Messianic miracle to that of the power of Satan.
 - We see this witnessed in Mark 3:22. Check out the text.

Mark 3:22 The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.”

- From this point forward, Jesus begins to speak to the public in parables yet privately explains the parables to His disciples and the Twelve.
 - So what are we to take away from this timeline thus far?
 - Because Israel, nationally, has rejected Jesus and has blasphemed the Holy Spirit's work, the offer of the Kingdom coming right then and there is rescinded for a time.

- If Israel had accepted Christ as their King and the offer of the Kingdom right then and there, then they would have witnessed the Kingdom fully consummated before their eyes.
- Unfortunately, this rejection of the King and His Kingdom would for a time, open the door to those to whom would receive the light by having eyes to see and ears to hear.
 - This begs the question: If Israel has nationally rejected Christ and His Kingdom, then who will have the opportunity to see it and enter it?
- Well, we can see a picture of this Kingdom offer unfolding beyond its normative borders in Mark 3:7-8.
- If you recall sometime back in our time in Mark 3, we discussed the pattern by which people in the Galilean region heard of the wondrous works of Christ and His teaching.
 - The regions in which were reached with the riveting news of Christ spread far and wide. Check out the text with me:

Mark 3:7 Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and also from Judea,

Mark 3:8 and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him.

- The mentioning of select regions in which all the people heard of what Jesus was doing is not by happenstance.
 - Nothing in scripture is placed there incidentally.
 - If you notice, the regions named begin in predominantly Jewish regions and end in exclusively Gentile areas.
 - Now why do I mention this? This progression of hearing the news of Jesus and the Light He brings to the region will impact how we understand this parable.
 - Understand that the Kingdom Program will continue to be made known even with Israel having (nationally) rejected its King.
 - Although Israel (nationally) has blasphemed the Holy Spirit, this sin does not impact Israel in a personal (individual) sense from receiving the kingdom.
 - That, although a “leadership complex” is at play, where the people follow what the leaders say, there are those of the remnant who will respond to the message of the Kingdom and Christ as Messiah.
 - How can we confirm this reality? By simply looking at those in whom are among the Twelve selected by Christ. All Jewish men.
 - This confirms what Paul says in Romans 1:16-17.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as

it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

- Now before we jump into the Parable of the Growing Seed tonight, I want us to briefly recap the Parable of the Soils.
 - Because as Jesus mentioned, understanding the first parable will provide proper understanding to the rest.
 - Jesus explained earlier that the word of God is the seed and that the word of God responds differently depending upon the soil it lands on.
 - The responses from the varying soil conditions gives way to how the heart of the individual receives the word of God and responds to it.
 - The heart response of the hearers can range from positive responses in faith, which result in much fruit from the word, to those who hear but do not respond.
 - Wherever the chips may fall, the word of God will produce what it has set forth to produce within that heart.
 - In other words, the word of God will produce the desired result of God to the Glory of God.
 - Isaiah 55:9-11 puts it this way:

Isaiah 55:9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:10 “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
And do not return there without watering the earth
And making it bear and sprout,
And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;

Isaiah 55:11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
It will not return to Me empty,
Without accomplishing what I desire,
And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

- So regardless of where the seed is spread, it will respond upon the hearts in whom the Lord has willed it to respond.
 - The difficulty in this as those who share the Gospel, is knowing two things:
 - 1. Who is the gospel working through?
 - 2. Is the gospel at work?
 - Are the people responding to the message that we herald, or is the word not rooted in their hearts?
 - With the first parable reviewed and proper context as to where we are in the timetable is given, we will now witness how the Gospel of the Kingdom of God germinates and grows within the hearts of men and women.
 - Pick me up at Mark 4:26-27.

Mark 4:26 And He was saying, “The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed

upon the soil;

Mark 4:27 and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know.

- Jesus tells those in His inner circle (the disciples and His Twelve) that the Kingdom of God is like a man who cast seed upon the soil.
 - It's clear that Jesus is once again reenforcing the agrarian parable from the Parable of the Soils.
 - As a quick reminder from the first parable, Jesus provided the explanation as to what the seed and the soil is.
 - We know that the seed represents the word of God and the soil represents the varied heart responses to the word.
 - Ultimately, we witnessed that the gospel within the hearts of men and women can only produce 2 responses.
 - There will either be a response, by faith, which produces joy and bears fruit or a response of rejection and no fruit thereby rendering unbelief.
 - What we can't miss from this particular parable is not how the different soils respond, but rather how the seed itself grows and produces life.
 - He mentions that as the man casts seed, he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, the seed sprouts and grows.
 - Within this parable, Jesus is careful to make it apparent that the man who sows has no involvement with the seed's growth.
 - He tells us the sower goes to bed and wakes up, alluding to the reality that no effort is exerted on behalf of the sower.
 - But it gets better. Notice the later half of verse 27.
 - The text tells us how this process of the seed germinating and growing unfolds: he doesn't know.
 - Jesus makes it clear in structuring this parable that although the man/sower cast the seed, he is not the focal point of the process of the seed's growth.
 - The primary focus seems to be placed on the seed (word) coming into its own by an inner working rather than an outward cultivation.
 - In other words, the gospel does not need your assistance to cultivate spiritual transformation into those who hear it.
 - Could this be the primary focus of Jesus' point here in this parable?
 - If I may be so bold as to say, "That is the point." You and I need not worry ourselves in the minutia of *how* God is moving in the hearts of the hearer.
 - It's like my wife tends to say, "We just need to stay in our lane."
 - This does beg a question to be asked and that is this: Who is the one that is producing the outworking of the gospel within the hearts of the hearer?
 - The Apostle Paul gives us that answer in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7. He says this:

1 Corinthians 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

1 Corinthians 3:7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.

- ○ It is God! God alone is responsible for the growth of His crop and their maturity. He is sovereignly in control of the field.
- To think that the evangelistic efforts we implement in the church are somehow responsible for the growth of the gospel in that person's heart is at best far reaching, thereby steering us out of our lane and into God's.
 - Although a Pastor's efforts at doing an altar call at the end of the sermon seems well-intended and genuine, it stirs up this sense of striving to see if the efforts of the message preached measured up to God's inner work.
- The onus is not on how good the preacher preaches with a particular style.
 - The response of the outworking of the gospel in the hearts of men and women is solely based upon the Holy Spirit regenerating the heart of that hearer.
 - No human being can stake claim to the power of the unveiling and illuminating power of the gospel.
- If I were to say it plainly, the gospel needs no assistance to its content or context! It works all on its own.
 - No fertilizer or seed supplement is necessary. The Gospel is sufficient on its own.
 - We see why the seed of the Gospel and its growth needs no help in verse 28. Check out the text.

Mark 4:28 The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head.

- Jesus continues in His parable about the growth of the Kingdom of God by mentioning that it is the soil that produces the crop itself.
 - It begins growth as a blade, to the head, and eventually matures to where the head of grain is visible and available.
 - It would be at this point of the growth from seed form to full stalk of wheat that the crop is ready for harvesting.
 - This theme of agricultural life has been consistent since Mark 4:13, therefore we can see that the example of this parable and its purpose is building up.
 - Similar imagery with a common theme.
 - Remember in the original agrarian parable that the 4 soil conditions represent the varied responses of the heart upon receiving the very word of God.
 - In other words, the growth of the word in the life of a person is predicated upon the receptive or rejecting heart.
 - The gospel will either multiply and grow in number because of a prepared and available heart or there will be no fruit and no response.
 - One question that comes to mind is: If the soil is producing the crop, who has

made the heart (soil) ready?

- The answer to this question is found in the Greek language for two words: “produces” and “by itself.”
- The word for “produce” in Greek is *kar-po-phoreo*. It means to cause the inner life to be productive or to bear fruit.
- The other word here that Mark uses when Jesus says “The soil produces crops (by itself)” is the Greek word *auto-matos*.
- It’s where we get our English word “automatic” or “automatically.”
 - Meaning that the crops themselves respond on their own not because of the intervention of man, but the divine intervention of God.
 - If it’s not clear by now, God does not need our help in the growth and development of the seeds planted within those He draws.
- The way in which the gospel bears fruit in the lives of people is only by their hearts having been made ready to receive (successfully) the gospel.
 - So thus far we see that the word of God setting root within the readied heart, prepared by God, is then gathered for God at an appointed time.
 - However, before we move ahead too quickly, the text makes it clear that a heart made ready by God responds positively.
- Within these first 3 verses alone, one could see that the goal for those who hear the word and respond is to respond in full maturity meaning produce fruit.
 - What we can tell from the original parable is that there is only one soil that produced mature fruit and that was Condition #4.
 - What about Condition #3?
- Although Condition #3 does not yield fruit, they are saved, however this begs another question.
 - How does one differentiate between that of a Condition #2 person versus a Condition #3 person?
 - This difference is a matter of a person moving from spiritual death to spiritual life.
- The answer to this question by default can only lead us to believe that the end goal for any true believer in Christ is bearing much fruit.
 - Paul says it this way in Colossians 1:10-11.

Colossians 1:10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Colossians 1:11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all perseverance and patience; joyously

- The goal for every regenerate believer is a life that bears fruit to the Glory of God.
 - James 1:18 states it this way:

James 1:18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

- ○ This will make more sense as we look a bit closer to verse 29. Check it out with me.

Mark 4:29 But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

- If we don't see it by now, it's apparent from verse 29 that there is an expected result of the seed and an expected reaping of a harvest.
 - Notice the sense of timing towards the opening line of verse 29... “But when the crop permits.”
 - It is as if there is time being patiently provided for the seed to do its work within the hearts of men and women to produce mature fruit, pleasing to the Father
 - It is as if there is a timeline at play here and the results of all things coming into full effect (bearing fruit) requires one to be patient in the process.
 - If you are the Lord's, there will be evidence in your lives. It may not be fully visible now, but in God's timing, if you are His, that life will come forth.
 - What does Paul tell the church at Philippi in Philippians 1:6?

Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

- This confidence that Paul has is the confidence that the evangelist must have and the believer must know.
 - That, although I do not see or know how this gospel seed is unfolding in the lives of those it roots in, I can rest in knowing that God is in control of its growth and its gathering.
 - The growth of this seed will bring forth life on its own by both an inward and outward working of God's Spirit in their lives.
 - I believe, according to Mark's account of what Jesus was saying regarding the growing seed, that what God plants He germinates and what He germinates grows and what He grows He gathers! Nothing will hinder it, not even human interference.
 - There is clearly a picture that we see here in verse 29 of a harvest.
 - Seeing the word sickle and harvest here in the text should ring into the minds of a Jewish listener – judgement.
 - As James Brooks mentions in his commentary on Mark, he states that “The harvest almost certainly represents the judgment at the end of the age.”
 - Before we move on to the next Parable, one should note that the Parable of the Growing Seed is only unique to that of Mark's Gospel.
 - Why is this parable only found in Mark's Gospel, and why did the other Gospel

writers not speak to this parable?

- We do not know for certain; however, we can make certain assumptions that speak to the purpose of enduring well because of the Light we possess.
- Check out what Peter wrote regarding the seed that we possess as people of God in 1 Peter 1:23-25.

1 Peter 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Peter 1:24 For, “All people are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall,

1 Peter 1:25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.

- Friends, what is in you, which is the enduring word of Christ, will be fully worked out in you. This is a guarantee! (Isaiah 55:11 His word will not return void).
 - Let's move on now to the Parable of the Mustard Seed. Let's read verses 30-32.

Mark 4:30 And He said, “How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it?

Mark 4:31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil,

Mark 4:32 yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade.”

- Jesus begins by asking the question, “How shall we picture the Kingdom or what shall we present it?”
 - In other words what is a comparative picture that best illustrates how the Kingdom will unfold from being paused for Israel now to fully being consummated at the 2nd Advent of Christ?
 - Well, it should not surprise us that Jesus is once again using agrarian allegory.
 - This illustration would especially connect well with the people of the 1st century.
 - Jesus then continues on with this idea of seed, sowing, and growth.
 - And it seems as if the idea of consistency with the first parable is at play here.
 - The only difference here is this time Jesus provides us with a particular seed type. He states that the Kingdom of God is like a “mustard seed.”
 - If you have not seen a mustard seed before, it is quite small.
 - As a matter of fact, Jesus expresses just how small in part b of verse 32.
 - He states that the mustard seed is the “smallest of all seeds”.
 - There are many that argue the point that the mustard seed is not the smallest

seed and they are indeed correct.

- However, we must keep in mind that this is parabolic in nature and is speaking to the mere size of the seed.
- The mustard seed, also known as the black mustard plant, is found in present day Israel.
 - The size of the seed is approximately 1.00 mm in length.
 - It has the potential to grow to be anywhere from 10-12 feet tall.
- So although the mustard seed is not the smallest seed that exists, Jesus' point still remains. Check out how this small seed responds after being sown.

Mark 4:32 yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade."

- Apparently, this small, and what seems to be insignificant seed, at face value, would eventually burst forth in glorious splendor and height providing abundant shade and refuge.
 - I find this to be quite significant in so many ways because this was in fact how our Savior's ministry began – a small start.
 - He was the unattractive, unknown carpenter from a nobody-town called Nazareth.
 - This reinforces what Nathaniel's disposition was towards Jesus being Messiah in John 1:43-51. Check out the text really quickly.

John 1:45 Philip *found Nathanael and *said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

John 1:46 Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip *said to him, "Come and see."

- If this doesn't present you with the humble, inconspicuous, yet small beginnings of our Lord and Savior, maybe Mark 6:3 might help.

Mark 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.

- Why is this so key to see? Because the average Jew in that day anticipated a different Messiah.
 - The Messiah that was expected was one who would be a valiant military leader.
 - He was going to dominate and overthrow the Roman government and rule victoriously with justice and might.
 - However, Jesus' first coming was not triumphal and majestic (But His Second

Coming will be)

- Jesus' first coming was one of humility. It was unimpressive at best. It almost seemed backwards.
- The same way in which Jesus' ministry would begin is the same way the Kingdom of God (Mystery Kingdom) would unfold, in time.
 - And the outworking of the Gospel being proclaimed to the world after Jesus' death and resurrection would continue with the Twelve, with the exception of Judas.
- Friends, the Kingdom of God would be made fully known to all in its full consummation, amongst all, at the appointed time.
 - A question comes to mind: When will that appointed time arrive for Christ's 2nd Coming and for the Kingdom to be fully established?
- Well, when Israel (nationally) responds to the reality that their King was the Christ that they killed and there is national repentance; that is when Christ will return with the Kingdom in full Glory!
 - In the meantime, the opportunity to receive the Kingdom in repentance and belief in the Gospel will be offered to the Gentiles (non-Jews) also known as the "outsiders."
- This brings us to part b of verse 32, where the text mentions that the "birds of the air can nest under its shade."
 - This statement begs a question: Who are the birds and what is providing the shade? Let's first address the birds.
- Remember that in order to understand all the parables, we must understand the first one – The Parable of the Soils.
 - Within proper rules of interpretation, symbols and signs can either be found in the current context, chapter, or previous chapters or books.
 - In this case, we have seen what the birds represent in the first parable in Mark 4:15.
- It is in Mark 4:15 that Jesus explains it is Satan or satanic forces that come in and take away the word.
 - I believe, in a way, this reality of the birds finding shade and resting under the shade of the tree represent evil forces under the guise of Christendom.
- I mention this because the quotes that Jesus uses are borrowed from 2 Old Testament scriptures: Daniel 4:10-12 and Ezekiel 31:6.
 - Here are the text for your reading:

Daniel 4:10 'Now these were the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed: I was looking, and behold, there was a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great.

Daniel 4:11 'The tree grew large and became strong
And its height reached to the sky,
And it was visible to the end of the whole earth.

Daniel 4:12 'Its foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant,

**And in it was food for all.
The beasts of the field found shade under it,
And the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches,
And all living creatures fed themselves from it.**

- And here is Ezekiel 31:6

**Ezekiel 31:6 ‘All the birds of the heavens nested in its boughs,
And under its branches all the beasts of the field gave birth,
And all great nations lived under its shade.**

- This imagery from the Old Testament regarding “birds resting under the shade of the trees,” to a Jew, rings not in a positive sense, but in a negative sense.
 - The reason being is because the Jews were held under captivity and exiled under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylonian rule.
 - Here is what one scholar states regarding this particular parable:

“The history of Christendom clearly confirms this failing to intimidate as a roaring lion, he now sought to insinuate as the subtle serpent. In the first parable, the assault was from without (outside) the fowls of the air catching away the seed. In the second parable, his activities were from within – he sowed tares among the wheat” - A.W. Pink

- So if the birds potentially represent evil forces then the full growth of the mustard seed represents what?
 - Friends, it would represent the Kingdom of God or Christendom as the Mystery Kingdom (Messianic Kingdom) is revealed.
 - Here’s the question for us to ask: How does this particular interpretation pan out? That is the question.
 - If the Kingdom of God is the larger than life tree that is taller than all other vegetation around it and spreads wide, then this indicates a thriving and growing Kingdom.
 - However, at the present time, while the Mystery Kingdom is at play and experiencing much growth, there will be evil forces attempting to rest under its shade for refuge.
 - So what does this look like in a practical sense for us today regarding being in the Age of the Gentiles (The Church Age)?
 - It looks like false teachers entering into the church using the guise of Christianity in an effort to come under the banner of Christendom.
 - It looks like growing apostasy in the church.
 - It looks like churches being more focused on catering to the needs of people than proclaiming the truths of God.
 - It looks like churches embracing more worldly matters versus standing firmly

on the truth of the Gospel.

- I can go on and on but the reality is these evil forces are currently, in this age, hiding under the guise of the church and Christendom as a whole.
- But as the parable of the wheat and tares mentioned in Matthew's Gospel, there will be a period where both the wheat and tares will rise together.
 - It will be in the harvest (judgement time) that what is God's and what is not will be revealed.
 - This position provides a strong dispensation.
- I also believe that, in a way, the birds could also be representing Gentile believers, those who would have been deemed outsiders.
 - Therefore, according to what I can see the text presenting, I find that both these interpretations are not too far off from one another.
 - Let's end tonight with verse 33 and 34.

Mark 4:33 With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it;

Mark 4:34 and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.

- Mark wraps this section of parables here by summarizing the point that Jesus' teaching ministry continues in parabolic terms versus teaching openly about the Kingdom.
 - Jesus' teaching ministry moving forward would be through parables, teaching about the Kingdom in a hidden way.
 - The only way in which outsiders would come to know Jesus as Messiah would be through parables.
 - And those who had ears to hear would come to understand the truth of the Gospel of God in time as more and more is unveiled.
 - The exception to this would be with Jesus' disciples and the Twelve.
 - To this group, Jesus would continue to explain the parables to them in their entirety.
 - This explanation would be in private, away from the large crowds for the insiders would be the ones who would take the Gospel from where it was to the outermost parts of the earth.
 - Let's Pray.

Citation:

- James A. Brooks, [Mark](#), vol. 23, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 85.



Mark - Lesson 4D

Chapter 4:35-41

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- Last week we dove into the Parable of the Mustard Seed.
 - And it was there where we discovered God’s unfolding plan of the Mystery Kingdom (The Messianic Kingdom).
 - Due to Israel’s rejection there would be a pause placed on National Israel receiving the Messianic Kingdom.
 - So until they reach repentance and accept Christ as Messiah, the present age (Age of the Gentiles/Church Age) is open to the Gentiles (You and I).
 - This will be a time where the Gospel continues to be preached and many will come to faith in Jesus Christ.
 - We spoke to how the unfolding of the Mystery Kingdom would have small beginnings.
 - And as it grows, as compared to the mustard seed, Christendom would become this huge monstrosity, but will face much adversity.
 - We learned that birds would use Christendom as shade and refuge.
 - We discovered that within understanding the first parable the birds give way to two categories.
 - In one sense, due to the parabolic symbology of the birds in the first parable, the birds symbolized evil forces using Christendom as a means of cover.
 - This results in us seeing today the growth of false teachers, improper doctrine being taught, growing apostasy in the church, etc.etc.
 - And on the other hand we discussed how the birds also represent the Gentiles coming into the faith and accepting Jesus as Messiah.
 - And in assessing them both, I concluded that these realities are ever present in Christendom, today.
 - Tonight, we will discover Jesus’ power and authority over nature as He calms the sea.
 - If I were to outline tonight’s teaching in a train of thought, we will see the following:
 - 1. A Fierce Storm
 - 2. A Frustrating Question
 - 3. A Firm Rebuke
 - 4. An Unfolding Faith
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight’s text it would simply be this: “Who is this man?”
 - I invite you to open your bibles and read with me our text tonight, Mark 4:35-41.

Mark 4:35 On that day, when evening came, He *said to them, “Let us go over to the other side.”

Mark 4:36 Leaving the crowd, they *took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him.

Mark 4:37 And there *arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up.

Mark 4:38 Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they *woke Him and *said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”

Mark 4:39 And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.

Mark 4:40 And He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

Mark 4:41 They became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

- Let’s pray
- Pain and peace somehow are able to coexist with each other without ever interrupting the one.
 - This perplexity of peace in the midst of the storm almost seems unorthodox at best.
 - Yet we see the beauty of its coexisting ability in one of the most well-known hymns in the church today written by Horatio Spafford
 - I’ll just recite the first half:

**When peace like a river attendeth my way
When sorrows like sea billows roll
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well with my soul**

- Tonight’s section of scripture is no exception.
 - Tonight’s text takes us into a closer and more intimate look at Jesus.
 - His closest followers including the twelve will have their minds rocked as they witness the very power of God demonstrated in the very person of Jesus Christ.
 - They will come face to face with yet more illumination as to the very identity of Jesus Christ.
 - If you thought the disciples had an idea or an inkling about Jesus before, then it’s about to get even more interesting.
 - Pick me up at verse 35

Mark 4:35 On that day, when evening came, He *said to them, “Let us go over to the other side.”

- As we come to the end of Mark 4, Mark begins this section in a very peculiar way.
 - Notice, the text begins with the phrase, “On that day, when evening came...”
 - As a good bible student, we should recognize that the start of the sentence begs a question:
 - “What day is Mark referring to and why would he begin the sentence in this way?”
 - And if we follow the narrative up to this point, we see that, apparently, the day in

which Mark is referring to is the same day that Israel (nationally) committed the unpardonable sin.

- This was the day in which Jesus pronounced judgment upon that specific generation in Israel for the rejection of their Messiah and His Kingdom.
- It was also on that day that Jesus introduced the aspect of the mystery Kingdom in which He explained in Parables.
- We discovered that Jesus speaking in parables would be His new method of teaching, communicating truth about the Kingdom.
 - He would no longer speak openly about the Kingdom, but only in parables.
- However, for those considered an insider, He would explain to them the meaning of the parable.
 - Just to refresh our memory, without going into too much detail, the parables we discussed were the following:
 - 1. The Parable of the Soils
 - 2. The Parable of the Growing Seed
 - 3. The Parable of the Mustard Seed
 - Again, if you have not had the chance to hear those teachings, we encourage you to go to the ministry website or the ministry app for those teachings.
- So, all in all, this day, that Mark mentions at the top of our text tonight is quite a significant day.
 - The day was filled with rejection, much teaching, and will ultimately explain Jesus' pattern of reaching others with the message of the Kingdom.
 - As a note, while we move throughout this section of scripture, we will see, yet again, another dimension of Jesus' identity.
- Mark follows up his opening line by mentioning that, when evening came, Jesus told His disciples and the twelve, "Let us go to the other side."
 - Remember that the context of this scene is taking place near the coast of the Sea of Galilee.
 - We can confirm this in Mark 3:7, Mark 4:1, and here in Mark 4:35. There is repeated phrases of "by the sea" or "near the sea".
- We can assume from Luke's gospel that Jesus is located in the area of Magdala which was not too far from Capernaum off the Sea of Galilee.
 - The question that may be spinning in our minds at this moment may be, "What city is across the way on the other side that Jesus and the insiders will travel to?"
- Well, if we continue reading a bit past our selected reading tonight, into Chapter 5, we find our answer in Mark 5:1. Check out what the text says.

Mark 5:1 They came to the other side of the sea, into the region of the Gerasenes.

- Jesus tells His disciples and the twelve that they needed to travel over to the region of

Gerasenes.

- What is most interesting about this particular region is that most of its inhabitants were Gentiles.
- We know this because as we move further along in our study in Mark 5, more specifically Mark 5:19, Jesus gives us clarity on this reality.
- Check out really quickly Mark 5:19:

Mark 5:19 And He did not let him, but He *said to him, “Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.”

- This trip to the other side of the Sea of Galilee speaks to the reality that Israel (nationally) has rejected their King and the offer of the Kingdom to come right then and there.
 - Friends: Could travel to the other side potentially begin the message of the Kingdom being made known to the Gentile people? I do believe so.
 - Whatever the case may be, it is clear that Jesus will be making His way to the other side of the Galilee to continue in His teaching Ministry.
 - It is apparent that although there is a rejection of the message from the many (the religious leaders) the message must and will continue to go forth.
 - Mark mentions in verse 36 that Jesus and His disciples begin to make their move towards the next destination. Check out verse 36 with me.

Mark 4:36 Leaving the crowd, they *took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him.

- Mark’s account at this point paints a picture that the departure across the way was an immediate one, almost with sudden haste.
 - Remember that this scene is upon the evening of the following events:
 - The religious leaders having blasphemed Jesus and Jesus’ mother and brothers assuming He was a fanatic.
 - Along with scribes continually trying to find a way to undermine Jesus’ ministry, Matthew’s Gospel tells us around this same evening Jesus was faced with two other issues:
 - Jesus is faced with a scribe trying to publicly pledge His life to become a disciple of Christ along with a disciple who had not quite counted the cost of following Jesus. (Matthew 8:18-22)
 - One could see that by the end of this day, Jesus would have been physically exhausted with this crowd of people.
 - It is after this series of events that Mark mentions that the disciples took Jesus along with them on the boat, “Just as He was”.
 - I emphasize, “Just as He was” because Mark 4:1 lets us know that Jesus was already in the boat due to the large crowds gathering. His floating pulpit if you

will.

- So with the time of the departure needing to happen now, Jesus and His insiders had everything they needed right there in the boat.
 - No need for prepping off shore or gathering of people and supplies, why? Because Jesus had those in whom would join Him with Him.
 - One intriguing detail we could potentially skip over is at the end of verse 36, the text mentions that the twelve and other disciples were with Him.
 - But then the text say, “and other boats were with Him”.
- It’s almost as if not everyone who was following Jesus could fit on one boat, therefore requiring multiple boats for travel.
 - I don’t want to speculate too much but there could be an indicator that those in the other boats were willing to follow Jesus across the Lake.
 - Let's keep moving to verse 37.

Mark 4:37 And there *arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up.

- Mark tells us that as Jesus and His disciples, the twelve, and potentially the others that followed, began to sail across the Sea of Galilee.
 - And while they were sailing across the way a mighty storm arose.
 - For us to truly appreciate Jesus’ demonstration of authority and power in these next few verses, we need to speak to some geographical context.
 - In order for us to do this, we will briefly speak to the following items:
 - 1. The boat
 - 2. The Sea of Galilee
 - 3. The Galilee’s weather conditions upon the Sea of Galilee.
 - Let’s begin with the boat: The boats themselves are around 30 feet long, 8 feet wide, and approximately 5 feet deep.
 - They had a flat bottom design which allowed the boat to easily come to shore.
 - On either end of the boat were benches covered with cushions of sorts for reclining in the boat.
 - These boats, although not huge, were able to carry a dozen men in calm seas.
 - And with the size of the boat and the average weight of the men, it would result in the boat being approximately 12-18 inches above the water line.
 - So as they are traveling from Magdala to Gerasenes, they would be cutting across the northern tip of the Lake.
 - It could be estimated that sailing across the lake in a west to east direction would have taken a couple of hours.
 - The Sea of Galilee itself is a freshwater lake about 80 feet deep.
 - Now for the geographical and environmental implications that arise from the unique lay of the land in the Galilee.

- With the lake being below sea level, combined with the mountainous surroundings, on top of the prevailing wind over the hills in the area, it would tend to cause fast rising storms.
 - This mixture of geography, topography, and prevailing wind conditions would contribute to the violent weather pattern that Jesus and His disciples were experiencing.
 - According to Mark's account, this storm came through in the evening which explains the choppy nature.
 - Matthew's gospel says this was a "great storm" whereas Mark and Luke say it was a "fierce gale of wind"
- Apparently, the storm was so torrential, that the waves were breaking over the boat to the point that the boat was beginning to sink.
 - Clearly this storm was unlike what these men, especially the fishermen, were used to.
 - And while all of this is going on, notice Jesus' disposition. Check out verse 38.

Mark 4:38 Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they *woke Him and *said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

- As all of these conditions were unfolding, winds roaring, boats filling to the point of sinking, the text tells us that Jesus was sleeping.
 - For a moment, let's understand the situation these men are in.
 - At best they are panicked because their lives are on the line, facing death.
 - Most of these men are fisherman which means that they are quite familiar with the lay of the land but most importantly, the Sea of Galilee.
 - One would assume as fishermen they could navigate through this trying situation, however their very skills and abilities go out the window.
 - These men are at a loss, yet their only hope is sound asleep in the stern of the boat.
 - This begs the question: How in the world is Jesus able to sleep during a time like this?
 - We can assume that Jesus is getting wet from the raging waters of the sea.
 - And the sound of fierce wind being felt and heard, yet none of this wakes up our Lord and Savior.
 - Maybe Jesus has reached a point of exhaustion after having done ministry and teaching back-to-back, on top of constant confrontation with the religious leaders.
 - On one end the disciples are trying not to die and are on the brink of perishing, while on the other hand, Jesus is resting in the stern.
 - Verse 38 is an interesting text because these men are on the brink of losing their lives, and it seems as if their last resort is to wake Jesus up.
 - And rather than waking Jesus up to help them in this situation or to deliver them from this storm, they ask Him a strange question.

- They ask Him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”
- Do you see the question they asked Him? Their line of questioning is fixed upon their current condition rather than their present position.
- The disciples see their daunting circumstances; life literally flashing before their eyes
- Isn’t it funny how we too can find ourselves in these unplanned situations?
 - Feeling helpless, alone and as if God is nowhere to be found – somehow inattentive and unavailable?
- This text brings us to a similar reality even today.
 - We mistake God’s silence or lack of immediate response as if somehow He is unable to meet us right where we are.
- I believe this speaks all the more to the reality that God is right there with us in the storm.
 - Maybe it is our response to the storm that must be realigned with the proper response of our Savior’s while in the storm – at peace in God.
- As we read this, it should also draw us back to the condition of the original audience in whom this account was written to:
 - Roman believers facing death and being killed in the streets of Rome for their belief in Christ.
 - These men and women hiding in the catacombs of Rome hoping to not be killed, but if they were, Christ was theirs and they were Christ’s.
- Rather than the disciples and the twelve trusting in the One who is with them, they appeal to their feelings and surroundings.
 - And how often do we find ourselves in this situation today; overwhelmed with the weight and worries of our circumstances.
 - We rather hone into what we are going through rather than resting in the One Who is in it with us.
- As I heard one preacher say: “Emotions are great passengers, but they are terrible drivers.”
 - As believers in Christ, we must trust in the One Who is with us in the storm and not our emotions gauging the storm.
 - Christ is with us because of the Father’s immense love for and towards us.
 - Let us keep moving. Check out verses 39 and 40.

Mark 4:39 And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.

Mark 4:40 And He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

- Here is where Mark’s account shows us the dynamic power and authority of Christ but most importantly Jesus’ deity.
 - He mentions that Jesus rises from His sleep and rebukes the wind and sea with a simple command.

- And proceeds to respond to their previous question with a question.
- If you were to picture this chaotic scene that Mark has described, this scene can become a bit comedic.
 - Jesus is waking up from what seems to be a deep sleep, given the condition of this storm.
 - And He is woken by what seems to be a question of great concern.
- I can imagine Jesus getting up from the stern, maybe whipping His eyes with a brief yawn.
 - He looks around, sees the chaotic conditions, sees the disciples' faces of fear, then proceeds to lift His hand and voice and rebukes the winds and waves by saying "Hush, be still".
- The Greek words here for "Hush, be still" are two separate words.
 - "Hush" is *siopao* which means to be silent.
 - "Be still" is *phimo-o* which means to shut up as with a muzzle. As if placing control upon the mouth of an animal.
 - In other words, Jesus speaks to this great storm and the wind and seas and they immediately obey Him.
 - This happens so suddenly that Mark says that the storm immediately became calm.
- There are 3 big picture items that we see between verses 38 and 39 that we must point out. We see the following:
 - 1. Jesus exercises authority over nature
 - 2. Jesus responds to the needs of His disciples
 - 3. Creation responds accordingly to its Creator in perfect obedience.
- You may have noticed that this situation contains some interestingly similar circumstances from that of one particular Old Testament book.
 - If you are familiar with the book of Jonah, we could literally put up similar passages and see similar content yet completely different responses from the main characters (Jonah and Jesus).
 - Although the causes of the storms are different, both situations produce a common theme.
 - The common theme in both is that both Jonah and Jesus trusted in the Lord knowing that there was no need to fear the storm.
 - This is why both Jonah and Jesus were able to rest in the boat while everyone around them were in great panic.
- The reality was whether the storm led to their dismay or to their lives being spared, there was no need for fear for they belonged to the Lord.
 - Friends, this was the faith Jesus was looking for from the insiders!
 - This is why Jesus' question to these men was: "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"
- This very question demonstrated Jesus' growing frustration, yet at the same time it exhibited immense patience.

- Why are we able to come to this particular conclusion?
- Well, if we look at the word “afraid” in Greek from Jesus’ line of questioning, we find our answer there.
- The word for “afraid” in this verse is *deilos* which means cowardly or timid.
 - In other words, do you not see that I am in this storm with you?
- Understand that the issue here is not that these men don’t believe that Jesus is Messiah.
 - They recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah and their faith was in Him, however, their faith required more development into Who He truly was.
 - To put it plainly, they still displayed insufficient faith.
 - This is what prompts Jesus’ second half of the question; “How is it that you have no faith?”
- Can you sense the frustration and maybe even disappointment in Jesus’ line of questioning here?
 - Recognize that by this time the waters have ceased its crashing and the winds have ceased in their roaring.
- Jesus’ point here is, you have seen me provide for others who simply wanted to be healed because I can, yet you don’t believe enough to know I care about your very needs?
 - The disciples have seen Jesus respond in various ways over and over again and yet they panic as if He was incapable or unable to meet the need.
- If this storm was a test of where the disciples were in their trust in Messiah, they have failed miserably, however, in Him there is no failure.
 - Deuteronomy 31:8 says it this way speaking to Joshua succeeding Moses.

Deuteronomy 31:8 The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”

- The real question that begs to be asked is: “What did the disciples see that moved them from cowardly fear to marveling at Messiah?
 - Check out our last verse for tonight, verse 41.

Mark 4:41 They became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

- Mark wraps it up here by telling the reader that after Jesus displays His power and authority over nature itself that it caused the insiders to be afraid.
 - Friends, these men were so afraid that they had to completely rethink the very identity of Jesus.
 - Reason being was because His very actions, authority, and power were beyond what Messiah could do.
 - Notice that Mark uses emotional wording here regarding the insiders’ responses

to Jesus' demonstration of power, he said "They became afraid..."

- Before we make the assumption that this is the same afraid as in Jesus' line of questioning, we have to examine the language here.
- This afraid is not the same. The word for "afraid" here in Greek is *phobeo*. It means a heightened fear in the sense of high reverence or respect.
- In other words, their regard for Jesus went from where it was to a Holy reverence.
 - The question that comes to mind here is, "Why now?" Why does the disciple's sense of Jesus change at this point?
 - This has all to do with Jesus' command over nature!
- To really understand this one needs to have a connection to that of the Hebrew scriptures.
 - Within the Old Testament, the Only One who had the power and authority to command nature itself was Yahweh.
- Seeing this display of power was something they had heard before from generations past, such as how God split the Red Sea and allowed the children of Israel to pass over dry land.
 - Check out what the Psalms say about this experience:

**Psalm 106:9 Thus He rebuked the Red Sea and it dried up,
And He led them through the deeps, as through the wilderness.**

- If that doesn't show you the display of the power that was witnessed in those boats maybe this will hit the nail on the head.
 - Check out Psalm 107:23-32

**Psalm 107:23 Those who go down to the sea in ships,
Who do business on great waters;**

**Psalm 107:24 They have seen the works of the Lord,
And His wonders in the deep.**

**Psalm 107:25 For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind,
Which lifted up the waves of the sea.**

**Psalm 107:26 They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths;
Their soul melted away in their misery.**

**Psalm 107:27 They reeled and staggered like a drunken man,
And were at their wits' end.**

**Psalm 107:28 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
And He brought them out of their distresses.**

**Psalm 107:29 He caused the storm to be still,
So that the waves of the sea were hushed.**

**Psalm 107:30 Then they were glad because they were quiet,
So He guided them to their desired haven.**

**Psalm 107:31 Let them give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness,
And for His wonders to the sons of men!**

**Psalm 107:32 Let them extol Him also in the congregation of the people,
And praise Him at the seat of the elders.**

- What those men witnessed on that boat was only a work that Yahweh could perform.
 - This is why those men were moved to Holy Fear! Could this man not only be the promised King, but God in the flesh!?
 - They have once again witnessed another dimension of Jesus' identity.
 - In one sense the Messianic miracles were in a category of their own; I see you Jesus, you are Messiah.
 - But now they witness Jesus control the things that only God can control.
 - Their knowledge of Who Jesus is unfolds all the more as they experience Him more and more.
 - And may I say, this is the reality of our walk with Jesus!
 - The more you walk with Jesus the more He shows you another dimension of His love, grace, and truth.
 - I love how Mark ends Chapter 4 because He ends the chapter with the question that all are left with after seeing Jesus command the winds and waves.
 - “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”
 - And I leave us with this question tonight: Do you know Him as the God-Man? Do you know Him as the Christ, the Son of the Living God?
 - Let's pray.



Mark - Lesson 5A

Mark 5:1-20

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- Last week's teaching consisted of Jesus' display of authority and power over the chaotic waters of the Sea of Galilee.
 - This was off the brink of what I called an exhausting day full of rejection, conflict, and much teaching.
 - Jesus would tell His disciples and the twelve that the time had come to sail across the way to the region of the Gerasenes.
 - It would be through their travels across the Sea of Galilee that a terrible storm sought to disrupt the peace of the passengers.
 - And while this storm persisted, Christ remained at rest and peacefully asleep.
 - Like any normal passenger, the disciples were in great fear for their lives doing all they could until they came to the end of themselves to turn to Christ.
 - It would be through one simple command that Jesus would speak to the storm, and it would be still to the point of being perfectly calm.
 - Not only were the "insiders" able to witness Jesus' power and authority once again, but they witnessed His identity even more.
 - And as we ended last week, we asked a question that even the disciples asked themselves:
 - "Who is this man, that even the winds and the seas obey Him?"
 - Well, if that demonstration of the Deity of Christ was not captivating enough for you by way of seeing His Authority and Power, then tonight most definitely will.
 - Tonight, we will witness one of the most graphic scenes regarding demon possession, but above all, Jesus' authority over the demonic realm.
 - I invite you to open your bibles and turn with me to Mark 5:1-20.

Mark 5:1 They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.

Mark 5:2 When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him,

Mark 5:3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain;

Mark 5:4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him.

Mark 5:5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.

Mark 5:6 Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;

Mark 5:7 and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!"

Mark 5:8 For He had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

Mark 5:9 And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he *said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many."

Mark 5:10 And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

Mark 5:11 Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain.

Mark 5:12 The demons implored Him, saying, “Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.”

Mark 5:13 Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

Mark 5:14 Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened.

Mark 5:15 They *came to Jesus and *observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the “legion”; and they became frightened.

Mark 5:16 Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine.

Mark 5:17 And they began to implore Him to leave their region.

Mark 5:18 As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him.

Mark 5:19 And He did not let him, but He *said to him, “Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.”

Mark 5:20 And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

- Let’s Pray.
- Well as we approach tonight’s text, I want to warn us that it will bring about a sobering reality in which we currently face in our world today.
 - It is the reality that demon possession is very much real and exists in the world we live in whether you want to fully accept it or not.
 - And because our text tonight presents us with this very real reality, we are forced to stare its truth in the face, especially amongst recent events.
 - The reality is, you cannot look at our world today and hear about the growing and grotesque actions of people and not surmise a dark influence behind these actions.
 - What we are going to witness tonight is an overwhelming account of how demonic possession occurs and its impact upon human beings.
 - Yet at the very same time we will see the conquering authority and power of Christ over the demonic realm and Satan’s agenda towards image bearers.
 - We can rest in the fact that the growing evil activity of demons/unclean spirits in this world is only temporary, for they have a definitive end.
 - Mark will give us a picture of that end tonight and surprisingly enough the demons themselves are aware that their time is limited.
 - With that being said, let’s look at our first five verses for tonight.

Mark 5:1 They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.

Mark 5:2 When He got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him,

Mark 5:3 and he had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him anymore, even with a chain;

Mark 5:4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was strong enough to subdue him.

Mark 5:5 Constantly, night and day, he was screaming among the tombs and in the mountains, and gashing himself with stones.

- Mark’s account thrusts us into another scene in a different part of the Galilean region.
 - As we briefly mentioned in our teaching last time, the region they have arrived in is known as “the region of the Gerasenes”.
 - This region of the Galilee was known as the country of the Gadarenes according to Matthew’s gospel.
 - This area was a relatively small village located midway on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.
 - The region of the Gerasenes encompassed many other cities, one of which was a city named Gerasa which stood 37 miles southeast of the lake.
 - I mention this because with the immediacy of Mark’s gospel, it could paint the picture that everything within these verses is taking place right off the shore.
 - If you were to imagine verses 1-5, they serve as the backdrop, if you will, for setting up the scene that will take place upon the start of verse 6.
 - It’s almost as if Mark has summarized some general information for us from verses 3-5 and paints a summary of sorts for who this demon possessed man is.
 - The text mentions that immediately as Jesus is getting off the boat that He is met by “a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit”.
 - Although Mark and Luke mention that one man is present upon arrival, Matthew’s gospel mentions that two men were present.
 - We can surmise that Mark and Luke’s account have their focus on one of the two men, more specifically their focus is on the one in the worst condition.
 - Notice the living conditions of this demon-possessed man in verse 3. The text mentions that he lives “among the tombs”.
 - Burial tombs during this time were the equivalent to what we know today as a graveyard.
 - The only difference with the tombs within the region of the Gerasenes, more specifically near the Sea of Galilee, was that they were carved from the stone in the cliffs of the hills.
 - As one commentator states “These were probably cave-like rooms cut into the rocks of nearby hills which served as tombs.”

- Mark documents that this demoniac literally lived among the dead (unclean).
- These living conditions, I believe, speak to the reality of the demoniac's demonic activity. It was unclean and deadly activity.
 - No life comes from Satan and his schemes!
- Mark's description continues to unfold because he mentions that this demon possessed man was not a "normal case".
 - The text alludes to the reality that this man had strength beyond measure (super-human ability).
 - This man was both unhinged and uncontrollable.
- Apparently, he is so uncontrollable that not even chains could restrain him.
 - It could be assumed that over time, people from the city, at one point, attempted to bind him with chains.
 - They wanted to keep him as far away from the city and civilians as possible, however, due to his super-human strength, binding him in their own strength was only temporary.
- Verse 4 goes on to confirm for us this riveting reality by mentioning that "no one was strong enough to control the man."
 - This begs the thought that perhaps this was not the first attempt to gain control over this demoniac from the citizens of the region.
 - It could also be assumed that the man's possession had gotten progressively worse over time, because at one point it seems as if they could bind him.
- Whatever the case, it is clear from verse 5 that this man who was demon possessed was being completely tormented.
 - Mark describes for us in the text that by night and day this man was constantly screaming among the tombs, cutting himself with stones.
 - The Greek language here suggest that this voice inflection (screaming) was an ongoing event that did not cease.
- Imagine those nearby who heard the screaming and screeching both day and night – constant torture and yelling in pain and misery.
 - These conditions in which this man was in was horrific. We have to surmise that this man would have potentially been known by some in the city.
 - But now he has been banished to the outermost parts of the region to essentially be left for dead, amongst the dead.
- The man was so tortured that the demon caused him to consistently cut himself.
 - It's clear at this point that this demoniac's condition was like none we have witnessed within the synoptic gospels.
- This brings us to a point that must be acknowledged and that is another characteristic of demon possession: the goal is to deliver torment and destruction.
 - Demonic possession results in erratic and unhuman-like behavior.
 - Let's keep moving to verses 6-10.

Mark 5:6 Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;
Mark 5:7 and shouting with a loud voice, he *said, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!”

Mark 5:8 For He had been saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!”

Mark 5:9 And He was asking him, “What is your name?” And he *said to Him, “My name is Legion; for we are many.”

Mark 5:10 And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

- The scene now picks up in real time and what Mark lets us know is that upon the demoniac seeing Jesus from a distance, he runs and recognizes Jesus’ deity.
 - What is quite interesting is that the text doesn’t mention the distance in which is between Jesus and the demonic, yet the demoniac recognizes Jesus from afar.
 - How is that so? Well this shows us that demons have a general knowledge of who Jesus is within His Deity.
 - This should be mind blowing because they recognize Jesus’ Divine nature and origin yet in eternity’s past disobeyed God’s authority and rebelled.
 - This shows us that there can be general understanding of God but yet still be full denial of His Glory and Person.
 - And yet, isn’t this indicative of how unbelievers who are presented the Gospel of Christ can recognize His uniqueness, but still deny Christ of His deity and power.
 - This friend is the enemy’s exact plan: to sow seeds of doubt and confusion and keep men and women in unbelief so that they may never come to the truth of God.
 - However, we are aware that God’s glory will be made known and recognized by all: both believers and unbelievers – angels and demons.
 - Paul says these words in Philippians 2:9-11:

Philippians 2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

Philippians 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Philippians 2:11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- What should cause your ears to perk, is the question that the demoniac asks Jesus upon His arrival.
 - If you notice, the line of questioning is similar to that of the first encounter of demon possession in the synagogue in Mark 1:24.
 - The demoniac ask “What business do you have with me Jesus, Son of the Most High God?”

- We gather 2 things from this line of questioning:
 - 1. The unclean spirit's recognition of Jesus' deity and divine position which we covered earlier.
 - 2. The unclean spirit's recognition of a coming and permanent end. Let's examine this item.
- Luke's gospel provides us with a clearer understanding of the question the demoniac asked.
 - It speaks to the reality that because the demon knows Jesus' divine origin and nature that there will be a future impending judgment that will come.
- This is why the demoniac asked, "What business do we have with each other?"
 - In other words, the time has not yet arrived has it? This doesn't seem like what was to be anticipated this early.
 - Yet again confirming that the demonic realm has some general understanding of what is to come but not in detail.
- The demoniac was correct in the fact that judgment is inevitable however right now is not the right time.
 - This makes sense why Luke's account in Luke 8:31 speaks to this coming judgment for demons this way:

Luke 8:31 They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

- For in Jesus' first coming, it was not to pronounce judgment but for Him to come to seek and save those who were lost.
 - Or as we read earlier in Mark's gospel, Jesus came for the sick who need a doctor.
 - But do not think that a day will not come that when the trumpet sounds and the sky splits open and Jesus' feet hit the ground, that change won't come.
 - There will be a time of temporary confinement for demons in the abyss until the final judgment where they will be thrown into the lake of fire.
 - Secondly, we see that the demoniac uses a particular title for Jesus in his line of questioning.
 - He calls Jesus, "the Son of the Most High God."
 - This term was often used by the Gentile people to refer to God and the term acknowledges God's residence in Heaven and His Sovereignty (Dan.4:17)
 - So until then, the demoniac knows that his time within this human host has run its course because the Sovereign Lord and King is before Him.
 - To put it another way the owner of all creation has put an eviction notice on the door of that man's life.
 - And what do you do when you are faced with an eviction of this magnitude: You pack up and try to find the nearest exit!
 - It is at this point that Jesus begins to expel the demonic man, but before He does, He follows the Jewish approach of exorcism.

- He asks the demon what his name is to which the demon responds, “My name is Legion, for we are many”
- A legion within the Roman world was an army that consisted of approximately 6,000 soldiers.
 - In other words, this man’s possession increased over time which explains why this man had, what would be deemed, as super-human strength and this degree of torture.
 - Friends, Jesus wasn’t up against one unclean spirit possessing a person, Jesus was up against 6,000 demons fully occupying this one man.
- So with these demons aware of who Jesus is and their eviction notice served, they try to negotiate their terms in the meantime on where they will be banished to.
 - And it just so happens that their quick solution is just a few miles up the way. Check out verses 11-17:

Mark 5:11 Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain.

Mark 5:12 The demons implored Him, saying, “Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.”

Mark 5:13 Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

Mark 5:14 Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened.

Mark 5:15 They *came to Jesus and *observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the “legion”; and they became frightened.

Mark 5:16 Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine.

Mark 5:17 And they began to implore Him to leave their region

- As the scene continues to unfold, Mark seems to zoom out of the present exchange with Jesus and the demoniac and he zooms towards the distance to a herd of pigs.
 - It would be here that the legion would implore Jesus to send them out to the herd of pigs number about 2,000 in total.
 - The question at this point becomes, why the pigs?
 - As R.T Franc mentions in his commentary on Mark he states: “The ritual uncleanness of pigs from a Jewish point of view would add further point to the transfer; from a man living among unclean tombs the unclean spirits transfer to unclean animals.
 - In other words, the focus of the exorcism would be to restore the image bearer to a proper state and to send the unclean spirits to what was deemed unclean animals.
 - We then see that Jesus allows these demons to enter into the pigs which leads the group of 2,000 pigs to run off of the cliff and drown to their doom.

- The reality was, the only way in which demons can escape the host they are in is if that host dies, therefore releasing them from their captivity in that body.
 - We also witness this same situation after Satan has in-dwelt Judas' body and once He had used Judas, caused him to commit suicide.
- From there, you can only imagine the mixed emotions from the owner of this herd of pigs.
 - On one hand they are in awe at what Christ had done but on the other hand in great frustration at the loss of his livestock.
- So it is with this shock factor at play that Mark tells us that the herdsmen ran to the city to tell others about what was witnessed.
 - The crowd would soon arrive sometime later and see for themselves what Jesus had done for the man.
- This crowd of people are now witnessing the man who was once unclothed, unclean, and unhinged now completely in his right mind.
 - Truly this is not what these folks were used to – maybe some are in complete shock and disbelief.
- This man, once tormented by 6,000 demons, having experienced split personality and superhuman strength, is now sitting at the feet of Jesus – fully restored.
 - This change brings about some key things for us to analyze as it pertains to demon possession versus being indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
- What are the typical response of those indwelt by the Spirit of God versus demons?
 - I believe one thing we can see regarding how the Holy Spirit works versus the uncontrollable nature of demons can be found in 2 Timothy 3:16.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

- That Greek word for inspired here is *theopneustos* which means God-breathed.
 - So although we know that the scriptures have human authors that recorded down the information, the Big A author is God Himself by the person of the Holy Spirit.
 - The Holy Spirit spoke to the “little a” author of scripture providing them exactly what to write in their personality, style, etc.
 - The Holy Spirit didn't turn them into robots or zombies whereby these men did not have access to their extremities to intelligibly write the words the Spirit gave them.
 - These men were in their right mind, with full control of their members, completely submitted to the leading of the Spirit to write what was divinely given.
 - The response of the Holy Spirit leads one to holy things, righteous things, and He dwells richly within the believer.
 - Check out how the Holy Spirit would rest upon Jesus at His baptism in Isaiah 11:2:

**Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and strength,
The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.**

- Do you notice how the Holy Spirit interacts with those in whom He occupies?
 - The Spirit of the Lord is gentle, He rests upon us and within us.
 - He does not overtake us in the sense of being out of control.
 - He does not torment us. He does not cause us to respond in ungodly ways because there is no darkness in God.
 - Therefore, it must be clear that being possessed by a demon versus being led by the Spirit of God are two completely different things.
 - And both present two completely different results.
 - In any case, what the people of the Gerasenes witness is a completely different man, but with what changes they see, they insist that Jesus leave their city.
 - Luke 8:37 tells us that the people's desire for Jesus to leave was motivated by fear of what they saw.
 - I find the reaction of the people of the region to be quite questionable.
 - You just witnessed Jesus expel a legion of demons from a man.
 - You would expect much rejoicing and thankfulness for complete restoration of someone they would have known, yet that is not the case.
 - It's almost as if they would have rather kept the demoniac around in his deprived state than for him to be in his right mind.
 - And isn't this quite telling of how we deal with Christ moving in the darkened areas of our hearts and lives.
 - That we would rather deal with our darkness than give Jesus room to invade those areas even if it cost us something of great value.
 - I mention this because there are some scholars that suggest that the economic loss of the herd of pigs played a part in their request for Jesus to leave.
 - Whatever the case may be there, you have to love Jesus' response. This is classic Jesus! This is how He responds to their outrage and fear. Check out verses 18-20.

Mark 5:18 As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him.

Mark 5:19 And He did not let him, but He *said to him, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you."

Mark 5:20 And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

- We see from Jesus' expelling of Legion and making the man whole two separate

responses: We have the crowd's response and the healed man's response.

- And as we have stated in previous teachings, there will only be two responses as it comes to the Gospel of God being made known: belief or unbelief, response or no response.
 - The healed man who was once deemed unclean and unhinged has now been transformed by Christ and he now desires to be with Him.
 - He doesn't just take the healing and walk away, but there is a genuine desire to follow Christ where He goes.
- However, Jesus' response to the man marks what I see as the beginning of evangelism to the Gentiles.
 - Notice, specifically, verses 19 and 20 after Jesus tells the man he can't go with Him.
 - Jesus gives him a directive and tells him to "go and tell all and report to them what the Lord had done and how He showed him mercy."
- This is different than Jesus' healings and miracles before, because prior to this point, Jesus would tell people, to "speak these things to no one."
 - However He gives this, what we can assume a Gentile man, a directive and lo and behold the man follows suit in perfect obedience to Christ.
- The man travels across the 10 cities also known as Decapolis and tells the people of the great and mighty things Jesus has done for him.
 - If you read over this too quickly you might have missed this slight detail – pay close attention again to verse 19 and 20.

Mark 5:19 And He did not let him, but He *said to him, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you."

Mark 5:20 And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

- Mark uses two words interchangeably at the conclusion of Jesus' demonstration of His Authority and Power over the demonic realm.
 - He uses the Greek word *kyrios* in verse 19, similar to what we witnessed when Jesus and His disciples were in the fields and His disciples were hungry.
 - It was there that Jesus declared He was Lord of the Sabbath.
 - We now see that Mark's play on words connects Jesus right back to being Lord over creation but more especially Owner overall, even having power over the demonic realm.
 - This is yet another dimension by which the disciples are able to see their Messiah.
 - Jesus' power is both reverential and marvelous!
 - This is in fact the disposition of the man that was once possessed – and a Gentile at that!
 - He moved from being possessed by a legion of demons to now being securely

kept by the very mercy of God through Christ Jesus.

- The reality for this man in the region of the Gerasenes is the reality for all men and women who move from being unclean to clean – unbelief to belief.
 - This dynamic transformation will either cause one to tremble in fear or marvel in awe at the very power of God through His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - We should marvel at the fact that our Great God and King Jesus Christ has the Power to conquer the schemes and ploys of the enemy, sin, and death!
- This news of Jesus' conquering and triumphant power is worthy to be shared as this Gentile man did throughout the Decapolis.
 - Hearing of what Christ had done in him reminds me of what Psalm 66:16 says:

**Psalm 66:16 Come and hear, all who fear God,
And I will tell of what He has done for my soul.**

- Do you have a story on your lips about your life that speaks to the love and saving Power of your Lord and Savior?
 - Are you willing to carry His name throughout the land telling about how He moved you from death to life?
 - If the Lord could meet the man controlled by a demoniac, He can most definitely meet you!
 - Rather than your fear of God and the unknown moving you away from God, may the power of His word move you ever so towards Jesus.
 - I would like to think that it was through this unashamed boldness of this man, once demon possessed now free, that makes known Christ amongst the Gentiles.
 - Although the forces of Satan are great, friends there is none greater than our God.
 - Let's Pray.

Citations:

- John D. Grassmick, ["Mark,"](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 122.
- R. T. France, [*The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002), 230.

- Last week, Jesus and His disciples had crossed over to the other side of the region of the Galilee to a region called the Gerasenes.
 - And it was there that Jesus was met by a demoniac who was possessed by 6,000 demons – making this man unhinged with immense strength.
 - It would be through Jesus demonstrating His Authority and Identity in this majority Gentile region, that He would deliver this man from his torment.
 - As the man is freed from his personal torment, it surprisingly causes a bit of an uproar in that city.
 - In one sense the man is freed, however some of the local livestock is lost in the exchange, thereby causing the herdsmen and the crowd to have Jesus leave their area.
 - And we saw that although the once demon-possessed man had been freed, he desired to be a disciple of Jesus and follow Him.
 - However, Jesus tells the man to do something that was a bit unorthodox from Jesus' miracles prior to this point.
 - He tells the Gentile man to go and report to those he knows and tell them what the Lord has graciously done for Him.
 - And the text concluded that the man went throughout the Decapolis making known all that the Lord had done for Him.
 - Ultimately, this man came to know Jesus as the God-man – He witnessed Jesus' identity and work as the promised Messiah.
 - And would now make it known to other Gentiles who would receive this news, who Jesus truly was.
 - Tonight, we will witness an interesting narrative that is chiastic in nature and points us to a central theme of believing faith.
 - If I were to tag tonight's text, it would simply be "The 12-Year Issue and a 12-year-old girl".
 - And for the sake of content and context, we will break this narrative up into a part 1 and part 2 session.
 - I now invite you to open your bibles and meet me at Mark 5:21 as we read all the way through verse 43.
 - However we will focus our time tonight in the first fourteen verses; verses 21-34 for part 1.
 - Here's what the text reads.

Mark 5:21 When Jesus had crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him; and He stayed by the seashore.

Mark 5:22 And one of the synagogue officials, named Jairus, *came, and upon seeing Him, *fell at His feet

Mark 5:23 and *pleaded with Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, so that she will get well

and live.”

Mark 5:24 And He went off with him; and a large crowd was following Him and pressing in on Him.

Mark 5:25 A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years,

Mark 5:26 and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but instead had become worse—

Mark 5:27 after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak.

Mark 5:28 For she had been saying to herself, “If I just touch His garments, I will get well.”

Mark 5:29 And immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

Mark 5:30 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that power from Him had gone out, turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched My garments?”

Mark 5:31 And His disciples said to Him, “You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’”

Mark 5:32 And He looked around to see the woman who had done this.

Mark 5:33 But the woman, fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.

Mark 5:34 And He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be cured of your disease.”

Mark 5:35 While He was still speaking, people *came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, “Your daughter has died; why bother the Teacher further?”

Mark 5:36 But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, *said to the synagogue official, “Do not be afraid, only believe.”

Mark 5:37 And He allowed no one to accompany Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.

Mark 5:38 They *came to the house of the synagogue official, and He *saw a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing.

Mark 5:39 And after entering, He *said to them, “Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child has not died, but is asleep.”

Mark 5:40 And they began laughing at Him. But putting them all outside, He *took along the child’s father and mother and His own companions, and *entered the room where the child was in bed.

Mark 5:41 And taking the child by the hand, He *said to her, “Talitha, kum!” (which translated means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”).

Mark 5:42 And immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astonished.

Mark 5:43 And He gave them strict orders that no one was to know about this, and He told them to have something given her to eat.

- Let's Pray.
- A friend of mine who is a gospel recording artist recently released a single entitled "One Touch".
 - And the premise of the song hinges on the narrative on which we find ourselves in tonight – the woman with the issue of blood.
 - And in his lyrics, he poses a line in the song from the position of the woman as if she were to have been interviewed about that day.
 - And her parenthetical response goes like this:

"The hem of Him healed my body. The hem of Him saved my soul. One touch can change everything".

- ◦ And it is this lyric that encompasses the reality of our text tonight: That Christ is the only one that can make us whole.
 - And that faith is the requirement by which we can fully see the person and work of Christ.
- However, before we get to that section of the text, we begin with another story which leads us into the woman with the issue of blood.
 - With that being said, pick me up at verse 21.

Mark 5:21 When Jesus had crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him; and He stayed by the seashore.

Mark 5:22 And one of the synagogue officials, named Jairus, *came, and upon seeing Him, *fell at His feet

Mark 5:23 and *pleaded with Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, so that she will get well and live."

Mark 5:24 And He went off with him; and a large crowd was following Him and pressing in on Him

- So Mark picks up now on the other side of the Sea of Galilee – it could be assumed based upon the scene we will enter into, that the region is back in Capernaum.
 - As we discussed in our recap, Jesus and His disciples and the twelve have been in the region of the Garasenes.
 - Jesus had been told by the citizens to leave their region after he had just expelled 6,000 demons from the demoniac.
 - This expelling ultimately caused 2,000 pigs to run off the cliff and drown in the water.
 - So with the mounting fear of what the people had witnessed, on top of the frustration they felt towards losing their livestock, Jesus and His disciples make

their way back to familiar territory.

- And the text tells us that upon Jesus' arrival to the area, that He was met by a large crowd of people.
 - The language here alludes to the fact that Jesus was not able to make it far into land because as the text states, "Jesus stayed by the seashore."
 - And it wouldn't be much later that amongst this large crowd of people that a Jewish synagogue official named Jairus would come up to Jesus and fall at His feet.
 - Let's stop here for a moment and take in the scene that Mark has described for us thus far.
- We have a large group of people awaiting the arrival of Jesus off the boat.
 - And the moment Jesus exits the boat, not a second later, people are swarming around Him.
 - If it's not clear by now, Jesus has become quite a popular figure in the region.
- And while all of the people in the area have gathered around Him, Jairus, the religious leader, sees Jesus, runs towards Him, and falls to his knees.
 - This scene should cause one to be in a bit of shock due to the reality of who a synagogue official is and what they do.
- A synagogue official, according to R.T France's commentary on Mark, is "one who carried responsibility and authority in the local synagogue."
 - An official was not a scribe or rabbi, but a lay member of a synagogue who was entrusted by leadership.
 - His responsibilities consisted of maintenance and security of the synagogue and procuring the scrolls for scripture reading.
 - To give you an example of Jarius' role in context, here is an example of the role of an official found in Acts 13:15. Check out the text:

Acts 13:15 After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it."

- ○ So it's clear at this point that not all religious leaders were hostile to Jesus, especially seeing Jairus' current condition.
- Jairus is in front of this entire crowd, on his knees at Jesus' feet with reverential recognition to Jesus' person and power.
 - Friends this doesn't just demonstrate humility, this demonstrates Jairus' desperation in the matter.
 - He puts aside his role, responsibility, and social clout as a religious leader and recognizes the only one in whom can meet his need – and that is Jesus Christ.
- This sort of reverence and worship before a human would have been deemed

blasphemous at best by the Pharisees.

- Yet Jairus was not concerned about the consequences of his current position. He was desperate for his daughter to be restored.
- Verses 23 and 24 tells us that the urgency and desperation that Mark expresses here is that Jairus' daughter was "at the point of death".
 - This phrase "at the point of death" in Greek is one word which is *eschatos*, which means "at death's door".
 - In other words, at any moment his daughter could die, therefore time was of the essence.
- Jairus is fiercely desperate and in need for Jesus to respond to the physical need.
 - Can you feel the tension in the text? This need requires immediate haste and Jairus believes that Jesus is able to meet the need.
 - One could imagine that Jairus has heard about Jesus and His miraculous healings and miracles throughout the region.
 - Most assuredly Jairus could have had some doubt regarding Jesus' ability.
 - However, that doubt must have been pushed aside and Jairus responds in faith towards Jesus because He wants his daughter made well.
- The text lets us know that what Jesus is seeing from Jairus, moves Him to follow Jairus to his home to heal his daughter before she dies.
 - Now notice how verse 24 tells us "Almost as without any hesitation"
- You have to love our Lord's response here. Within this urgency Jesus feels sympathy for the father and his daughter's condition.
 - This is the response of love that our Heavenly Father has demonstrated towards us in our broken spiritual state.
 - Jesus responded to our great need by dying on the cross for our sins.
- Now, before we move on too quickly, take note of the crowd who is around Jesus while all of this is happening.
 - As Jesus goes to the next destination, they follow suit.
- And I believe this speaks to a habit that we find in cultural Christianity. We want to follow Jesus when it is convenient.
 - We want to follow Jesus when it brings about much attraction with the spotlights and excitement.
 - But the moment that the going gets tough or trial and tribulation comes along with Jesus, the crowd is nowhere to be found.
- The moment you stand on the truth, even if it cost you popularity or the like, folks will walk off and away.
 - This is what Jairus was willing to do for the sake of his daughter and this is what some of Jesus' disciples were willing to endure for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel of God.
 - As a matter of fact, as we move further along in Mark's gospel, observe how the

crowds and the group of disciples become smaller and smaller.

- Let's keep moving on to verses 25-28.

Mark 5:25 A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years,
Mark 5:26 and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but instead had become worse—
Mark 5:27 after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak.
Mark 5:28 For she had been saying to herself, “If I just touch His garments, I will get well.”

- So as Jesus, Jairus, and the crowd are making their way towards Jairus' home, it is as if there is a pause in the story line.
 - This pause that we witness in this section of Mark is known as the Markan sandwich. It is chiastic in nature.
 - This is where Mark begins a story line, pauses it to insert a new story, and concludes with the original story and the defining point.
 - So while Jairus' story line pauses, the story of a woman who had been hemorrhaging for 12 years picks up.
 - Mark does not provide details regarding the woman's name – simply her existing medical condition.
 - Some scholars and theologians have gathered that the hemorrhaging this woman was experiencing was due to some sort of menstrual disorder.
 - Whatever the cause or case of this 144 month long menstrual cycle, this sort of disorder should ring some Old Testament bells in our hearing.
 - If you recall in our first messianic miracle regarding the Jewish leper, we discussed the social shame and alienation that came with that sort of condition.
 - On top of that we mentioned the impurity of the skin condition itself.
 - In the same way the book of Leviticus addressed the uncleanness of the leper, it also addressed the unclean conditions of a woman dealing with menstrual impurity.
 - You can see more in detail in Leviticus 15:19-33.
 - This woman, according to Mark 5:26, sought all help she could find.
 - Mark first mentions that she sought all the medical experts she could find.
 - She goes from physician to physician seeking a cure to her condition.
 - Mark alludes to the fact that this woman has exhausted all her resources because the text states “she spent all that she had”.
 - There was nothing that the medical experts could do to ensure her condition would be restored.
 - This becomes even more apparent as Mark says the woman's condition “got

worse”.

- Just like Jairus’ daughter’s condition was growing worse and he had to come to the end of himself, so did the woman with the issue of blood respond in the same way.
 - I love verse 27, because the text tells us this little detail: “after hearing about Jesus...” We can stop right there for a moment.
 - There is something about knowing that your only hope is right in your vicinity, isn’t it. He’s simply one call away – one reach away, one message away.
- This woman has heard about the very miracles of Jesus. She possibly has heard through the grapevine that Jesus was in the area.
 - And hearing that Jesus was nearby, there may have been a particular piece of scripture that rang in her remembrance about a messianic prophecy.
- In order to understand her bold statement of faith, we have to grab hold to the Old Testament, more specifically the significance of the tallit.
 - The tallit was rectangular in shape and was draped over the shoulders and extended down the length of the outer tunic or robe.
 - And off the four corners of the tallit (hem), called wings, hung tassels of knotted thread called tzitzit (zit-zit).
 - This was something that the Lord instructed Israel to make in the Law. We see this in Numbers 15:37-40. Check out the text.

Numbers 15:37 The Lord also spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 15:38 “Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue.

Numbers 15:39 It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot,

Numbers 15:40 so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God.

- Throughout the Old Testament, the tallit (hem) and the tassels themselves became a very important symbol in Jewish society.
 - They began to represent the person’s reputation and their authority.
 - The tassels of a person were esteemed so highly that to have them cut off by someone would speak to the injury or the denial of a person’s value (*citation in Logos*)
 - To see the connection to authority and value, observe these 2 scriptures in your hearing. One includes David and the other King Saul.
 - In 1 Samuel 24 Saul is pursuing David in the wilderness and they meet in a cave at En Gedi.
 - Saul is indisposed in the cave and David sneaks up behind him and cuts off the

hem of Saul's garment.

- David doing this shows the fact that he was close enough to strike Saul.
- In this act of humiliating Saul, David would later repent.
- We see this similar situation with Saul and Samuel in 1 Samuel 15:27, check out the text:

1 Samuel 15:27 As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore.

1 Samuel 15:28 So Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you."

- So naturally, if any symbol of power or importance were to arise, the Pharisees would take heed to it.
 - Even to the point of exaggerating the size of their tassels for purposes of being seen.
 - You can see Jesus mocking them of this practice in Matthew 23:5.
 - So with this context in mind, you can see how this woman was able to believe that to simply touch Jesus' tassel was speaking to His authority, power, and how it would make her healed and whole.
 - However, to simply express her belief in tradition would sell the power of this story short.
 - Her belief was not tied to simple tradition, her belief was tied to scripture – more specifically, faith in a Messianic prophecy found in Malachi.
 - Turn with me to Malachi 4:2.

Malachi 4:2 "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall."

- The text mentions that those who fear the name of the Lord will see Him bring healing for His people.
 - The "sun of righteousness" spoken about here refers to Messiah Himself and His glorious arrival.
 - But what puts the icing on the cake, is the section of Malachi speaking to "healing in His wings"
 - What is that all about?
 - If you remember, wings is the name given to the four corners of the tallit on the tassels of a man's garment.
 - Even more so, the word translated for "corner" in Numbers 15:38 is *kanaph* which means "wing".
 - So this woman, having grown up hearing Malachi 4, connected Messiah having the

ability to heal in His wings, literally, as the very corners of His tassels/garment.

- And it's here we find the woman making the statement in verse 28, "If I touch His garments, I will get well".
- It's in complete faith that she makes her way behind Jesus – not worried about risking her life knowing she is unclean.
 - She isn't focused on the reality that she has nothing left in her name of value because she sold it for the sake of finding a cure.
 - No, she is ever fixated on the word of God that she knew and the very man in whom she identifies as her Messiah.
- Friends, this is the type of faith that the paralytic and his companions had as they cut the hole out of Peter's roof.
 - It is a faith that moves one to respond in action based upon what they know for themselves.
 - It's like the old church mothers used to say, "Baby you can't make me doubt Him because I know too much about Him!"
- I want to make sure we understand the reality of her situation: This lady is at risk of potentially being put to death because she is ceremonially unclean.
 - However, she is willing to break the walls of false religion down for the sake of restoration and fellowship with the Lord.
- Friends, where the religious leaders placed/established cumbersome procedures to be made well, Jesus made Himself known as the only one who can truly make one well – both physically and spiritually.
 - There are no special responses needed to come to Christ. He is very much available. No appointments necessary.
 - Friend, have you heard about Him?
 - Has someone shared the good news about Him to you? Has He made Himself known to you?
 - A better question to ask is: Do you believe He is who He is?!
- Jesus is the very object and subject of our faith. He is the end all and be all!
 - Check out verses 29-34.

Mark 5:29 And immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

Mark 5:30 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that power from Him had gone out, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My garments?"

Mark 5:31 And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

Mark 5:32 And He looked around to see the woman who had done this.

Mark 5:33 But the woman, fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.

Mark 5:34 And He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be cured of your disease.”

- Mark lets us know here in verse 29 that at the moment that the woman who had been hemorrhaging for 12 years touched the hem of Jesus’ garment, that the flow of blood dried up.
 - The text mentions that she felt within her body that she was healed.
 - One simple touch of the healing power of Jesus moved the woman from hemorrhaging to healed.
 - Verse 30 tells us that “Immediately, Jesus perceived within Himself that power had gone out and asked who touched my garments?”
 - Now as we approach this section of the text, recognize that this was not a mystical moment between the woman and Jesus.
 - Rather this brings up two important questions: What has caused this healing within the woman that Jesus feels power has drawn out from Him?
 - And secondly: What is it about this touch that grasps the attention of Jesus that He calls it out publicly?
 - Well, to the first question, it is clear that Jesus’ ability to do the healing that He is doing is being accomplished by the third person of the Trinity – The Holy Spirit.
 - This is the power by which Jesus has the strength to do the work that He is doing.
 - Remember, it was the Holy Spirit that descended upon Him and empowered Him to do the work that the Father had given Him to do.
 - To the second question: What was so unique about this particular touch? What made this one stand out from the rest?
 - This is the question that causes the disciples to look at Jesus with a wee bit of confusion.
 - You could almost say that the disciples’ response to Jesus’ question of “who touched me” was a bit sarcastic to say the least.
 - I could imagine them looking at each other in disbelief saying “Jesus, I mean you are a popular guy in a large, pressing crowd, and you’re asking who touched you?”
 - It’s as if they think Jesus is having a brain fart if you will.
 - But the reality was that Jesus felt something that others could not fathom nor experience except for Jesus, Himself, and the woman.
 - Can you imagine, Jesus stops mid walk and says aloud with a pressing crowd, asking “Who touched me?”
 - The woman at this point, not identified yet, might feel embarrassed, a sense of hesitation and trepidation.
 - And as Jesus looks around and turns around, she drops to her knees before Jesus with her head tilted toward the ground in guilt and her shoulders slumped.

- And the text makes mention in verse 33, that the woman, fearing and trembling aware of what happened, lets Him know the whole truth.
- In other words, she lays out her entire story to Jesus as it pertains to her condition to the point of her celebration.
- She gives Him the rundown that she has loosed everything seeking to be healed only to find that it was in Him that she had everything!
- This might sound like what the demoniac experienced after having been made whole by Jesus as well.
 - His restoration leads to his proclamation of Jesus' demonstration of power throughout the Decapolis.
 - The man literally speaks to the entire report of how Christ has made him whole.
- I love the fact that as the woman lays out the whole truth of the matter, that Jesus doesn't rebuke her but rather receives here.
 - He tells her "Daughter, your faith has made you well, go in peace and be cured from your disease."
 - Understand that simply touching the hem of Jesus' garment was not the answer.
 - As we mentioned earlier, this woman's faith was in the One in whom she believed had the ability and authority to heal her.
 - Her faith, in which she could not see but understood, made her well and by the power of the Spirit of God.
 - This is why Hebrews 11:1 says this:

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:2 For by it the men of old gained approval.

- It is from this point that Jesus, after hearing the whole truth and seeing the woman, tells her "go in peace and be healed."
 - Jesus brought about an Old Testament formula of what is known as reassurance and blessing.
 - The reassurance was the peace that came in knowing that Christ was who she believed He was, the Messiah promised long ago.
 - The blessing was in knowing that her physical ailments were healed and she had been made whole and able to rejoin the community clean and restored.
 - Friends, it is only in Christ's person and His work that we are made whole in our identity as an image bearer and right before Holy God through Christ our propitiation.
 - Isn't this really a picture of the reality of men and women coming to faith in Jesus?

- He makes Himself best known when we come to the end of ourselves.
- He demonstrates who He is and invites you into this story of His Divine love – the Love of the Father.
- You don't have to be clean to get to Jesus to be made whole by Jesus. Why? Because He makes you whole.
 - All you have to do with the knowledge that you have is to make your way to Jesus.
 - Because He has made the way to make Himself known to you – this is the beauty of hearing the Gospel message proclaimed.
- One question that you might be wondering is, what about Jairus' daughter? When do we get to her situation?
 - Let's look at verse 35.

Mark 5:35 While He was still speaking, they *came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, “Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?”

- Come join us next week as we look at part two of Mark 5:21-43.
- Let's Pray.

Citations:

- R. T. France, [*The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002), 235, 238
- John D. Grassmick, [*“Mark,”*](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 124.

- We left off last week with a cliff hanger.
 - We ended our time together with the woman who had been hemorrhaging for 12 years, now having been fully healed and whole.
 - This was accomplished by her touching the hem of the garment of Jesus.
 - However, the text made it evidently plain that the healing of her body and being restored back to community came because of her faith in Jesus.
 - It was not the garment that made her well, it was her faith that made her well.
 - And we concluded that our faith in Christ is what truly makes us well.
 - Not just in the sense of physical healing in which the story shows us, but it is rooted in spiritual healing.
 - Faith in Christ alone moves us from spiritual death to spiritual life.
 - Believing faith brings about salvation in the One who makes us right before God.
 - It would now be at this point of the woman's healing that Jairus would receive word, at such a celebratory time, the worst news of his life.
 - His daughter had died.
 - So now our text pivots back to our first story and that is where we will pick up our reading as well.
 - I invite you to open your bibles with me to Mark 5:35-43.

Mark 5:35 While He was still speaking, they *came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, “Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?”

Mark 5:36 But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, *said to the synagogue official, “Do not be afraid any longer, only believe.”

Mark 5:37 And He allowed no one to accompany Him, except Peter and James and John the brother of James.

Mark 5:38 They *came to the house of the synagogue official; and He *saw a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing.

Mark 5:39 And entering in, He *said to them, “Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep.”

Mark 5:40 They began laughing at Him. But putting them all out, He *took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and *entered the room where the child was.

Mark 5:41 Taking the child by the hand, He *said to her, “Talitha kum!” (which translated means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”).

Mark 5:42 Immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded.

Mark 5:43 And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this, and He said that something should be given her to eat.

- Let's Pray.
- Emma Johnston wrote a hymn entitled, "Only Believe" in 1889 based upon Mark 5:35-33.
 - My favorite line of that hymn is verse 2. These are the words she penned.

**"His word is assurance complete;
Thy sins and thine idols now leave
Come, pleading His promise, and fall at His feet
The you've nothing to do but believe."**

- Belief upon Jesus Christ is not simply a matter of believing upon what He can do for you, but rather it is a complete assurance/confidence of who He is in His person, identity, and work.
 - Jairus will face this reality in tonight's text and will be confronted with this same statement – to "only believe".
 - Let's go back and reread verses 35-37.

Mark 5:35 While He was still speaking, they *came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?"

Mark 5:36 But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, *said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe."

Mark 5:37 And He allowed no one to accompany Him, except Peter and James and John the brother of James.

- So our scene picks back up from where we had previously left off and now Jairus' situation emerges back onto the scene.
 - As you can imagine Jairus is witnessing this amazing miracle before his very eyes.
 - The woman with the issue of blood for 12 years had been healed because of her faith in Jesus by touching the hem of His garment.
 - If you recall, her faith in Jesus was not based upon word of mouth, but by the word of God.
 - More specifically, it was Malachi 4:2 that expressed that the "sun of righteousness would have healing in His wings" (hem).
 - And while the woman is probably, inwardly, rejoicing, Jairus receives word that his daughter has died.
 - Picture this scene here as if it were being played back on video: Jesus is pressing through a crowd headed toward your immediate need.
 - However, in the process He is interrupted by another need for another person and now your need seems to be out of His immediate purview.
 - Now the moment arises where your answer to prayer and desperation for this

need is right around the corner – only to find that it’s too late.

- This news is gut wrenching! This man who has risked everything to get to Jesus, is now left hopeless – in his mind.
 - However, Jesus gives Jairus a word of hope with a promise.
 - Jesus tells the synagogue official, “Do not be afraid any longer, only believe.”
- The text mentions that Jesus hears the report from the men reporting from Jairus’ home.
 - However, what is most interesting is the Greek language for Jesus having “overheard” their conversation.
 - The word “overheard” in Greek is *parakouo* which means you hear what is said but you ignore the report.
- In other words, Jesus lets Jairus know, “I know what your men told you was true, but I am who I am – watch me demonstrate who I am so that you may see.”
 - Jesus tells Jairus to not be afraid but only believe.
 - I love Luke’s account of this event because he provides us a bit more information than Mark in this instance. Check out Luke 8:50.

Luke 8:50 But when Jesus heard this, He responded to him, “Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she will be made well.”

- It is interesting to know that even when the world gives you their facts and their findings, that their information and reports pale in comparison to the prognosis and promises of the King.
 - Jesus’ word should be a comfort to our hearts and souls. May our confidence be in His words and not this world.
 - Now as they arrive to Jairus’ house, notice in verse 37 that Jesus allows none of His disciples to accompany Him, except for Peter, James, and John.
 - If you recall these were among the first of Jesus’ recruited disciples now turned Apostles.
 - It’s important that you remember these 3 apostles because they will be accompanying Christ consistently in moments of great revelatory significance.
 - We will see these moments in Mark 9:2 with the transfiguration, the final discourse regarding the destruction of the temple while sitting on the Mount of Olives in Mark 13:3, and at Gethsemane to pray before His betrayal by Judas in Mark 14:33.
 - These 3 men will also play a vital role in the establishment of the Church in the book of Acts and this moment would play a pivotal role as future leaders in the Church.
 - This is key to not skip over too quickly because it points to Jesus’ focus and priority on discipleship and training in Leadership.

- Discipleship requires one to follow closely with Jesus because as we follow Him we will eventually see the cost that comes with the call to Him.
- Let's keep moving to verses 38-40.

Mark 5:38 They *came to the house of the synagogue official; and He *saw a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing.

Mark 5:39 And entering in, He *said to them, "Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep."

Mark 5:40 They began laughing at Him. But putting them all out, He *took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and *entered the room where the child was.

- Now, upon the arrival at Jairus' home, Mark tells us that they are met by a commotion of "people weeping loudly".
 - It was not unusual to have professional mourners at the site of the loss of a loved one. This was common sighting within Jewish life in that day.
 - In case you find it hard to believe, here is a quote from Rabbi Judah a century later:

"Even the poorest in Israel should hire at least two flute players and one wailing woman."

- ○ These professional mourners exemplified the present realities of the current situation at hand; the child was dead, and nothing could be done to undo her death – at least that's what they thought.
- Jesus, hearing their mourning and wailing, asked "Why make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but asleep."
 - Now understand that to those who were uninformed about who Jesus was and Him being unaware of the situation, this had to be comical at best.
- In essence, the reality that Jesus sees this situation as salvageable was laughable to the mourners.
 - And isn't this quite indicative of many unbelievers today?
- When it comes to the message of the gospel being preached and heard, to the world, to the skeptic, the message seems foolish.
 - Paul tells us this in 1 Corinthians 1:18:

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

- The reality was these mourners had seen dead people time and time again in their

professional mourning careers. Dead is dead and there's no coming back from that – in their minds at least.

- However, they have yet to meet the God-Man, Messiah, Jesus Christ, the one who would be the firstborn among the dead.
- Colossians 1:18 tells us this:

Colossians 1:18 He is also the head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

- So in Jesus' growing frustration and the unbelief of those around Him He dismisses the mourners and clears the room of all distraction.
 - And as we mentioned earlier only permits Jairus, his wife, Peter, James, and John into the room.
 - For Jesus is about to do something that was going to completely blow the minds of those who were in the room. Check out verses 41-43.

Mark 5:41 Taking the child by the hand, He *said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!").

Mark 5:42 Immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded.

Mark 5:43 And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this, and He said that something should be given her to eat

- As Jesus, Jairus, his wife, and Jesus' close inner circle enters into the room they see laying on the bed a lifeless body.
 - Maybe the parents are staring endlessly at their baby girl possibly even choking on their own tears based upon what they see before them.
 - Yet with this reality before them, Jairus is reminded of Jesus' word: "Do not be afraid, only believe!"
 - Jairus is probably then reminded about the woman that he had just encountered who was troubled with her illness for 12 years.
 - Her willingness to press through the crowd and the faith to believe that Jesus was who the scriptures said He was.
 - That was enough for Jairus – now it was time to watch Jesus do what no one else could do.
 - Jesus goes up to the little girl who is now dead, lifeless, and technically considered to be unclean.
 - He takes her hand and says to the lifeless little girl in Aramaic "*Talitha Kum*", which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"

- The text in verse 42 then tells us, immediately the girl got up and began to walk.
 - One interesting detail to note here is that Mark also provides us with the age of the little girl – she was 12 years old.
 - We will come back to the significance of the number 12 regarding both the girl's age and the 12 years of suffering of the woman, momentarily.
- But let's pause here really quickly: This scene is quite interesting, because as believers, we find ourselves at a similar crossroad –
 - This space between helplessness and hopefulness.
 - We too experience circumstances in our lives that cause us to question if God can or even will.
- It is often times in our battles of doubt that our faith is tested greatly: It leads us to ask the question: Do I take God at His word?
 - Can we truly lean upon Jesus even when it seems like there is nothing left to do? The answer is Yes.
- I believe that it is important that we don't over emphasize the miracle that has happened here.
 - Because the tendency is to read this and say, well if I need healing all I need to do is believe by faith and I'll be healed too.
 - Or if I go to scripture and find all the healing scriptures and say them and memorize them then God will heal me of this or that.
 - When we begin to eisegete the text, we begin to formulate how God should respond in our lives according to how He specifically responded in this instance. (Prescriptive v. Descriptive)
 - We see this approach to the text destroying people's understanding of God's word especially with individuals who are in the "Word of Faith" movement.
- Remember, the miracle is not the emphasis here, the emphasis is the faith.
 - The miracle is not the end goal, the true miracle is the faith in knowing that Truth came in the form of a person and His name is Jesus Christ.
- It is upon Jairus' daughter getting up and walking again that verse 42 says that everyone in that room was "completely amazed".
 - The Greek wording for "completely amazed" is a compound of 3 Greek words.
 - The language renders this idea that those in the room were in great amazement as if their breath had been completely removed from their lungs.
 - This type of astonishment is literally someone being beside oneself.
- Friends, this type of miracle is one that, as a father, you would want to run and tell everyone about what Jesus has graciously done for you.
 - However, Jesus gives everyone in that room strict orders not to say anything to anyone about what they had just witnessed.
 - The question you may be asking at this point is: Jesus, why not!?
- We must not forget that our why has been answered sometime back in our Mark

study.

- The religious leaders have rejected Jesus as their Messiah thereby Israel nationally has rejected its King .
- It's almost as if the mourners were setting the proverbial tone for where the people, nationally, were in general.
- The professional mourners were convinced that Jesus' claim to bring a girl back from the dead was comical. We will come back to this towards the end.
- Friends, faith is not based upon what you can see, it's based upon what you can't see.
 - Faith is based upon what you know to be true even when you can't see it right now. Faith is responding to God telling the truth!
- What I find most interesting however is the fact that although Jesus tells them not to say anything to anyone, that it would not remove the fact that those who knew she was dead would eventually see her!
 - Again, everyone is made aware that Jairus' daughter died – eventually they were going to see at some point that she was alive again.
- Here's what I believe is happening: If they say what they saw, the people will not be convinced it was Jesus' doing – therefore this speaks to the people's spiritual blindness.
 - However, if they see it for themselves, they will now have to wrestle with what they cannot unsee.
- You either believe that Jesus is who He is or you don't, but the reality is, it will eventually be made known that He is a truth teller. God can not lie!
 - One either responds by faith or they don't, but know that Christ has made Himself evidently known – the evidence is clear.
- Well, we find towards the end that those in the room are in such shock that Jesus has to tell them "Make sure you feed her, she needs to eat."
- The big question that comes to a head in our study thus far is: How do these 2 stories connect?
 - Remember, everything up to this point is building and Mark's use of these 2 scenes in this chiastic form is not by happenstance.
 - So Lord, what are you showing us here in the text?
 - We can surmise that both Jairus, on behalf of his daughter, and the woman with the issue of blood, come to Jesus in faith.
 - Jairus is seeking for his daughter to be healed of this bedridden sickness at the age of twelve.
 - While the woman with the issue of blood is seeking to be healed from her 12 years of hemorrhaging.
 - Both the woman with the issue of blood and Jairus' daughter were deemed unclean.
 - Yet both women are able to encounter the healing hands of our Savior and are made clean and whole.

- Both Jairus and the woman have come to the end of themselves and could bring nothing to Jesus but themselves.
 - Jairus, willing to risk his career, status, and livelihood, all for the sake of his daughter being saved.
 - And the woman, depleting all of her resources for the sake of getting to the only source that could make her whole again.
 - Both situations call for desperate measures.
- To everyone else, what they were doing looked costly, it looked crazy, and to some it even made no sense.
 - But both Jairus and the woman knew something that the others did not know.
- As John Grassmic mentioned in his work on Mark, he states:

“Faith involved more than simply believing Jesus could perform miracles. No one questioned that in Nazareth.”

- He then goes on to say:

“Both Jairus and the woman displayed faith that God was somehow at work in Jesus”

- I would take Grassmic’s statement a bit further and state that God was evidently at work in Jesus because Jesus is God – the second person of the Trinity.
 - He was with God in the beginning! (John 1)
 - Both Jairus and the woman encountered God in the flesh!
 - What Jairus, his wife, Peter, James, and John witnessed in that room that day was only something that God can invite you into and that is to see Him for who He is!
 - And that’s where our story ends.
 - Before we wrap up, I mentioned earlier there were two things I we would eventually come back to:
 - 1. The significance in the terms being asleep versus death.
 - 2. The significance of the number 12 in this story.
 - Within scripture, more specifically the New Testament, we see the terms “asleep” and “death” used in different ways.
 - Someone being “asleep” is usually connected to that of a believer. It connects the reality that death is not the end for the believer, only the beginning to an eternity with Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
 - Whereas death is a permanent condition by which there is no coming back. Death, therefore, is the end of life rendering an eternity separated from God and His presence.

- So in a way, Jesus is showing that for those in the room who have life in Him, death will not be their end. Jesus has the power over death itself!
 - Paul tells us this glorious truth in 1 Corinthians 15:55-57:

1 Corinthians 15:55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

1 Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

1 Corinthians 15:57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Lastly, we seek to understand the significance of the number 12.
 - Some say that the number twelve simply speaks to the age of the little girl and the years of suffering of the woman – nothing more and nothing less.
 - But to simply put that to coincidence is not comprehensible.
 - The number 12 in scripture speaks to the government of God and the completeness of His purpose.
 - The significance of this number can be seen all the more in Matthew's central focus on Jesus as King of the Promised Kingdom in his account.
 - So what better way to see how one enters God's Kingdom than through these 2 stories in Mark.
 - To enter into the Kingdom requires faith alone in Christ alone.
 - Christ is the object of our faith.
 - He is the only one in whom we must place our faith in because He alone paid our debt and bore our sins. (1 Peter 2:24)
 - Christ made us clean/right before Holy God through His death. Paul tells us this in Romans 5:9-10.

Romans 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

- Christ is the only one that can move men and women from unclean to clean.
 - He is the only one that can put men and women in right standing with God.
 - Faith is not this ethereal thought of mystical sayings, ideas, and chants.
 - As I mentioned earlier tonight, Saving Faith is found in a person!
 - Friends, Jesus makes Himself known both personally and relationally and He is very much available, but you must believe.
 - Do you believe Jesus is who He says He is?!

- Let's Pray.

Citations:

- R. T. France, [*The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002), 239.



Mark - Lesson 6A

Chapter 6:1-6

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- We have officially arrived at Chapter 6 of the Gospel of Mark.
 - In our previous teachings, Part 1 and Part 2 of Mark 5, we covered some very important matters regarding the Kingdom.
 - And it would be through the example of the woman with the issue of blood and Jairus' daughter that we grasped how one enters the Kingdom.
 - We came to see in both stories that both individuals demonstrated faith in Jesus.
 - Both the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years and Jairus had to personally come to the end of themselves.
 - The woman had depleted her entire savings and had done all she could, humanly possible, to secure herself freedom from bondage of sickness and being unclean.
 - Jairus risked his entire career, piety, and reputation, everything humanly possible, for the sake of his daughter being made well.
 - Both stories bring the hearer to the realization that no one can be made spiritually clean apart from Divine intervention from Holy God.
 - It would be seen through both stories that Jesus Christ is the answer to their ailments – both physically and spiritually.
 - And we discovered towards the end of these stories that for one to be made whole spiritually and attain eternal life, that they must place faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Faith, ultimately, is trusting that God is telling the truth.
 - And in this case our faith as believers in Jesus Christ is found in a person and His work – and that person is Jesus Christ.
 - His work would be what only One who is both fully God and fully man could do – and that is to die on a cross for our sins, be buried, and be raised on the third day.
 - The promise that God made about a Savior for His people was to be fully realized in the Person that He sent from Heaven down to earth – Jesus Christ.
 - This friends is the message that we proclaim!
 - Tonight, our text now transitions back to a familiar territory, where our Lord and Savior was raised.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would simply be: "A Prophet without honor".
 - I now invite you to open your bibles with me to Chapter 6 of Mark's gospel. We will read the first 6 verses together.

Mark 6:1 Jesus went out from there and *came into His hometown; and His disciples *followed Him.

Mark 6:2 When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?"

Mark 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and

Joshua and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?” And they took offense at Him.

Mark 6:4 Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.”

Mark 6:5 And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

Mark 6:6 And He wondered at their unbelief. And He was going around the villages teaching.

- Let’s Pray.
- My wife is incredibly discerning when it comes down to people, and situations, but most importantly when the Lord opens her eyes to certain things we need to consider as a family.
 - And as the amazing wife she is, she submits those things to me as the head of our home.
 - However, the problem I run into regarding what she shares with me is, like a hard-headed man, I tend to receive the exact message more easily from others than I do her.
 - What I have now learned over the years with great familiarity, is that when my wife has something to say, it would behoove me to listen the first time because she has yet to be wrong.
 - And in the same way I have tended to dismiss the truth my wife presents me, the people in Nazareth reject the truth that Christ has presented to them.
 - In our text tonight, we find Jesus back in familiar territory, with familiar people, in a familiar setting, and without fail He is received in a familiar way – received with unbelief and with others needing Him to prove Himself.
 - As we open tonight’s text, here is the outline we will witness:
 - 1. An astonished crowd
 - 2. A familiar passage
 - 3. A familiar response
 - 4. A focused mission
 - So, with that outline in mind, let’s look at the first two verses together

Mark 6:1 Jesus went out from there and *came into His hometown; and His disciples *followed Him.

Mark 6:2 When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?”

- Well our scene picks up right after the scene near the Sea of Galilee where Jesus encountered Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood.
 - In our last teaching in Mark 5, we witnessed Jesus having just raised Jairus’

daughter from the dead while in the company of Jesus' inner circle and the little girl's parents.

- As one could imagine, word of what Jesus had done there would have travelled quickly especially the demonstration of raising the dead.
- It would be after this series of events that Jesus and His disciples make their way to Jesus' hometown of Nazareth.
 - We can surmise, according to verse 2 that some time has passed between the event near the sea and their travel to Nazareth.
 - That's why the text states in verse 2, "When the Sabbath came.."
- It will now be here at the synagogue on the Sabbath that Jesus would do what was of custom and that would be to teach.
 - Jesus was now among His own countrymen, in familiar territory, teaching the scriptures.
- Mark mentions that as Jesus is teaching and the crowd is listening, that the large group was astonished at what Jesus was teaching.
 - This reaction was typical from all the places Jesus had taught prior.
- This word "astonished" in the Greek is *ekplesso*. It means the people were marveling and amazed at what they heard.
 - The text further expounds on the amazement of the people in part b of verse 2.
 - Mark states that the people, in their amazement, began to ask the following questions in response to what they were hearing.
 - 1. Where did this man get these things?
 - 2. What is this wisdom given to Him?
 - 3. How are such miracles performed by His hands?
 - All of these questions we will answer in tonight's teaching.
- It is clear that whatever Jesus was teaching, it was profound and the people were in awe of His teaching.
 - But isn't that the question that begs to be asked of the text?
 - What was Jesus teaching about, but more specifically what scriptures was He reciting from that spoke so poignantly to the people?
- Well in order for us to know what Jesus said and what scroll He was reading from, we must look to Luke's gospel for the details.
 - Turn with me to Luke 4:17-21

Luke 4:17 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

**Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.
He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free those who are oppressed,**

Luke 4:19 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.”

Luke 4:20 And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

Luke 4:21 And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

- So what Luke shows us in his account is that Jesus has just read the scroll of the prophet Isaiah – more specifically Isaiah 61:1-2a.
 - In order for us to truly grasp what Jesus was saying and why the people marveled, let’s turn quickly to Isaiah 61:1-2a.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,

Because the Lord has anointed me

To bring good news to the afflicted;

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,

To proclaim liberty to captives

And freedom to prisoners;

Isaiah 61:2 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord

- There are several things we must observe from this Messianic text.
 - First, what stands out in Isaiah 61:1 is the fact that we witness a very clear expression of the Trinity.
 - Verse 1 states, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..”
 - The word “Spirit” in Hebrew is *Ruach*, which refers to the Holy Spirit.
 - We then see the “Lord GOD”. That spelling speaks to Adonai YHWH which refers to God the Father.
 - And lastly, we see the pronoun “Me”, which is capitalized in Luke 4:18. And this refers to “the Servant of God” who is the Son of God – Jesus Christ.
 - Interestingly enough, the very first line of which Jesus read in the synagogue spoke directly to His identity.
 - We also see in the beginning of Mark’s Gospel John the Baptist, having received a sign from the Lord regarding the Spirit of God resting upon the One who has been sent from God in Isaiah 11:2.

Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him,

The spirit of wisdom and understanding,

The spirit of counsel and strength,

The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

- What Jesus was reading before the people, in Isaiah 61:1-2a, was the very reality of His first coming and this was happening in real time, before their eyes.
 - The very promise and truth of God’s word is before them, wrapped in flesh.
 - What follows is 5 things that Messiah would come to do upon His arrival as

Messiah. Check these out really quickly:

- 1. He would first be “anointed” which the Hebrew root of the word could be rendered “Messiahed”
 - Thereby the Messiah would be anointed to preach the good news of the Gospel to His people.
- 2. He was anointed to bind up the broken hearted.
 - In other words, Messiah would come to deal with the inward issues of sin.
 - This is what Isaiah 57:15 says regarding the binding up of the broken hearted.

Isaiah 57:15 For this is what the high and exalted One says—
 he who lives forever, whose name is holy:
 “I live in a high and holy place,
 but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit,
 to revive the spirit of the lowly
 and to revive the heart of the contrite.

- ○ 3. He would be anointed to “proclaim liberty to the captive”
 - The captivity refers to the outward manifestation or bondage of sin therefore allowing people to no longer be slaves to sin.
- 4. He was anointed to free the prisoners from the prison of which they were bound.
 - For men and women enslaved to sin, the world, and the devil, Messiah would provide complete freedom.
- 5. Lastly, He is anointed for the reason of “proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favor.”
 - This detail here is important for us to observe closely.
- The word proclaim in Hebrew is *qr* (ka-ra). It means “to call” or “to read”.
 - In other words, this announcement from the mouth of Jesus Himself, began the introduction to the outworking of the Mystery Kingdom regarding the dispensation of grace to those outside His covenant people, more specifically, the Church Age.
- So in one way the people are marveling at His teaching with such power but yet there is a disconnect from what they have just heard to what they have before their eyes.
 - We can surmise this reality based upon what the text tells us in verses 3 and 4 of Mark 6. Check out the text.

Mark 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?” And they took offense at Him.

Mark 6:4 Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.”

- The people in the synagogue, rather than seeing Jesus for who He is and declared Himself to be with full authority, rejected His person and boiled it down to Him being the “kid from Nazareth”
 - They could not separate the Jesus they were familiar with from the God-man in whom Jesus was according to His works and the very word of God.
 - What I find most interesting is although Luke’s gospel states that Jesus was Joseph’s son, Mark’s gospel omits this detail.
 - And I believe this is the case because he wanted to distinguish the fact that who is standing before them is beyond familial comforts.
 - To take it a step further, Jesus’ father was not Joseph, but rather, God the Father.
 - What we should ask ourselves within the latter half of verse 3 is: “Why are the people moved to take offense towards Jesus?”
 - Well, Luke’s gospel presents us with the cause of the offense. Check out Luke 4:22-28.

Luke 4:22 And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”

Luke 4:23 And He said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.’”

Luke 4:24 And He said, “Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown.

Luke 4:25 But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land;

Luke 4:26 and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.

Luke 4:27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”

Luke 4:28 And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things;

- We ultimately know that the only way people get offended is when they hear the truth.
 - Truth has the tendency to cause opposition against our flesh.
 - And what we can tell from Luke’s account is that the people are not convinced that Jesus is who the scriptures say that He is because they still see Him as “Joseph’s son” and not the promised Messiah.
 - Jesus responds to their unbelief by responding to their insult with a proverb. Look at verse 23:
 - “No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.’”

- In other words, they would rather Jesus demonstrate, once again, His power so that He may prove to them who He is.
 - However, as Darrell Bock states in His commentary on Luke: “People must be willing to hear the word of God and receive it before they can see anything as God’s work”
- Friends, isn’t this what the woman with the issue of blood and Jairus had to do? Simply believe and have faith based upon who Jesus said He was?
 - It is belief upon the person of Jesus, who He is, and what He has done that those men and women are saved.
- Jesus reinforces His point by providing 2 historical examples from the Hebrew scriptures.
 - However, in providing these 2 examples, Jesus contrasts the unbelief of the Israelites with that of the belief of 2 Gentile individuals.
 - Our examples will be found in the Kings, more specifically, the first in 1 Kings 17 and the other in 2 Kings 5:1-14.
- Jesus’ first example is with a widow in Zarephath, which falls in the region of Sidon, which we previously identified as a Gentile region.
 - And it is here that God tells Elijah to go to the widow for “God had commanded her to feed Elijah”.
 - Now the backdrop here is that the land is in a drought and it had not rained for some time.
- In obedience to the God of Israel, Elijah goes and meets the widow at the gate of the city where she is gathering sticks to cook her and her child’s last meal.
- However, Elijah tells her to first give him a drink and to bake him a morsel of bread with her remaining ingredients.
 - She lets Elijah know that she only has enough for her and her child in which Elijah responds in 1 Kings 17:13-16. Check out the text:

1 Kings 17:13 Then Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son.

1 Kings 17:14 For thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth.’”

1 Kings 17:15 So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days.

1 Kings 17:16 The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke through Elijah

- So the widow responds in faith, believing that what God said through the man of God was indeed true.
 - She eventually concludes, after having seen God respond to a desperate need in her life, once again, through the prophet of God, that the word of the Lord is true!

- Check out the text in 1 Kings 17:24:

1 Kings 17:24 Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.”

- There are two words that we should observe in light of this text and context.
 - The first word is “know” and the second word is “truth”
 - The Hebrew word for “know” in this text is *yd'* (ya-da). It means to be cognizant or aware of a fact or a specific piece of information, or possess knowledge or information about something.
 - In other words, something has been revealed based upon the information (truth) received.
 - The next word we must look at is the word “truth”.
 - The Hebrew word is *emet* which translated means trustworthy and faithful that the word of the Lord is true.
 - So when we see these two Hebrew words in light of the context, there is information that is revealed and illuminates our reality to something we did not once perceive.
 - And upon receiving that knowledge and truth, we respond to that truth because it is absolute truth.
 - It is after this first example that Jesus provides us with another example from the Hebrew scriptures. This example regards Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army.
 - Naaman was a valiant warrior and the Lord used him mightily in disciplining Israel.
 - Another fact worth mentioning is that Naaman was a leper.
 - Within one of Naaman’s conquests upon Israel, he took captive a little girl to become his wife’s servant.
 - One day while working, the little girl mentioned to her mistress that the God of Israel could heal Naaman of his leprosy.
 - Naaman’s wife informs him and Naaman brings word before the King of Syria that the God of Israel could heal him of his physical ailment.
 - In response to this reality, the King of Syria writes a letter to the King of Israel at that time to meet with Israel’s prophet in Samaria.
 - Elisha receives word from the King of Israel, and tells the King this is an opportunity to make known the God of Israel in our midst.
 - This would be an opportunity for the Glory of God to be made known to Israel’s enemy and those around them.
 - So with that in mind, turn with me to 2 Kings 5:10-14 to see the exchange between Naaman and the Prophet Elisha:

2 Kings 5:10 Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan

seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean.”

2 Kings 5:11 But Naaman was furious and went away and said, “Behold, I thought, ‘He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.’

2 Kings 5:12 Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage.

2 Kings 5:13 Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, “My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean?’”

2 Kings 5:14 So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean.

- So Elisha sends the word from the Lord by way of a messenger to tell Naaman what he needs to do.
 - However, notice Naaman’s response to this word – he’s furious.
 - Naaman is expecting the pomp and circumstances. He wants to see elaborate demonstrations of the power of God.
 - He even makes mention that there were better rivers that he could have gotten into besides being in the Jordan.
 - Isn’t this quite revealing as to the hearts of the people in the synagogue? “How about you show us Jesus with more of your miracles, signs, and wonders?”
 - We will only believe you if you show us first – but inwardly knowing they never would.
 - This method of being cleansed for Naaman seemed foolish and quite mundane so he walks away in frustration.
 - Notice the text: Who did it take to get Naaman to reconsider the reality of the truth that was right before him? His servants.
 - It wasn’t another King or anyone of high status. It was the very ones who received commands from the commander that shared with him the truth just as Jesus did with Jairus: “Commander, Only Believe!”
 - Convinced of what was shared and having a changed mind on the matter, Naaman goes into the Jordan as the word was sent to him.
 - He responded and obeyed the word in truth and the text tells us that after the 7th dip in the Jordan, Naaman’s skin was restored as that of a child and that he was cleansed.
 - I pray that you are seeing the parallels between these two stories in the Kings and our 2 previous teachings on the woman with the issue of blood and Jairus’ daughter.
 - Both stories center around a similar theme of faith and trust in the word of God.
 - The widow had a need yet is required to give up all of her resources for the sake of trusting in the word of God through the prophet and believing that word despite the great potential loss.

- This is similarly connected, in a way, to the woman with the issue of blood, yet this widow in the Kings is a Gentile woman.
- On the other hand we have Naaman, a great and mighty warrior with an even greater affliction.
 - However, it is the little slave girl's faith who provides the hope that he needs to believe that her God in Israel, could cure him of his disease.
 - And although he was prideful and unwilling to dip himself in the Jordan seven times, by way of the faith of the servants, Naaman himself responded in obedience to the word of truth!
- Isn't this familiar to how Jairus was also encouraged by the faith of the woman with the issue of blood after having received word that his daughter had died.
 - However, what does the great Servant of God, Jesus Christ, tell him, "Do not fear, Only Believe!"
- Friends, this is Jesus' point in using these two historical examples from the Hebrew scriptures!
 - Belief and faith go hand in hand and it requires you putting full trust in God's word knowing that He tells the truth and that He sent His Son, Jesus to save the lost!
- What the text alludes to us here in Luke 4 is that the anger of the people stemmed from the reality that the Gentiles responded to faith in Yahweh!
 - Jesus had come to His own with the good news of salvation, yet Jesus' own people did not want to receive the message – they rejected it.
 - However, the people in whom the Jews could not stand and were diabolically opposed to, responded to the invitation by faith!
- Their rejection of Messiah cost them the opportunity to personally respond to the good news of God having sent His Son to redeem humanity from the power of sin.
 - And their rejection of Christ as Messiah was rooted in the fact that they were not willing to change their minds as to who Christ was.
 - They could only see Him for what they saw Him as, "The carpenter", Mary's boy, the little kid that was always at the synagogue.
- And isn't this quite indicative of the response of the unbelieving world?
 - They'll say, "The message of the gospel is way too simple!"
 - They'll say, "How can salvation come from a man who is born of a virgin?"
- Oftentimes, we overlook the mundane for the miraculous, or as Naaman's servants said, "The great things" despite the simple things.
 - However, that is not how God saw fit to make known His glorious Gospel.
 - Check out what Paul said to the Corinthian church regarding the wisdom of God – 1 Corinthians 1:18-25:

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written,

**“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.”**

1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

1 Corinthians 1:21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

1 Corinthians 1:22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;

1 Corinthians 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

1 Corinthians 1:24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

- So it is after verse 28 of Luke 4, that Luke tells us that upon the people hearing Jesus' exposition, they became enraged.
 - So much so that they wanted to throw him off of the cliff.
 - Here's our last 2 verses – verses 5-6:

Mark 6:5 And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

Mark 6:6 And He wondered at their unbelief. And He was going around the villages teaching.

- Mark tells us here that Jesus could not fully demonstrate the full work of His power there simply because of the fact that it required faith to be at work so that they may see His true identity as the God-Man.
 - The text simply mentions that Jesus was only able to heal a few sick people in the midst.
 - Beyond that there was no demonstration of faith found among the people.
 - It's almost as if to say: “Jesus, we know you can do miracles here and there, but beyond that we do not believe your claims as Messiah.”
 - And this is the spiritual reality of many.
 - The very definition of unbelief is that the hearts of men and women are naturally calloused and closed to the truth of who Jesus is.
 - The unbelief of the people was so great that verse 6 tells us that Jesus “wondered” at their unbelief.
 - The Greek word for unbelief here is *thau-mazo* which means to be astonished, however this word is in the imperfect, active, third person singular.
 - Simply meaning, Jesus was astonished at the habitual unbelief of His people, not just in this day but since the very beginning of time.
 - It's almost as if to say, “You have been told long ago that I would come and

tabernacle with you and yet you still refuse to believe.”

- I could imagine Jesus at this moment is both greatly saddened yet immensely hopeful. Why?
- Because as Jesus’ illustration from earlier in Luke’s gospel mentioned, there would be another group of people who would receive and believe this message of the gospel.
- This group would be the Gentiles within the dispensation of grace.
 - Here is where the preparation for the Apostles would take place as the start of the Church Age would soon be approaching, after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.
- Lastly, you must be greatly encouraged by what we see in part b of verse 6.
 - The text tells us “And He was going around the villages teaching”
 - Despite the unbelief that is present among the people, God still displays amazing grace to all who are willing to hear the gospel preached.
 - Why do I mention this?
 - Because the message of salvation would still be proclaimed and the mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost would continue forward.
 - The only way in which one comes to this realization is through divine illumination of one’s depraved condition before Holy God.
 - So, in the meantime, Jesus continued to proclaim the good news of the Gospel of God.
 - That men and women would see that the salvation was found in the very person of Jesus Christ – the long-awaited promise from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - Those who had drawn hearts would receive this glorious news and would see the salvation of the Lord.
 - Let’s Pray.



Mark - Lesson 6B

Chapter 6:7-13

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- Last week, we covered the rejection of Jesus’ teaching and identity from those in His hometown of Nazareth.
 - This was not His first time there and the response that He received from His own came as no surprise.
 - We ultimately discovered that the response of familiarity to Jesus bred hostility to His identity.
 - In other words, the people were too comfortable in their childhood association to Christ that they missed His Divine identity.
 - What we were able to take away from this section of the text is that truth will bring about 2 responses, regardless of who you are or who you think you know.
 - Truth will either produce belief because it is indeed absolute truth or truth will bring about hostility because of an unbelieving heart.
 - Tonight, as we dive into the next few verses of the text, we will come across a pivotal moment in Jesus’ ministry.
 - As the rejection of His message and identity is increasing amongst His people, He is persistent to continue teaching despite the opposition and rejection.
 - And Jesus’ ability to endure the hardship of His earthly ministry will serve as a major teaching moment for His apostles in whom He will send out.
 - This trial run of sending out His apostles will prepare them for the journey they have committed to in following Jesus – even without fully having the plan in mind.
 - If I were to tag our text tonight it would simply be “The Trial Mission”.
 - With that being said, let’s read verses 7-13 of Chapter 6, together.

Mark 6:7 And He *summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits;

Mark 6:8 and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belt—

Mark 6:9 but to wear sandals; and He added, “Do not put on two tunics.”

Mark 6:10 And He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town.

Mark 6:11 Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them.”

Mark 6:12 They went out and preached that men should repent.

Mark 6:13 And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.

- Let’s Pray.
- In the education system, when teachers are beginning a new lesson, especially one that will be tested on a state exam, the lesson begins with an objective.
 - That objective is expressing in few short words what the student will learn from the unit.

- And upon the students walking through the lesson, they may come up to a particular method that must be practiced over and over for mastery.
- Within that preparation, the pedagogical method used is one known as “I do, You do, We do”.
 - This is where the teacher first demonstrates what the approach to the problem should look like.
 - Once the teacher demonstrates the appropriate way to do the problem, the teacher will then give the class the opportunity to approach the problem themselves (You do)
- It is at the conclusion of the student’s approach that the teacher joins in with them as a simple facilitator for further questions that arise (We do).
 - And in this same way, we find Jesus presenting the apostles with a “You do” opportunity.
- He will send them out after having witnessed Him in action over the course of time and now gives them the opportunity to engage in ministry as He has been.
 - We will witness Jesus do the following for these ordinary men in effort to prepare them for the work He has called them to:
 - 1. He will Summon them
 - 2. He will Send them
 - 3. He will Authorize them
 - 4. He will Instruct them
 - 5. He will Provide for them by way of the Father’s provision
 - 6. They will Proclaim for Him
- Mark’s account here brings us to a point in the text where Jesus is now at a significant point in His ministry where He will send the apostles out on a trial mission.
 - This sending out is on the cusp of the twelve having witnessed the dynamic works of Jesus in person – up close and personal.
 - From Jesus healing the sick, expelling demons, forgiving sins, making the lame walk, expelling a blind and mute demon, demonstrating power over nature, the list goes on and on.
 - However, with all the demonstration of His power which would normally have lead to the revelation of His Identity and Person, the lack of belief from his own led to a National rejection of Jesus as Messiah, ensued by the religious leaders.
 - This is evidently what we witnessed with Jesus having arrived to Nazareth once again proclaiming the message of the Kingdom to those He knew.
 - But despite Israel’s National rejection of their Messiah, it did not prevent Israel (personally) from responding to and receiving their Messiah on a personal level.
 - This is where the significance of this mission comes into play with sending out the apostles.
 - With that in mind, pick me up at verse 7.

Mark 6:7 And He *summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs,

and gave them authority over the unclean spirits;

- Mark picks it up here in verse 7 right after the major opposition in Nazareth due to the people's unbelief.
 - If you recall, right after the unbelief of those in Nazareth are displayed, verse 6b states, "And He was going around the villages teaching."
 - And I mentioned in our last teaching that Jesus' response was extremely encouraging because despite the opposition, the message was still being proclaimed.
 - The question that comes from this could be: "Well what was the point of consistently proclaiming a message to people who aren't willing to accept it?"
 - And the answer to that question is simple: If God has still provided time for people to hear the message proclaimed, then there are people out there, by God's providence, who will receive it but must first hear it. (The Remnant)
 - Most importantly, it reveals the compassionate heart of Jesus and that of the Father, which is for men and women to repent and trust in Christ.
 - 2 Peter 3:9 states it this way speaking to God's patient endurance:

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

- We see this reality in Matthew 9:35-38 where Jesus mentions that His people are "like sheep without a shepherd".
 - This sense of lostness came about through the leadership complex. However, God had a plan in mind. Check out Matthew 9:36-38 in the ESV:

Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;

Matthew 9:38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

- What I find so refreshing in the text is right after Jesus mentions "the Lord of the harvest will send out laborers", verse 1 of Chapter 10 states this:
 - "And He called to him the twelve."
 - One quick point the text makes clear here is that the Lord already has His laborers in mind and will draw them forth in His timing.
 - One of the biggest blessings the Ministry has witnessed is wherever there has been a particular ministry need for a project of some sort, the Lord has always provided the person or place for that particular ministry need.
 - The Lord is quite resourceful and as Laborers for the Kingdom, He will always

provide the need despite the necessity.

- He is indeed the Lord of the Harvest!
- So with the twelve being summoned for the mission ahead, Jesus strategically sent them out in an organized manner – He sent them out in pairs.
 - The question that may come to mind is: “Why send them out in groups of 2?”
 - Wouldn’t they be able to cover more ground by being sent out individually?
- Going out individually would have sufficed for the sake of missional outreach, however it would be horrible for the sense of authorizing the testimony of the other.
 - According to RT France’s commentary on Mark, He states that sending out in pairs was practiced in the Hebrew scriptures.
- Deuteronomy 17:6 mentions the fact that two witnesses established legal testimony and the need for both the messengers to support one another’s message thereby providing verification.
 - Check out the text really quickly:

Deuteronomy 17:6 On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

- So as these men are sent out two by two, they will be sent to proclaim the message of the Kingdom to the remnant of Israel.
 - And in receiving this message, the remnant would be informed about how the Kingdom program would be carried out moving forward due to the offer being rescinded for a time.
 - So in the meantime, those who would receive Christ and accept Him as their Messiah would in fact inherit the Kingdom once Christ came back in His 2nd coming.
 - And although the apostles were not fully knowledgeable of the plan in detail, they did proclaim what was given to them – and that is the message of the Gospel of God.
 - This was the message that John the Baptist proclaimed as well as the message that Christ proclaimed about Himself and that message was: Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand (it is before you now).
 - We will come back to this meaning of repent toward the end of the night so let’s put a pin here.
 - Lastly, in Christ’s commissioning the apostles for their mission, He gave them authority to do mighty works as a means of authentication.
 - It is worth our time to pause here and recognize that this authentication was solely apostolic in nature and Divinely given.
 - Meaning that God gave this authority to His apostles only and not to all believers and disciples following Him.
 - I mention this because today we have individuals who think that these works and

authority is somehow spiritual giftings that God has given the believer for the Church, today.

- Understand that the apostles had a very specific role in the establishment of the New Testament Church and God's program for the Mystery Kingdom.
- Therefore, the giftings that the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon believers is completely different in function and focus versus that of the authority Christ gave His apostles.
- Now one thing you may notice throughout the gospel accounts is the authority Christ has given varies based upon the account.
 - Be it as it may, the variation is not problematic because what the Gospel writers are conveying within their accounts is that God has given them the ability to do what they have been commissioned to do.
 - You may also recall just a few chapters ago, it was the religious leaders accusing Jesus of doing all that He did by the power of Satan.
- So Mark makes it perfectly clear that this authority and power in which the apostles are given is a God-given authority and ability.
 - Thereby making the apostles authenticated agents or representatives for Christ.
- So with the summoning, sending, and authenticating power from Christ, He would now begin to instruct them on their mission.
 - Mark now moves to their instructions. Here is the first half in verses 8 and 9.

Mark 6:8 and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belt—

Mark 6:9 but to wear sandals; and He added, “Do not put on two tunics.”

- The Apostles are told to take nothing for their mission except for a mere staff. Nothing more, nothing less
 - ■ And for this journey they are permitted to only wear their sandals and one tunic – not two.
 - One reading through this section of scripture may question the significance of the text here.
 - On top of that, looking at the other synoptic accounts could present further confusion because Matthew and Luke's gospel mention taking no staff and other essentials.
 - I mention this detail because many theologians and scholars have brought up questions regarding these textual differences – such as:
 - “Why does Matthew and Luke's gospel mention taking no staff and other supplies, but Mark mentions taking a staff?”
 - This matter can be cleared up by clearly looking at the Greek language and immediacy of the mission.
 - Matthew's account uses the Greek word *ptaomai* which means “to get or to

acquire”.

- And the language conveys this sense of immediate need to go now and not to take time to search for the staff.
- Mark’s gospel uses a broader meaning of the word which is *airo* which means “to lift or take up”
 - In other words, what you have on at this present moment is all you need to take with you.
 - So take the sandals you have on, take the staff you have in your possession, take the one tunic you have and begin your journey.
- Luke’s account mimics Matthew’s account but conveys the same urgency.
 - So, what were the gospel writers conveying by the illumination of the Holy Spirit saying different things?
- The accounts demonstrate the reality that the mission is vital – move now! But know that all that you will need, My Heavenly Father will supply.
 - In other words, your earthly dependency on things pales in comparison to the provisions of God.
 - It is God who is the ultimate provider for not just some of our needs, but every one of our needs.
 - We are reminded of God’s immeasurable riches and provisions in Philippians 4:19.

Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

- From the staff, to the sandals, and even the tunic, everything that the apostles would need, through God’s provision, their every need would be supplied.
 - What was Jesus doing in allowing this group of untrained fishermen, tax-collectors, and the like, to go on a mission without Him there?
 - What was this test run going to show these men?
 - It would show them that all they would ever need for their mission for Christ both spiritual to physical would be provided for them by God Himself.
 - God is our sustainer, our way maker, our present help in times of trouble.
 - We need not worry ourselves with trying to best equip ourselves for the journey He is sending us on.
 - I remember telling Pastor Steve, I need seminary to equip me to pastor and he quickly corrected me and said you have the Holy Spirit to do that.
 - We must realize that where our resources and provisions falter or lack, God’s infinite resources and providential provision will always outlast ours.
 - And this reality would have to be something the apostles would have to fully rely upon both now with Christ’s earthly presence, but most especially when Christ departed to the right hand of the Father.
 - What I find most encouraging, and you should as well, is that their dependency

upon the Father could be witnessed in Jesus' dependency upon the Father.

- At every moment before Jesus would perform great miracles in the region it was always preceded by communion with the Father.
- What began as the apostle's early confusion of Jesus' intimate time with the Father would grow to fond appreciation and great need.
 - And may I say this should be the disposition of every believer. Time with the Father is necessary for effective ministry.
 - We now arrive to the last half of the instructions in verses 10 and 11. Check out the text.

Mark 6:10 And He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town.

Mark 6:11 Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them."

- You must love Jesus' approach to getting His apostles ready for a journey they weren't fully anticipating.
 - It's like telling a person you're going to teach them how to swim after they have seen you do it several times.
 - They then look at you and say, "Okay, you ready now?" and suddenly throw you into the deep end and say, "Go for it!"
 - Jesus, here, is giving the apostles a crash course, if you will, for how to go about their trial run.
 - He prepares them for the basics of what their mission for the early church would look like.
 - But what is most beautiful is He doesn't leave them high and dry; He is physically present on earth with them.
 - Therefore, His presence serves as this flotation device if you will.
 - In other words, although they will be sent out, they won't be alone because His authority and provision will be given to them and will provide for them.
 - Jesus first begins with the missional approach of humility for the minister in verse 10.
 - Jesus makes the effort of telling the apostles that humility is the mark of the sent out ones.
 - This goes right in accordance with the very nature of Christ: Total dependance of the Father and His provision.
 - I make this known because Jesus instructs the apostles to stay where they have been invited and not to depart from that place.
 - This invitation that the apostles would receive was an extension of hospitality and compassion from those who would hear the message of the Kingdom of God.
 - But ultimately this hospitality is extended because God was providing the

opportunity.

- Remember that this provision was covering the needs of the apostles, so this eliminated the excuse of more “preferred accommodations”.
 - The reality was it was common for traveling preachers to sleep outdoors in the ancient world.
 - And this is, in essence, Jesus’ point!
 - In other words, do not seek the better, more appealing offer from other homeowners, thereby risking your testimony with the more humble homeowner and their living conditions.
- To put it more plainly, don’t allow your preferences get in the way of God’s provision. Remain humble and grateful.
 - For the Pastor, whether you receive an honorarium or not, preach the Gospel well. Why, because God will provide.
 - Whether you are preaching in a room of 20 people or 20,000 people, preach the Gospel well. Why, because God is being glorified.
 - Recognize that God is the supplier and sustainer of your needs, not your greed.
 - And I just wonder, being that Judas sold out Christ for 30 pieces of silver, if this journey was not a sore spot for him.
- So, Jesus makes it clear that His authenticated agents are to be marked by humility.
 - We then witness in verse 11 that Jesus prepares them for the eventual acceptance or rejection and overall opposition that will come with their call and summons.
- Jesus lets them know there will be places and people who will accept the message of the Kingdom of Heaven and therefore will accept the messenger into their home.
 - And on the other hand, there will be some who will hear the message they bring and will reject the message, the messenger, but ultimately the object of the message.
- It is here that we can witness another sense of Jesus’ leadership in His training of these untrained apostles.
 - What we see Jesus do in verse 11 is provide the apostles with a proper response to a rejected message.
- Recognize that the rejection was a familiar response to Jesus’ message and ministry regarding the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - And Jesus makes the apostles aware that they will share in this rejection and persecution as well.
 - In other words, they have been invited to suffer for the sake of Christ!
- In this instance, Jesus gives the disciples a proper response to the rejection and that was to “Shake the dust off the soles of their feet for a testimony against them”
 - When the apostles were met by opposition to the message, the gesture of

removing dust from their feet was a sign of judgement against the unbeliever.

- For example, even a household that would not receive them, the apostles would use the same gesture.
- The same judgement that would befall a city that rejected Christ and His identity would be the same judgement to fall upon a household.
- Check out what Luke's account says regarding this matter in Luke 10:10-11:

Luke 10:10 But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say,

Luke 10:11 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'

- Shaking the dust off one's shoes is the equivalent to our phrase, today, "I've washed my hands of that person."
 - In other word, I've done all that I could do humanly possible, and they leave me with no other choice.
 - I believe this reality should free up every single believer in Jesus Christ. Why?
 - Because your role and my role as a proclaimer of the Gospel of Christ is to simply proclaim the message of truth.
 - You are not responsible for the results of people and their response to the message of the Gospel.
 - There will be some who respond positively because they have been called and chosen by God in eternity's past, and to that end we rejoice.
 - However, there will be some who will hear the message and not respond to the truth.
 - Therefore, it's important to recognize that they aren't rejecting you, they are rejecting the only hope of true freedom and hope for salvation.
 - Check out how Paul and Barnabas responded to both the reception of some and the rejection of others they ministered to in Acts 13:48-51.

Acts 13:48 When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Acts 13:49 And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region.

Acts 13:50 But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.

Acts 13:51 But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.

- ○ Let's look at the last two verses again.

Mark 6:12 They went out and preached that men should repent.

Mark 6:13 And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.

- Mark mentions that the message that the apostles have been entrusted to proclaim is the same message they witnessed John the Baptist and Jesus proclaim.
 - The message and the content was consistent.
 - This is key to acknowledge because the apostles were entrusted to take hold of this message and proclaim it.
 - The message regarding Christ during that time was that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah that God had promised long ago.
 - And that those who believed that Christ was the One in whom the Father sent, would be saved.
 - This would be the one in whom John would point to and the Spirit of God would rest upon this one and His name is Jesus Christ.
 - And upon hearing Jesus' teaching and seeing the demonstration of His power, the people were to have a "change of mind" about who they thought Messiah was.
 - The word "repent" is the Greek word *meta-no-eo* which means to change one's mind – to literally reconsider your own dispositions and abandon it for the truth that has been made known to you.
 - So it would be through the Divine authority of Christ as the God-man that would provide the authenticating authority of power for the apostles to authenticate the message they proclaimed.
 - Friends, this would be the apostles' trial run into a ministry they were completely unaware of. They were the "sent-out" ones.
 - I say this because what began as the apostles observing and learning the words of Jesus and His actions, now moved to an open session of "doing".
 - Those in who Jesus summoned and called to Himself would now be sent out on mission to do as their Master had done.
 - One question that one might ask is: "Why now?" and on top of that, were these men even ready for this mission before them?
 - The answer to that question is that the heat was turning up for Jesus' ministry especially from Chapters 6-8:26 as this marked the last phase of Jesus' Galilean ministry.
 - So what do you do when the pressure is applied and time is running short?
 - The apostles are thrust into the mission field, however they are equipped with all they need to complete the mission of the Kingdom program.
 - The goal of every disciple of Christ is to observe the Savior well that you may obey all that He has called you to do.
 - And in it all, to know that He has equipped you with all that you need for life and godliness in the Spirit.
 - I recall around 11 years old, my dad became unusually adamant about me becoming disciplined.

- To learn how to take care of my responsibilities well and to execute them to the fullest.
- In his last few months of life, that became the anthem from his lips as his discipline became sterner.
- I experienced a similar thing with my spiritual father, Stephen Armstrong.
 - Weeks before he passed, he was on me about becoming more organized, learning how to make stronger decisions and sticking to it.
 - As well as being diligent in studying and preparing 2 messages per week.
 - And not too long after that he passed.
- Why do I share this? Because Jesus was coming to the end of His earthly ministry as well and His apostles had to be made ready.
 - Even if it seemed too soon, the timing was perfect, and above it all, the Lord was with them through it all.
 - This mission would be a foreshadow of the ultimate mission they would have in making disciples of all nations in Matthew 28:19-20.

**Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Matthew 28:20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”**

- The reason that the apostles were able to do what Christ sent them to do is because He was with them and empowered them to do the work.
 - And friends may I encourage you in the text to know that you have been equipped and empowered because we now have the indwelling Holy Spirit.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 6C

Chapter 6:14-29

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- Last week we came across a pivotal moment in Jesus' teaching ministry.
 - As the rejection of His message and identity continued to increase amongst the people, He continued in proclaiming the Gospel of God.
 - As the disciples witnessed the people's rejection of Jesus, it would serve as a teaching tool for how they should respond – and so it did.
 - Jesus sent His Apostles on their first trial mission where they would be given apostolic authority.
 - This would be Jesus' authorization and authentication of His workers to do His work of spreading the message of God around regions of the Galilee and eventually the world.
 - And from that trial mission, His Apostles would be trained in observing and doing, equipped by the authority of Christ, and sent in the power of Christ to do the work of Christ.
 - Tonight, as we approach the text, we will come across an interesting narrative that ultimately leads to the death of John the Baptist.
 - If I were to outline our flow through the text tonight, it would go as follows:
 - 1. A Flashback and a Familiar Message (v.14-16)
 - 2. A Fearful Fascination (v.17-20)
 - 3. A Fraudulent Request (v.21-28)
 - 4. A Forceful Foretelling (v.28-29)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be, "Don't shoot the Messenger"
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles to Mark 6:14-29 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Mark 6:14 And King Herod heard about it, for His name had become well known; and people were saying, "John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why these miraculous powers are at work in Him."

Mark 6:15 But others were saying, "He is Elijah." And others were saying, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old."

Mark 6:16 But when Herod heard about it, he kept saying, "John, whom I beheaded, has risen!"

Mark 6:17 For Herod himself had sent men and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her.

Mark 6:18 For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

Mark 6:19 And Herodias held a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death, and could not do so;

Mark 6:20 for Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he had been protecting him. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed; and yet he used to enjoy listening to him.

Mark 6:21 An opportune day came when Herod, on his birthday, held a banquet for his nobles and military commanders, and the leading people of Galilee;

Mark 6:22 and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests; and the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you want, and I will give it to you.”

Mark 6:23 And he swore to her, “Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you, up to half of my kingdom.”

Mark 6:24 And she went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask for?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist.”

Mark 6:25 Immediately she came in a hurry to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”

Mark 6:26 And although the king was very sorry, because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he was unwilling to refuse her.

Mark 6:27 Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded him to bring back his head. And he went and beheaded him in the prison,

Mark 6:28 and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother.

Mark 6:29 When his disciples heard about this, they came and carried away his body, and laid it in a tomb.

- Let’s Pray.
- There’s an old adage that goes like this: “Don’t shoot the messenger”
 - This statement was a sentiment expressed in the play *Antigone* (An-ti-guh-nee), written by Sophocles around 440 BC.
 - It would later be used in Shakespeare’s play entitled *Antony and Cleopatra*.
 - This phrase is often used when someone reveals truth that the receiver is not willing to receive or blatantly doesn’t want to receive.
 - And rather than that person being upset with the origin of the message, they find the means to take their frustrations out on the messenger themselves.
 - In the case of our text tonight, we have a similar story at play – the only difference is that the communicator of truth was killed by the receiver of the message.
 - As we observe the text we will ultimately see men and women, naturally, attempt to silence the truth at any cost – even if it means attempting to eliminate the proclaimers of truth altogether.
 - Pick me up at verse 14-15 of Mark 6.

Mark 6:14 And King Herod heard about it, for His name had become well known; and people were saying, “John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why these miraculous powers are at work in Him.”

Mark 6:15 But others were saying, “He is Elijah.” And others were saying, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.”

- Mark picks up here as Jesus’ teaching ministry continues to grow and expand, especially now that the Apostles have been sent on a mission.
 - Christ has both authorized and authenticated these men to do the work He has

summoned them to.

- So as the Apostles are going out two by two, their reach with the message of the Kingdom and repentance makes its way around the region.
- Jesus' name becomes so well-known throughout the region that Mark tells us that even Herod Antipas heard of Him.
 - And with Herod Antipas hearing about Jesus and His message of repentance and the Kingdom, it almost became too surreal.
 - Reason being is because as Mark lays out the message Herod is hearing at this point it sounds quite familiar to what John the Baptist was preaching.
- Now this section of the text may read a bit strange because it is as if Mark is taking Herod Antipas' experience and rewinding it, if you will.
 - You may recall earlier on in our study of Mark that on the onset of Jesus' early teaching ministry, John the Baptist was imprisoned by Herod (Mark 1:14-15)
 - However, by the time we get to Mark 6:14, we read that John has died.
- So what we have here in the text is a "flashback moment".
 - Almost as if Herod Antipas were experiencing déjà vu.
- One question that could be raised is: "What event(s) occurred between the time he was imprisoned to the time of his execution?"
 - Well tonight, time will allow us to get into the weeds of this question and to the eventual cause of his death.
 - However, before we get to that, we must realize what Mark is making known for the reader regarding the familiarity of the message.
- Remember, that John the Baptist's ministry was a well-known ministry as well, well before Jesus' arrival on the scene.
 - During the start of John's ministry, Israel had not heard a prophet or prophetic word in over 400 years. (Intertestamental period)
- Being that John the Baptist was the first prophetic voice after the intertestamental period, his ministry and identity would have been quite prominent to say the least.
 - So when Herod Antipas and others closest to him hear about a similar message and the authority of Jesus' name around the region, Herod's conscience becomes pricked.
- So with Herod hearing about all of the miraculous things that Jesus was doing and the similar message that Jesus was preaching, people were connecting these acts to a great prophetic work.
 - And indeed, the prophetic message of God was continuing and unhindered through the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- Therefore we see some assuming that the ministry of Jesus was that of Elijah or one of the prophets; it was dynamic and powerful.
 - What Herod Antipas assumed was the end of the ministry of John the Baptist was simply a continuation of the message about the One who was coming to be the way for men and women to enter the Kingdom.
- One could imagine, hearing about these amazing works and hearing this similar

message would have caused a startling anxiousness in Herod's heart.

- Growing up, my mom would startle me by creeping up behind me without announcing herself.
- This was usually done because the instructions she gave me to do were not being completed.
 - So before I knew it, I would turn around to proceed in disobedience and be greeted by my mother's face staring directly at mine.
 - And to that end I would jump and scream while she would say with the calmest voice: "See... You ain't living right!"
- And what she meant by that was: "If you were doing what I told you to do and living according to the rules, you wouldn't be startled!"
 - This friends is what Herod Antipas was experiencing in that present moment: a guilty conscience, knowing what he had done with John the Baptist.
 - It was all playing back like a bad dream.
- Let's keep moving as we will now answer the question we previously posed earlier: "Why was John the Baptist imprisoned and what caused his death?"
 - Check out to Mark 6:17-20.

Mark 6:17 For Herod himself had sent men and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her.

Mark 6:18 For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

Mark 6:19 And Herodias held a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death, and could not do so;

Mark 6:20 for Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he had been protecting him. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed; and yet he used to enjoy listening to him

- Mark begins to expound on this "flashback" moment with Herod Antipas.
 - And he makes it clear that the things that Herod Antipas is hearing about Jesus sounds quite familiar to the man that he had killed.
 - Although Jesus and John are two completely different men with separate and distinct identities, they both proclaimed the same message.
 - There was something about Jesus' message and ministry that resonated with Herod Antipas.
 - And what resonated with Herod was the fact that this message of conviction and truth was the same as what he had heard before.
 - It was something about the truth that Herod Antipas couldn't escape. He was once again having to face the truth square in the face.
 - And it is in verse 17 that we come to grips with the reality of why John the Baptist was killed and who the leader of that execution was.

- Mark tells us that John the Baptist's death was "on account" of Herodias.
- Now before we move on too quickly let me just say, if you thought you or your family had family drama – you haven't seen anything yet.
- Herodias was the granddaughter of Herod the Great: the ruler that sought to kill Jesus as a baby and who was jealous that there would be one who would rule over him.
 - Herodias married Herod Phillip who was one of the sons of Herod the Great, which means that her husband was also her uncle.
- It would be through Herod Antipas visiting his brother Philip in Rome that he snagged the opportunity to elope with his brother's wife.
 - So with this information having become public knowledge at this time, John the Baptist called both Herod Antipas and Herodias out for their sin.
- Both Herod Antipas and Herodias were involved in adultery which was clearly in contrast to Jewish Law – which Herod prescribed to by lip service (religiously).
 - More specifically we can see in Leviticus 18:16 and Leviticus 20:21 how Herod and Herodias had broken the Law.
 - Check out the text with me really quickly:

Leviticus 18:16 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness.

- ○ Here's Leviticus 20:21.

Leviticus 20:21 If there is a man who takes his brother's wife, it is abhorrent; he has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They will be childless.

- Verse 18 of Mark 6 tells us that John the Baptist "had been saying" what Herod was doing was unlawful and that he needed to turn from his sinful ways and acknowledge the truth of God's word and command.
 - Notice the sentence structure here in verse 18: John "had been saying". The phrase is in the imperfect, active, indicative.
 - Meaning this was something that John had been telling Herod, time and time again.
 - And doesn't this remind us of how truth resonates with that of the fallen humanity?
 - No matter how many times truth is made known, people choose what and how they want to respond to it.
 - They will listen to nuggets of wisdom up to the point that it doesn't disrupt their lives as it is.
 - They will either remain in the comforts of their sin or they will turn to the Savior. There is no in between!
 - So an opportunity on several occasions had been presented before Herod to display humility and turn from sin.

- However it seemed that his sin was more comforting than the condition of his soul.
- And as a proclaimer of truth, John the Baptist can't sit still and allow one who "claims" to love God live in a way contrary to the ways of God.
- We see this similar truth conveyed in Ezekiel 3:18-19. Check out the text.

Ezekiel 3:18 When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

Ezekiel 3:19 Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself.

- So both Herod Antipas and Herodias have been communicated the truth of the Gospel of God – to repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.
 - But notice Herodias' disposition to the truth made known to her regarding her sin condition. The text tells us she had a "grudge" against John.
 - The word "grudge" in Greek is *enecho*. The sense of this word is that it goes beyond resentment.
 - It is to the point that the individual wants to take action against this person.
 - In other words, Herodias was so deep in her sin and far from a peaceful shore that hearing the truth time and time again moved her to desire in her heart to kill John.
 - The truth of the matter was, John's message of repentance became a sore spot of conviction that Herodias didn't want to deal with.
 - Friends, this is what we see in our world today. The moment that people don't want to hear truth, they do whatever it takes to "cancel" that proclaimer of truth.
 - The moment that absolute truth is proclaimed, opposition begins to rise to shut it down by any means necessary.
 - One will either humbly submit to the truth and obey God by the working of the Spirit of God because their eyes have been open to the truth or they will seek their own understanding and their own truth and turn from God.
 - And this reality will ultimately bring about judgement that will rightfully be due.
 - The reality is, if it were not for the Lord Jesus taking our place and bearing our sins, we would be right in the line of fire of the very wrath of God.
 - What I find most interesting is that Herod was quite aware of Herodias' feelings about John but wanted to keep John safe.
 - Verse 20 tells us that Herod kept John safe. The reason being is twofold:
 - 1. He was afraid of John because John was a righteous and holy man.
 - 2. Secondly, the text tells us Herod "heard him gladly". In other words, Herod had a certain "fearful fascination" for John.
 - This is key for us to recognize at this point in the narrative because it speaks to the

overwhelming conviction of truth!

- The reality is, upon the heart of every human being is one's ability to know right from wrong.
- Paul speaks much about this reality of our human conscience bearing witness of right and wrong.
- Check out the text: Romans 2:12-16 quickly.

Romans 2:12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;
Romans 2:13 for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

Romans 2:14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,
Romans 2:15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

Romans 2:16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

- I remember in middle school when it came to associating with classmates and those who knew me as a “church kid”, I was often greeted in this way:
 - “Oh here comes Jesus’ little brother – let’s change the subject y’all. We don’t want to cause his ears to burn.”
 - I’m sure you have your share of stories regarding your experience at family gatherings or other social events.
 - When there are people around someone who they deem to be “right with God” or a “holy person” or believer in Christ, people’s attitudes and behaviors change.
 - Why? Because people have a fear of what is holy and righteous because we are naturally sinful people.
 - There is this natural distinction between light and dark, goodness and evil, and in this same way the presence of truth can cause one to be in fearful fascination – however without a willingness or draw to turn from their sin.
 - This respect and fear for what was holy caused Herod to honor John and to shield him from his wife’s schemes.
 - Herod was willing to put John in prison, but he wasn’t willing to kill him.
 - So in the case of Herodias, what do you do when one is caught between the truth and a desirable need but is not anchored to truth – you seek the opportune time to get what you want.
 - And just like the father of lies, Herodias waits, yet again for the right moment to get her request to kill John the Baptist.
 - Check out Mark 6:21-26:

Mark 6:21 An opportune day came when Herod, on his birthday, held a banquet for his nobles and military commanders, and the leading people of Galilee;

Mark 6:22 and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests; and the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you want, and I will give it to you.”

Mark 6:23 And he swore to her, “Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you, up to half of my kingdom.”

Mark 6:24 And she went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask for?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist.”

Mark 6:25 Immediately she came in a hurry to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”

Mark 6:26 And although the king was very sorry, because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he was unwilling to refuse her.

Mark 6:27 Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded him to bring back his head. And he went and beheaded him in the prison,

Mark 6:28 and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother.

- We must first begin here by looking at the second word in verse 21. Mark tells us that a “strategic day” or an “opportune day” came.
 - The word “strategic” here in Greek is *eukarios*.
 - You may be familiar with the Greek root word, *karios*, which we have talked about in previous teachings.
 - It normally deals with an opportune time or season.
 - However, in this context this opportune moment is found most suitable for none other than Herodias herself.
 - The opportunity to get rid of John the Baptist once and for all would come about on Herod’s birthday.
 - This would be the day Herod Antipas would be a bit more vulnerable than what he normally would be.
 - On this day, Mark mentions that Herod Antipas held a banquet with a rather large guest list.
 - This list included his lords, commanders, and other leading men in the region he ruled, which was in the Galilee.
 - And it just so happens that the entertainment for his guest was none other than Herodias’ daughter, Salome.
 - Scholars suggest that Salome was of the age of a young woman which meant she could have been no less than 12 years old.
 - Verse 22 states that Herodias’ daughter “pleased” the dinner guest and the king.
 - Now this word “pleased” in our text and this context means to delight in or give pleasure to.
 - In other words, her dancing was pleasing to the eye which we can surmise was seductive dancing at best.

- The question becomes “Why this method of entertainment and for what purpose was this serving?”
- Well, it becomes obvious from Matthew’s account that this entire plan of seduction was for a malicious purpose.
 - Check out what Matthew 14:8 states regarding Herodias’ daughter’s fraudulent request after the King makes an unwise oath at his weakest moment.

Matthew 14:8 Having been prompted by her mother, she *said, “Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.”

- It is at this moment upon hearing Salome’s request that Herod Antipas realizes this seductive act was ultimately orchestrated by Herodias.
 - At this point, what can Herod Antipas do after having made an oath of this caliber to Herodias’ daughter before all his men?
 - Understand that during this time an oath was a man’s bond, especially that from the mouth of a ruler such as the Herodians.
 - However, the type of oath that Herod Antipas made was considered to be “an oath in uncertain things”
 - Such a frivolous oath was wicked in the sight of the Lord which is why Bock in his commentary states that, “the oath could have been revoked”.
 - Unfortunately, because Herod made this oath before his men, his reputation was on the line and therefore his pride became louder than the reality of the matter.
 - You will see a little later on tonight just how “Pride comes before the fall”. (Proverbs 16:18)
 - I believe the text makes a very important applicational point here: When we allow sin to rule and reign, it will stop at nothing to corrupt the whole body.
 - Herod Antipas could have responded to the message he heard time and time again from John.
 - However, the revelation of truth will cause one to respond to truth and turn from sin or sit in sin and turn from truth.
 - We ultimately see here the depravity of the human condition.
 - Check out what Proverbs 21:2 tells us regarding the hearts and desires of men vs. the things of God:

Proverbs 21:2 Every man’s way is right in his own eyes,
But the Lord weighs the hearts.

- ○ And for good measure, Proverbs 14:12 states this:

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man,
But its end is the way of death.

- ◦ Apart from Holy God, the ways of the hearts of men lead to death and nothing good.
 - And we see this played out in the plans within Herodias' heart.
- So Herodias received what she always wanted but felt that Herod was too weak to accomplish – she got John the Baptist's head on a platter (v.27-28).
 - What we see in the natural are the tactics that Herodias used in manipulating her daughter to dance before the King for the sake of a fraudulent request.
 - However, there were spiritual matters at play behind these human agents because ultimately, Satan himself was using this woman for his purposes.
- Where does this leave Herod Antipas at this time?
 - Verse 26 told us that this made Herod Antipas “very sorry”. He was completely grieved by what He had to do because of his own sin.
 - As Franzman in his Bible History commentary points out: “Herod had let his hour of grace slip by”.
- What began as a drawing to the light of the truth of the Gospel of God for Herod became an utter rejection of truth for the sake of comfort and sin.
 - We ultimately see this reality played out in Luke 23:8-12. Check out the text.

Luke 23:8 Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him.

Luke 23:9 And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing.

Luke 23:10 And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently.

Luke 23:11 And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate.

Luke 23:12 Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other.

- There was no change found in the heart of Herod nor his reception to truth after the fact.
 - He was more concerned with his political alliances and comforts as a desiring king and the threats of a coming Kingdom in which Christ would be ruling.
 - Friends, coming to the truth requires cost and an abandonment of what you hold near and dear!
 - It is a cost of comfort and convenience for the sake of obedience to the word of God and His truth.
 - If you recall last week, we mentioned that when the Apostles were sent out with the gospel message there would be some who responded to it and some who didn't.
 - For those who did not respond, the apostles would “shake the dust from their sandals as an indication of judgement.”

- And this particular judgement would come either upon that home or that city.
 - Well with Herodias giving into sin and killing John the Baptist (rejecting truth and ultimately Christ), Herod would soon receive his due penalty from Heaven in his day.
 - Josephus records that the eventual destruction of Herod Antipas' army was sent as a punishment upon Herod and a mark of God's displeasure to him. (insert citation)
- Lastly, we see in verse 29 that John's disciples come to pick his body up and give him a proper burial in a tomb.
 - Again, truth, we see, comes at a cost and in some occasions will cost us our lives.
- The killing of John the Baptist ultimately served as a foreshadowing of Jesus' own death that was drawing near – and might I add with similar insights.
 - Just as Herodias sought ways in which to stop John's ministry, so were the Pharisees and Herodians plotting to kill Jesus for what he proclaimed but most importantly for who He was in His person, authority, and power!
- What we gather from the text as an obvious observation as well is that sin spreads.
 - What started as a means to “cover up” truth for the sake of sin in Herodias' heart eventually spread to involving Herod and Salome.
- What could have been an opportunity of repentance for Herod became a thing of remorse to that of a calloused heart.
 - Also don't miss what Mark is saying here: Although there is time to respond to the Gospel and hear it now, there will be a moment where it won't be.
 - Friends, tomorrow is not promised! And the question on the table for the non-believer is “Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Do you believe that in Him through Him and by Him men and women can be saved?!”
 - Secondly, as we are still in the Church Age, continue to share the Gospel despite the persecution.
- Truth has been made known – Christ has revealed Himself by the will of the Father.
 - For those who do not know Jesus but have heard the message, will you respond to the message of the Gospel of God?
 - Will you turn from your own dispositions and recognize the reality of sin in your life?
- Because the reality is that you will either respond to Christ in faith based upon who He is and what He has done for you, or you will face the wrath of God that is coming.
 - I implore you by the Spirit of God: Repent and Believe the Gospel!
 - Let's Pray.

Citation:

- Werner Herman Franzmann, [*Bible History Commentary: New Testament*](#), electronic

ed. (Milwaukee, WI: WELS Board for Parish Education, 1998), 294.



Mark - Lesson 6D

Chapter 6:30-44

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- Last week our text took a brief pause from the Apostles' trial mission and refreshed us with a familiar figure – John the Baptist.
 - Within our study last week, we discovered the reason for both John's imprisonment and eventual execution.
 - John's proclamation of the Kingdom and repentance was a message that Herodias did not take much liking to.
 - It would be through both Herod and Herodias' rejection of the message that led to John the Baptist's head on a platter.
 - We mentioned that the killing of John the Baptist was a foreshadow of the coming death of Christ for the sake of those in whom believed and would believe upon Him as Messiah.
 - Tonight, we will find ourselves back in our original story as the Apostles return to Jesus from their journey around the region proclaiming the message of the Kingdom.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be: "The Provider in Green Pastures"
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles with me to Mark 6:30-44.

Mark 6:30 The apostles *gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught.

Mark 6:31 And He *said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)

Mark 6:32 They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.

Mark 6:33 The people saw them going, and many recognized them and ran there together on foot from all the cities, and got there ahead of them.

Mark 6:34 When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

Mark 6:35 When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and it is already quite late;

Mark 6:36 send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

Mark 6:37 But He answered them, "You give them something to eat!" And they *said to Him, "Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?"

Mark 6:38 And He *said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go look!" And when they found out, they *said, "Five, and two fish."

Mark 6:39 And He commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass.

Mark 6:40 They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties.

Mark 6:41 And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them

all.

Mark 6:42 They all ate and were satisfied,

Mark 6:43 and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish.

Mark 6:44 There were five thousand men who ate the loaves.

- Let's Pray.
- Tonight, our text involves a very familiar passage of scripture – the feeding of the 5,000.
 - I am aware that we all, at some point in our walk with Jesus and being in the church, have heard this story taught time and again.
 - However, it is my prayer tonight that we approach this familiar teaching with fresh eyes.
 - And that with fresh eyes we will have a deeper knowledge of Christ, will pursue discipleship more intimately, and glorify Christ greatly.
 - With that being said, let's dive into the first 3 verses.

Mark 6:30 The apostles *gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught.

Mark 6:31 And He *said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.” (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)

Mark 6:32 They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.

- As we jump into verse 30-32, it almost seems as if it is an abrupt pickup – and that it is.
 - Mark moved us from the narrative of the death of John the Baptist to the return of the Apostles from their trial mission.
 - And from a glance, one could ask the question: How do these narratives even connect?
 - Because at the surface they seem completely disconnected.
 - However, if we make that assumption, we miss the intent of the author's point in these various stories as it relates to the teachings and works of Jesus and His Person.
 - If you recall a few teachings ago, I mentioned a term called the “Markan Sandwich”
 - Within sections of Mark's writings, he will interrupt one storyline and insert another.
 - In this case, the sandwich began with Jesus sending out the twelve and equipping them for His work.
 - That work included teaching about the Kingdom of God, healing diseases, and the like.
 - These miraculous works served as authoritative authentication of who they

were sent by.

- Then last week we saw that narrative interrupted by the story of John the Baptist's death.
 - Now tonight, we pick back up on the Apostles' return to Jesus after having gone on their trial mission.
- Now, if you remember, the purpose of the "Markan Sandwich" serves as a general connection to the stories with the sandwich structure.
 - For example we saw this with the woman with the issue of blood and Jarius' daughter.
 - Ultimately, interwoven with the story line was this general theme of believing faith.
- That faith in Christ is what makes one whole, both in the physical sense, but most importantly in a spiritual, salvific sense.
 - We are saved by in Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone.
- So with this idea of the Markan sandwich in mind, the question arises: "How does the story of the death of John the Baptist connect to the mission of the Apostles?"
 - Well in one sense we see that both the Apostles and John the Baptist have the responsibility of preaching the truth of the Kingdom of God.
 - We also see that there is a cost/sacrifice that comes with the call to proclaim truth (the Gospel).
- For the Apostles it may look like being rejected from town to town and having no place to lay their head.
 - Whereas for John the Baptist, preaching the truth cost him his head.
 - So in a way, these stories connect a much needed learning experience that the Apostles would have to realize sooner rather than later.
 - And what we see from the Apostles towards the end of their time in the 1st century is that the proclamation of truth led most to a martyr's death.
- So one application that comes from these two stories is that the Gospel message will cost you something.
 - It may be popularity with your coworkers or community leaders.
 - Your beliefs may cost you that potential promotion or recognition with others because you stand for truth vs. the culture (Counter cultural)
 - So with the Markan Sandwich in mind, prepare to see and discover some more parallels that the Spirit draws us to.
- So here at verse 30, the story of the Apostles' trial mission picks back up and they have now gathered with Jesus to "report all that they had done."
 - You could imagine these stories coming from their lips was probably overwhelming amounts of excitement.
- I almost imagine it was what my wife and I experienced after picking up our kids after their week at summer camp.
 - Our kids came back with exciting and unique experiences to tell us about – And that they did.

- It was as if they had motor mouths for the majority of our 4 hour drive home, but only because there was so much to share.
- And in a similar way, the Apostles have much to report back to Jesus regarding the places they went and the things they did.
 - It would be after Jesus has heard all of their report in full that He proceeds to tell them to go with Him to a “secluded place” and rest a while.
- Now this language should sound quite familiar to us because this request for seclusion was similar to that of what Jesus would do before He would perform mighty miracles.
 - He now would tell His Apostles to do the same because their time with people required them to now be refilled and refueled.
- This really demonstrates the compassion and care of Jesus towards His fellow workers.
 - And it also brings about a very important applicational point, and that is: Ministry requires moments of rest.
- If ministers of the Gospel were constantly ministering non-stop week after week, that work ethic would lead to “burn-out”.
 - I can’t tell you how many stories I have heard about Pastors being burned out because they never rested and were always going.
 - Either the laborers were few which force them to take on more responsibility, or that Pastor is lacking in abiding with the Lord and rest.
 - My wife is faithful in making sure I get the rest I need because she wants her husband around for a long time.
- So the importance of rest in ministry, especially with its demands, was necessary for Jesus and His Apostles to go and get some rest.
 - Let's keep moving. Check out our next few verses- verses 33-36.

Mark 6:33 The people saw them going, and many recognized them and ran there together on foot from all the cities, and got there ahead of them.

Mark 6:34 When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

Mark 6:35 When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, “This place is desolate and it is already quite late;

Mark 6:36 send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.”

- Mark tells us as Jesus and the Apostles were preparing to make their way to seclusion for rest, they were recognized by some of the large crowd passing through.
 - It’s almost as if the crowd passing recognized the Apostles from a distance and made a b-line for them.
 - It’s like going to a theme park and you and your family are moving in the direction of the latest attraction.

- Only to recognize that there is another family having spotted the same ride and wait time as you.
- Both of you look at each other and begin to “power walk” to see who will get there first.
- The text tells us that as Jesus and the Apostles began to set sail for their secluded destination that the rather large crowd followed their route on land.
 - This crowd was so committed that Mark mentions that the crowd arrived to their destination before Jesus and the Apostles did.
 - At this point, there may have been several things running through the minds of the Apostles.
 - “We just saw you guys not too long ago. Can this wait until tomorrow?”
 - Maybe the exhaustion playing in their minds at this point has moved to annoyance.
- Friends, oh the joy of ministry! Late calls, constant texts, delayed trips, etc. – all for the sake of doing the work of ministry.
 - This is both the call of ministry but also the warning of ministry. If you are not careful you can become mentally and emotionally drained.
 - But the opposite side of that coin is you can become quite obsessed with the work and not set certain boundaries in place.
- There is a beautiful boundary in ministry that is perfectly balanced in abiding and resting in Christ and His strength while doing His work.
 - In ministry you will be inconvenienced – how will you respond?
 - In ministry you will become frustrated with people – how will you respond?
 - In ministry you will have to deal with the messiness and brokenness of people – how will you respond?
- I love how Paul addresses the matter of really loving the people and what the excellence of love looks like displayed. This is what he writes in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

1 Corinthians 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

1 Corinthians 13:6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

1 Corinthians 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- One thing we should note in verse 34 is the response that Jesus displays towards seeing the needs of the people.
 - Mark tells us that Jesus “felt compassion” for the people that were coming to them.
 - The word compassion here is an interesting word because it is used in the New

Testament to describe Jesus' compassion towards people.

- This same means of compassion is found in Luke's gospel with both the Samaritan woman and the father of the Prodigal son
- It means to be affected or moved deeply in one's inner being (the bowels).
- In other words, Jesus' response displays the reality of what a caring shepherd does.
 - A caring shepherd sees the needs of the people and meets the needs of the people.
- The question we have to ask is: What causes Jesus to be moved with such compassion and concern for the people here?
 - Well, we see in verse 34b that the cause is based upon a statement that Jesus makes which is:
 - Jesus saw the people of Israel as being "like sheep without a shepherd"
- This phrase is a simile that was often used in the Hebrew scriptures.
 - It referred to the leadership of Israel in that day and their inability to care for, shepherd, and teach the people of God in the ways of the Lord.
 - In other words, the leaders of Israel were more self-focused than flock focused.
- We see Ezekiel speak to the wickedness of Israel's leaders by the power of the Spirit of God in Ezekiel 34:1-5. Check out the text.

Ezekiel 34:1 Then the word of the Lord came to me saying,

Ezekiel 34:2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?"

Ezekiel 34:3 You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock.

Ezekiel 34:4 Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them.

Ezekiel 34:5 They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered.

- So, the people were in need of a good shepherd to feed them and lead them into the safe pastures provided by their God.
 - The talks of a shepherd leading a flock and caring for its sheep begins to ring of a particular psalm written by King David – Psalm 23:1-2.

Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.

Psalm 23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;

- ○ The Good Shepherd always meets the needs of His people.
- Over the years, and having been a part of different churches, you can always see within the culture of a church if they are truly compassionate or not.
 - It usually begins with a genuine need of someone in the body.
 - However, the “only” thing that the leadership seems to say to that need is “Let me pray about it and see what the Lord says”.
 - But in all reality, they know they have the solution to the problem but refuse to count the cost for the sake of the ones in need.
- We must learn as followers of Jesus that our response to the needs of others must emulate that of our Head Shepherd, Jesus Christ.
 - Why? Because we know that our God supplies and provides all of our needs, therefore we serve with an open hand.
- As Mark moves to demonstrate Jesus’ compassion towards the people in an effort to meet their needs, we see Jesus’ approach.
 - And to some it might seem a bit backwards, however it becomes the perfect approach to the need of every lost individual in life.
 - Jesus began to teach them many things!
 - In other words, the priority of their spiritual nourishment exceeded their physical needs and satisfactions!
- Jesus didn’t begin with healings, miracles, signs and wonders! He began with what was of primary importance, and that was to teach.
 - Teaching of the scriptures is the primary focal point of edification of the body of Christ and the evangelistic efforts of the church.
 - Every gathering and fellowship of the body should be fixated upon this one thing – preaching Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
 - If you find the focus more centered on “3 points to a better you or healthier you”, and not conforming you to Christ, then there is misappropriation of the mission.
- We could assume in this context that Jesus taught about the Kingdom of Heaven and repentance and was speaking in parables regarding the Mystery Kingdom.
 - Mark continues on in verse 35-36, and he mentions that there had been some time that had passed between them arriving to a secluded place and the winding down of Jesus’ teaching.
 - One of the disciples states the fact that they were in a desolate place and that the “hour was late”.
 - In one way it could seem as if the disciples were feeling a bit drained and potentially inconvenienced.
- In other words, “Jesus, I’m glad the people are learning, and you are teaching so well, but it’s time to go.”
 - To make matters worse, because they are in a secluded place the people’s journey to retrieve food would’ve been long and arduous and they could have potentially starved.
 - There would be no way for them to get to the nearest village for food in time

because the folks were too far from home.

- We will see why further on in the text.
- So Jesus knows His apostles are tired, however there is a lesson to be learned from this situation despite how inconvenienced they may feel at the moment.
 - I remember one night I had received a rather serious message regarding a rather urgent matter and I was a “last resort” call.
 - When I initially saw the message, my immediate thought was, I don’t want to deal with this right now – this can wait, I’m spending time with my wife.
- However, the Spirit was moving me to respond – so I tell my wife the matter and she tells me, “go take care of the flock!”
 - There will be days and times in ministry and life that we may not want to answer that call to minister to a friend or loved one but know that it is a rewarding call because Christ is being proclaimed and exalted.
 - This becomes the opportunity to see Christ move in the lives of those around you in ways you would never imagine.
- This is the call that every Pastor is called to as an under shepherd under the leadership of the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ.
 - We must respond in compassion because our Lord and Savior responded with compassion – so much so that it cost Him His life!
 - Unfortunately, the apostles weren’t connecting the dots in the lesson that Jesus was setting up before their eyes.
- So while the disciples are trying to prematurely dismiss the crowd, Jesus presses into the moment to demonstrate once again who He is.
 - Check out verses 37 and 38.

Mark 6:37 But He answered them, “You give them something to eat!” And they *said to Him, “Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?”

Mark 6:38 And He *said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go look!” And when they found out, they *said, “Five, and two fish.”

- Without fail, Jesus refutes the disciples’ suggestion of dismissing the crowd for the sake of convenience and He demands that the people’s needs be met by them.
 - So, what seems to be an inconvenience for the Apostles, serves as a teaching moment for them and the demonstration of the power of Christ.
 - We are able to see the teaching opportunity more clearly in John’s gospel. However before we get there, notice how uninterested the disciples were in the request.
 - Verse 37b tells us what the disciples asked: “Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?”
 - According to the disciples there is a huge problem here and that is the amount of people present and the cost.
 - Clearly, Mark is using this moment to express the reality that this is an

overwhelmingly large group – we will see towards the end about how many could have potentially been there (It may shock you!)

- So the question we need to ask at this point is: How much is one denarii in comparison to two hundred?
 - Well on average, one denarii amounts to one day worth of labor, therefore two hundred denarii would be more than half a year's wage.
 - These details are critical to Mark's account!
 - The cost of food, the amount of people, etc. are all consistent numbers in all four gospel accounts.
- So with knowing that Mark is the “big picture” guy, his point is speaking to the reality that there are a lot of mouths to feed with very little resources.
 - In other words, we can't cover the bill on this Jesus!
 - And what we find Mark doing here is he is building up the narrative in a way that speaks to how astronomical this miracle is about to be.
- And what is most interesting to note regarding this provision that is to come is similar to that of what takes place in 2 Kings 4:42-43. I encourage you to check that out on your own time.
 - So with the disciples telling Jesus what they didn't have, He has them find out what they do have.
- The disciples return and John's gospel tells us that Andrew, Peter's brother, reports that there is a little boy who has 5 barley loaves and 2 fish.
 - Let's keep moving to see what Jesus does with the little that is there. Pick me up at verses 39-41.

Mark 6:39 And He commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass.

Mark 6:40 They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties.

Mark 6:41 And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all.

- It's at this point that Jesus commands the people there to sit down in the green grass in groups of hundreds and fifties.
 - And at this point, Jesus would take what was provided and blessed it looking unto the Father in Heaven for the meal that would be received.
 - In initial observation, a good bible student would ask the question: Why the detail about “green grass” and “groups of hundreds and fifties”?
 - Why does Mark include this detail within his account?
 - Well, this is where having all four gospel accounts plays a crucial role in understanding the whole picture.
 - If we go to John's gospel (John 6:4) he mentions that during this time of Jesus' ministry that the Passover, the feasts of the Jews, was near.

- This detail brings us into some seasonal and theological aspects of this miracle.
- Seasonal in the sense that Passover occurs in early spring which means that in that time in Israel, there was “much” grass.
 - Therefore Mark uses this description of the amount of grass as a means to explain the time of year which directly relates to an important event for the Jews.
- The theological aspect is directly connected to that of Passover, itself.
 - Passover commemorates and celebrates Israel’s national story of freedom by way of God’s provision.
- It speaks to how God took a group of Hebrew slaves, freed them from oppression and captivity, and made them a people for Himself.
 - God takes this people into the wilderness and feeds them manna (bread) from heaven and provides their every need with no tangible resources.
 - What is even more interesting is the picture that Jesus is recreating as He has the people sit in groups of hundreds and fifties.
- To better understand what Jesus is doing here, we need to turn to Exodus 18 to get the “big picture”. Turn with me to Exodus 18:14-22.

Exodus 18:14 Now when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, “What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?”

Exodus 18:15 Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God.

Exodus 18:16 When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws.”

Exodus 18:17 Moses’ father-in-law said to him, “The thing that you are doing is not good.

Exodus 18:18 You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.

Exodus 18:19 Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people’s representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God,

Exodus 18:20 then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do.

Exodus 18:21 Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.

Exodus 18:22 Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.

- There are several things we are to see within Exodus 18 that speak powerfully to this particular miracle that Jesus is going to perform.
 - First, we see in Exodus 18:19 that Moses served as the people's representative before God.
 - Whereas in our current text it is Jesus who is our representative before the Father.
 - Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 2:5 the following:

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

- ◦ In other words, we see that Jesus here is the greater Moses.
- Next, we notice that Jethro encourages Moses to have chiefs (leaders) underneath him who are to serve the people (similar to that of an under shepherd).
 - Does this sound familiar? If not, check out who Jesus gives the responsibility to pass out the blessing and provision of the meal? The Apostles.
- We should note here that before the food is distributed by Jesus that Jesus says a blessing over the 5 barley loaves and 2 fish.
 - It is said by some scholars that the prayer prayed by Jesus could have been the traditional Jewish blessing which goes like this:
 - *'Blessed art thou, Lord our God, King of the world, who bringest forth bread from the earth' (m. Ber. 6:1)*
- Next, I don't want us to miss here in these few verses at the point of the meal is how the people are sitting and the original language regarding the passing out of the food.
 - Notice again, verse 39 and 40 mention the people "sat down".
 - The imagery that automatically comes to mind here is that the people are sitting with their legs maybe crossed in the upright position.
- However, that is not what the original language says. The original language says they were reclining (*anaklino*).
 - This word means to recline at a meal as a guest at a banquet.
 - This meal that the Lord was preparing was a banquet where those who were coming by and heard about Jesus were invited to recline and eat.
- This brings us back to the significance of the "Markan sandwich".
 - Remember, there was one banquet that took place before. That banquet host was Herod Antipas who invited the ruling class, the upper echelon of society and was by invitation only.
 - However, at the banquet Jesus was hosting, He invited those who were considered the "least of these", the ordinary, the lost sheep.
- Where Herod's banquet was filled with mischief and murder, Jesus' banquet was filled with much satisfaction and blessing because the Lord had provided!
 - Not only had Jesus provided the needs for the people but verse 41b mentions that "He kept giving the food to the disciples."

- The Greek language provides the reader the understanding that the supply did not stop coming – it was a constant passing out.
- I wonder what Andrew was thinking at that moment as he is receiving more bread and fish from Jesus in his hands knowing he only brought him 5 barley loaves and 2 fish.
 - So as the apostles are passing out the meal, they are making known to all who are sitting there, “Here is the provision of the Lord!”
- This points to a key piece of discipleship in an applicational matter: Jesus is teaching his disciples Leadership delegation.
 - This is what Jethro was teaching Moses regarding the work he was doing for God.
- Jesus was preparing them for the reality of the work they would soon be doing without Him being physically present.
 - They would need to have compassion for the people as Christ demonstrated compassion towards the people.
 - But most importantly, the Apostles would need to know that everything they need is provided by the ultimate shepherd, God the Father.
- To truly care for God’s people requires those who follow Jesus to observe the compassion of Jesus to meet the felt needs as Christ has done.
 - Let’s look at the last 3 verses tonight.

Mark 6:42 They all ate and were satisfied,

Mark 6:43 and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish.

Mark 6:44 There were five thousand men who ate the loaves.

- Mark lets us know that through Christ’s provision, the little that was provided satisfied the needs of the many.
 - In fact, the people were completely filled to the point that there was an abundance of leftovers.
 - The number of leftovers was quantifiable, as verse 43 tells us the disciples picked up twelve full baskets of broken pieces of bread and fish.
 - It is quite possible that the baskets gathering the leftovers were that of fishing baskets.
 - So with 12 baskets filled with leftovers a key question arises: How many people were actually there?
 - Well Mark’s account answers the question, partially. He tells us that 5,000 men ate.
 - The word men here is not representative of male and female in the general sense of “humanity” – this word literally means male.
 - So does this mean that no women or even children were available?
 - Not necessarily, because John’s Gospel told us that the food given to Jesus to bless was from a “young boy”.

- So in order to establish the details we can go to Matthew's account where he mentions this clarifying detail. Turn with me to Matthew 14:21.

Matthew 14:21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

- So if what we have from Matthew says that women and children were not included in the number of men, then clearly there were more than 5,000 people.
 - If we were to assume, at best, that every man was married that puts us at 10,000 people.
 - Now if each married couple had, at minimum, 2 children then at best we have 20,000 people present at this outdoor banquet.
 - Friends, this feeding of this many people is nothing short of a miracle!
 - Jesus' provision was in fact more than enough!
 - This ultimately points us to the reality of what the feeding of the 5,000 is all about.
 - That beyond Jesus performing this miracle, it shows us that He is the compassionate provider, the caring Christ, the one who invites the helpless and the lowly to commune with Him.
 - Where Herod failed to repent on the day of his banquet for his birthday, the banquet that Christ prepared was one to invite the people to taste and see.
 - It was an invitation to repent and prepare for the Kingdom of God.
 - That although you may come with what you have you will leave fully satisfied in Him with all He provides.
 - It would be through Christ as our Passover that men and women, young and old, those near and far, would have the opportunity to see Yahweh in the flesh.
 - The very one who fed the children of Israel in the wilderness, was right before their eyes feeding them the bread blessed by the very bread of life!
 - What I want to leave you with tonight is a Jewish excerpt regarding a sign pointing to Messiah and how they would know.
 - This excerpt is from the Midrash Rabbot, known as Ecclesiastes Rabbah 1:28. This is how it reads:

The latter redeemer [Messiah] will be like the first redeemer [Moses]. What does the Torah say about the first redeemer? ... The first redeemer made manna to descend, as it is written, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." In the same way the latter redeemer will make manna descend, as it is written, "May he be as abundant grain in the land ..." (Ecclesiastes Rabbah 1:28)

- There would be no wonder why in John 6:14 after the people have eaten and seen what Jesus had done, said:

John 6:14 Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed,

they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

- I pray after tonight, those of you who have yet to believe will see as they saw that this is not a mere man, but this is the promised man, the promised One of God.
 - Jesus is Messiah. He is Lord. He is God.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 6E

Chapter 6:45-56

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- Last week we studied, arguably, one of Jesus' most powerful miracles regarding the nature of His ministry and the identity of His person pertaining to the Kingdom.
 - We witnessed Jesus feeding the 5,000 and this number was not including women and children.
 - It would be through this miracle that Jesus would demonstrate His work and power pointing to who He is as well as teaching His disciples a lesson.
 - The lesson they were to see was that Jesus is the good shepherd that David talked about in Psalm 23.
 - The disciples would have the opportunity to witness the caring and compassionate nature of Christ.
 - They would come alongside Jesus as they participate in serving the needs of the people as their supply and source of need was met by Jesus, Himself.
 - We also saw that this miracle pointed to Jesus being the greater Moses and pointed to Jesus' identity as the Messiah.
 - Tonight, we will see how, despite the powerful demonstration of Jesus feeding the 5,000, that His very own disciples just may have missed the point altogether.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be, "So Close Yet So Far".
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 6:45-56.

Mark 6:45 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away.

Mark 6:46 After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray.

Mark 6:47 When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land.

Mark 6:48 Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He *came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them.

Mark 6:49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out;

Mark 6:50 for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and *said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid."

Mark 6:51 Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished,

Mark 6:52 for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

Mark 6:53 When they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore.

Mark 6:54 When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him,

Mark 6:55 and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was.

Mark 6:56 Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were

laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.

- Let's Pray.
- A test is oftentimes the best indicator of where you are and can assist you in where you need to be.
 - In high school, I took AP Calculus and my professor's goal was to prepare us for the AP Exam.
 - Throughout our time with him, we were exposed to every question and iteration of questions imaginable to be as prepared as we could.
 - During study sessions, he would give us problems to solve that mimicked the exam to measure where we were.
 - However, with this particular teacher, it wasn't just about getting the answer correct, it was about following the progression of work, step by step.
 - There would be times when in answering the question we had a general idea of the answer, but if we missed those steps we didn't get the answer correct.
 - These simple mistakes or misunderstandings in the process were the defining line for if the question was partially correct or fully correct.
 - What was most frustrating was when you get to the end and the paper has been graded and you realize that because the answer was missing a negative or positive sign, he would say "You were so close, yet so far"
 - This is where we find the disciples tonight on their continued journey with Jesus.
 - They have walked with Him for some time, witnessed Him do mighty things but have not yet connected Him to being "The Son of the Living God".
 - We will see that, like a compassionate teacher, Jesus will bring the disciples through a test so they may see what He has been trying to show them all along.
 - Let's look at the first two verses together.

Mark 6:45 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away.

Mark 6:46 After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray.

- Mark picks us up at the later end of where we left off last week, and that is the scene of Jesus having just fed a crowd of over 5,000 people.
 - It was at the demonstration of this great miracle that the crowd who had received this generous meal from Jesus recognized a familiar sign from the Old Testament.
 - That sign we discovered was connected to the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-18.
 - This statement was Messianic in nature and spoke to the fact that the Lord would raise up a Prophet like Moses "whom the people shall listen to".
 - We also discovered in the Mishnah that this Prophet would be a greater Moses and

that He would feed the people an abundance of bread as Moses did centuries ago.

- So, with the people seeing this sign and realizing that the bread in which the disciples were supplying was not running out, they connected this work to that of the promised Messiah.
- However, their understanding of Jesus' identity and person was more fixated on a physical/political rule rather than a spiritual/transformational one.
- To the crowd they were expecting Messiah to be this political, militant, conquering King.
 - In other words, they wanted their physical release and freedom from the bondage of Roman rule.
 - However, Jesus' first coming was not focused on their physical liberation from Rome but rather their spiritual freedom from sin and its consequences.
- So, in the crowds' finite understanding of Jesus' authority and power, they attempted to capture Jesus to put Him where they wanted Him and that was in power.
 - Little did the people know that the way in which the physical manifestation of the Messianic Kingdom would come would first be through the death and resurrection of its King – Jesus Christ.
 - The only way in which one could experience this not-yet, but coming physical Messianic Kingdom is if they were made spiritually alive through Faith in Christ Alone.
- It would be this pre-mature attempt to make Jesus King right then that would resemble a similar pre-mature offer from Satan in the wilderness during Jesus' testing.
 - So it is because of this misunderstanding from the crowd, and as you will also see, the disciples, that we can better understand Mark's use of wording in verse 45.
- You can sense that there is this immediacy of dismissal of the disciples here in the text.
 - What is most interesting is that Mark tells us that Jesus "made" the disciples go to the boat and sail away to the other side.
 - The word "made" in the Greek is *anankazo* (an-an-kazo) which means to compel someone or force them to do something.
 - The question becomes: Why must the disciples move with such haste and force and not the crowd? Why such immediacy?
- Well it becomes apparent from the scene we just spoke about that the disciples themselves have somehow become potentially influenced by this Messianic upheaval.
 - *Anankazo* (an-an-kazo) suggest that there was possibly some reluctance from the disciples to leave (potentially agreeing with the crowd), however they obey and follow His instructions.
 - We will see later on why Jesus sending them away was vital for their growth as disciples.
- Mark continues by mentioning that as Jesus has dismissed the disciples hastily,

He bids the crowd farewell and leaves for the mountain to pray, alone.

- As you may remember, whenever scripture mentions this pattern of Jesus going to pray alone, it usually leads to a major demonstration of His person and identity but most importantly a major lesson to be learned.
- Let's look at verses 47-52 to see what that lesson will be.

Mark 6:47 When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land.

Mark 6:48 Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He *came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them.

Mark 6:49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out;

Mark 6:50 for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and *said to them, "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid."

Mark 6:51 Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished,

Mark 6:52 for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

- At this point in the story, there seems to have been some time that has passed from the conclusion of Jesus' dismissal of the disciples and the crowd to verse 47.
 - The text tells us that evening had come and along with the evening came the strong surge of winds and tumultuous tides.
 - What is most interesting in all of this is that while the disciples are in the middle of the storm, Jesus is nowhere in sight (He is on land.)
 - The disciples are in the boat in the middle of the sea with no sign of relief while experiencing overwhelming headwinds.
 - However, unknown to the disciples, Jesus is on the land observing and watching these men while in the chaotic waters.
 - One question that should come to mind at this point is: "How long have the disciples been out at sea?"
 - To best understand their time out at sea we need to have a better understanding of the phrase "at about the fourth watch of the night".
 - Here is an excerpt from Julius Scott from his book, "Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament":

"A watch was the period of time a group of soldiers stood guard before being relieved."

- ◦ Lachs in his writing in "A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament" states this:

“According to Roman usage of time, there were four watches at night, which, as we know from Mark 13:35, were called “evening, midnight, cock crowing, and morning...” the evening ran from 6-9PM, midnight ran from 9PM – 12AM, cock crowing ran from midnight to 3AM, and the last stretch was from 3AM to 6AM.”

- So based upon the Roman usage of time and the fact that by evening the boat was in the middle of the sea till the moment Jesus arrived to them by the fourth watch, that puts these men on the sea for approximately 9 hours.
 - These men have been toiling and struggling torturously with the boat in the chaotic waters and are more than likely exhausted.
 - This scene may begin to recall a time where the disciples were in a similar condition in the same water, but with a sleeping Jesus.
 - The only difference now is that Jesus is on the land observing them while the disciples are on the sea in a similar condition, but by themselves.
 - So where Jesus’ sleeping served as a means of testing their trust (faith) in Him then, what do you suspect His absence from the boat is doing?
 - What is most captivating to me at this point is not that these men have been in the boat for 9 hours, but that Jesus has been watching them and aware of their condition the entire time. Why?!
 - This reality is both comforting and startling and brings up a very important applicational point!
 - And that is: Our God is both keenly aware of our situation and personal storms in our lives, and at the same time He allows us to go through it, yet not alone.
 - The word “straining” in verse 48 is the Greek word *basanizo* (bas-an-izo) which in this context speaks to the strain and struggle of the disciples in the storm.
 - The question you may be asking is: “Why would Jesus look at their situation and not respond immediately as He compassionately did with the needs of the crowd?
 - What would make Jesus look upon their suffering, but yet not move with haste?
 - This brings us to an important note and that is this: God’s willingness to keep you in the storm is for the purpose of refining you to see Him more clearly, but most importantly that you may call on Him while in it.
 - Having a proper perspective of suffering in your life better produces right character in us.
 - It allows us to grow in our faith and maturity as followers of Jesus.
 - James 1:2-4 tells us this:

James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials,

James 1:3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

James 1:4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect

and complete, lacking in nothing.

- Verse 48 offers us a very “personal view” of our Lord and Savior as He comes to meet them in the chaotic waters.
 - Mark tells us that as Jesus sees them struggling in the storm He moves to respond, but in a way that would grasp their attention.
 - So instead of walking towards the boat, the text tells us that Jesus intended to “pass by them”.
 - This phrase “pass by them” is an exact expression that we see in the Old Testament – two places in particular.
 - We first see this phrase when Moses ask Yahweh to show him His Glory (Exodus 33:18-23).
 - In response to that, Yahweh hides Moses under a clef in the rock and only shows him his backside.
 - He does this because if Moses saw all of His glory in its fulness, he would have died.
 - So this showing is a partial revealing which is why Moses returns down from the mountain in the powerful glow.
 - This is how Moses responded after witnessing the Glory of God: Turn quickly to Exodus 34:6.

Exodus 34:6 Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

- We then see yet another example of Yahweh “passing by” in Job 9:11.
 - It is here where Job does not feel that God is present in His circumstances and doesn’t understand why he is suffering. Check out the text:

Job 9:11 “Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him;
Were He to move past me, I would not perceive Him.

- Job is struggling with the reality of his present suffering and is not understanding why he is going through what he is going through.
 - But as he wrestles with the reality of his present suffering, he holds true to the nature and character of God.
 - Check out Job 23:8-10:

Job 23:8 “Behold, I go forward but He is not there,
And backward, but I cannot perceive Him;

Job 23:9 When He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him;
He turns on the right, I cannot see Him.

Job 23:10 “But He knows the way I take;

When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

- One thing that we can see from Jesus passing by in the midst of this storm is not just speaking to His Sovereign power, it speaks to His compassion for His children.
 - That although He is watching and allowing His disciples to struggle for a period of time in their physical situation, the Lord was bringing about spiritual illumination.
 - This storm was simply a test to show them where they are in light of who He is!
 - Tests simply reveal areas of refinement for the purpose of full maturity.
 - I find this most encouraging friends, because the reality is we oftentimes separate God's activeness or feeling of His presence from our personal storms.
 - When the truth of the matter is: God is both divinely sovereign outside of our circumstance as well as intimately aware of where we are.
 - Take courage that this “storm of perfection” is simply pointing us to see Christ all the more clearly that we may know Him well and more intimately.
 - This leads us into the other point that Jesus is making here which we see in verses 49 and 50.
 - Check out verses 49 and 50 again:

Mark 6:49 But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out;

Mark 6:50 for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and *said to them, “Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.”

- Mark tells us that as Jesus is passing by, the disciples begin to see a figure of some sort walking on the water. They assume it is a ghost and become panicked.
 - If the waves were terrifying them at this point most certainly an unidentified person walking on the water would get their attention.
 - It is in the disciples' fear that Jesus compassionately reminds them of their faith in Him.
 - Now before we gloss over this, remember that Jesus' demonstration of power and miracles always leads to revelation to who He is!
 - So to the disciples, someone walking on water was something that no person could do.
 - At worst they ate some bad fish and are seeing a ghost of some sort, however that's not the case.
 - These men are very aware of their surroundings yet they are still somehow not aware of the One they have been walking with, fully.
 - Friends, Jesus walking on the water was much more than a simple “short cut” to the boat, it was a personal demonstration for His disciples to see who He really was!
 - Interestingly enough, check out what Job 9:8 says regarding the very power and might of Yahweh. Check out the text:

**Job 9:8 Who alone stretches out the heavens
And tramples down the waves of the sea;**

- The word trample in Hebrew is *drk* (de-rok), which means, to tread upon or on top of.
 - In other words, one of the defining characteristics of Yahweh is His ability to walk on water.
 - Jesus is showing them that He is more than a multiplier of bread, He is greater than a Prophet – He is the provider of all things.
 - Mark speaks directly to the identity and authority of Jesus!
 - The question one must ask themselves is: “Lord, how are you using my present sufferings or storms to see you more clearly.”
 - How is this storm being used for me to know you more, walk with you closely, and worship you more passionately?
 - Life’s storms are an opportunity to gauge our view of Christ!
 - Do we have a clear view of who He is even when the winds are forcefully blowing and the waves steadily crashing?
 - Or is your view of Him a bit blurry to the point that, like Peter, you have to ask, “If that is you Lord, let me out of the boat?”
 - Matthew’s gospel includes Peter’s experience outside of the boat with Jesus and what is most telling is, the moment that Peter takes His eyes off Jesus he begins to sink.
 - Why? Because Peter takes his eyes off the One who is His Provider and present help and looks at the things that are around him.
 - Rather than Peter recognizing who is with Him, he focused on the physical reality around him.
 - And as workers in ministry and disciples of Christ, the reality is we can do nothing apart from Jesus.
 - John 15:5 tells us this:

John 15:5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

- In ministry we can become so accustomed to doing for Jesus that we miss what it means to be with Jesus or to abide in Him.
 - We get so used to doing the work in our own strength that we forget it is God Himself who is both allowing us and providing for us to do these things (both willing and working in us).
 - Paul tells the church at Philippi these words in Philippians 2:12-13:

Philippians 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

- ○ But where the disciples went wrong was seeking to find their provision outside of the one who provides their every need.
 - It is the disciples' failed test at the feeding of the five thousand that prompted this test to come about.
- If you remember in John 6:5, as Jesus sees the large crowd coming, He looks to Philip and asks him a question.
 - The question that Jesus asks was "Where can we buy bread so that these people can eat?"
 - The text then tells us that Jesus asks the question to test Philip.
 - Looking at the overwhelming number of people there, Philip responds as Jesus knew He would and Philip speaks to the physical limitations and cost versus realizing that Jesus, their provider was with them.
- That before Jesus had sent them on their trial mission with nothing, in effort for them to realize that all they needed was provided by Him. (Mark 6:7-13)
 - Yet it seems as though with Philip's answer, this reality did not click for him or the other disciples.
- So the only way in which true understanding and maturity in their understanding could come about would be through their testing – and a test this was.
 - You have to love how Jesus responds to their fear. He reassures them of who He is. Look at verse 50.
 - He says "Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid."
- When Jesus makes that statement, He not only reassures them that they need not be afraid but that He is with them.
 - It is important to see this phrase in the original language.
 - The statement "it is I" in Greek is *ego eimi* which means "I AM" which is identical with God's self-disclosure to Moses in Exodus.
- For example, when Moses asked the question, "When Pharaoh asks who has sent me, what do I tell him?"
 - Yahweh responds by telling Moses, "Tell him that "I AM" has sent you!"
- In other words, Jesus lets the disciples know that the God-man is with you. You need not fear for I am all that you need.
 - It's almost as if the disciples needed a "rocky reminder" of who Jesus was:
 - He was more than a healer for the sick.
 - He was more than a miracle worker.
 - He was more than just a provider for the inconvenienced.
 - He was God in flesh dwelling amongst His people to provide the rescue and deliverance they needed.
- And it became clear that the disciples "had not yet gained that understanding

from the feeding of the 5,000.”

- Verse 51 and 52 tell us that after Jesus assures the disciples that it is Him, He comforts them with His presence by getting into the boat.
- It is at that point that the storm ceases immediately.
- Once again, a reminder of what Jesus has done before while in the boat, except this time Jesus uses no words, He simply enters the boat and nature responds accordingly.
 - Isn't it interesting how the moment that we set our affections upon Jesus in the midst of the storm or trial, peace meets us in that place.
- The biggest storms of my life, ones I didn't think I would get through soon enough...
 - The moment I called on Jesus,
 - The moment I turned my worry to worship,
 - The moment I opened my word,
 - The moment I fixed my eyes on Jesus, what seemed as a rushing mighty wind of defeat turned into a rushing wind of peace.
- Friends Jesus is the buoy in the storm, the anchor that will keep us steady and secure.
 - Mark tells us that although Jesus has calmed the sea, once again, that these works weren't registering in their minds.
 - Mark tells us the reason being is because “their hearts were hardened”.
- Now before we jump to conclusions, we could look at this word “hardened” and assume by its typical usage and definition that it speaks to the unbelief of men.
 - However, we must understand the use of this word with the audience addressed and in the proper context.
- In this context, regarding the disciples, the word “hardened” simply refers to them being insensible.
 - In other words, the disciples were not able to connect the dots between Jesus and these profound miracles He was performing.
 - It's like having a brain fart. You see the signs and the information but the picture is just not adding up yet.
- So, through Jesus bringing about this testing in the sea, He uses it as a means to bring about revelation of His person.
 - Now before we begin to walk around saying “How did the disciples not see all of these signs?”, we have to realize what these men and the people were combating before.
 - They have been inundated with pharisaical teachings and doctrine and have not been taught the truth about God until Jesus comes on the scene.
 - They are being constantly shown, in teaching, about Jesus and His mission but yet they have not fully come to the realization of His person.
- And in a way this is quite telling of our growing walk with Jesus, day by day.
 - That we can get so accustomed to walking with Jesus that it becomes easy to

miss His true identity because we think we have grasped all there is to know about Him.

- And there is a true danger there because our comforts about knowing Jesus cannot outweigh our daily intimacy (abiding) with Jesus.
- May we never get so comfortable that we miss the power of the Person of Jesus in our lives daily.
- This constant demonstration of who He is in His person and identity serves to point us to who Jesus truly is! And that is the Son of God!
 - Now, you have to imagine the frustration of Jesus at this point.
 - Time and time again making His power and works known.
 - Speaking to the disciples, not in parables, but explaining what He is teaching them.
- So this hardening of their hearts is not tied to their belief, it is tied to their understanding.
 - It's like getting married to your spouse.
- Initially, you did not know everything there is to know about your spouse – you just know they are the one for you.
 - That trust and growth in your relationship happens over time.
- And over time, your marriage gets tested, and through the test of life, the trials are meant to refine you and shape you to conform you more to Christ and ultimately closer to each other.
 - In the same way, Jesus is making Himself known more and more to the men that He has selected in making known the Kingdom of God and how one enters.
- The beautiful thing about this storm that Jesus had them in is that it gave them the opportunity to realize another aspect of the character and nature of Jesus.
 - Have you ever gone through a difficult storm in your life which you never expected, yet when you came out of it, your view of God became clearer.
 - It's almost as if you didn't go through that storm, your intimacy and deeper knowledge of God would have been stifled.
 - This is what the discipleship relationship with Jesus looks like – it is to conform us into the image of Jesus and to mature our faith.
- Maturity in our faith in Jesus is like exercising a weak muscle. It requires constant and consistent development in which one grows in Christian Character.
 - Mark continues by transitioning to the next scene in which Jesus has instructed the disciples to go. Check out verses 53-56.

Mark 6:53 When they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore.

Mark 6:54 When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him,

Mark 6:55 and ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was.

Mark 6:56 Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.

- Mark lets us know that after the storm has ceased and the winds have calmed that Jesus and the disciples have now arrived to a place called Gennesaret which is not too far from Capernaum.
 - And upon arrival to this place, as they are moving the boat to shore, the people recognize the motley crew of disciples and Jesus.
 - It almost seems that this was a scene of great excitement.
 - Verse 55 tells us that once the people recognized Jesus they ran to tell the whole countryside that He was there and they responded by bringing all their sick.
 - From every corner of the villages and cities, the people were coming to receive healing from Jesus.
 - In one way, this speaks to the growth of Jesus' ministry as a whole.
 - From the sending out of His disciples to the feeding of the 5,000, His work and miracles become known more and more.
 - The question that one must ask in all of this is: Will this demonstration of Jesus' work lead the people to know His identity and purpose of His coming.
 - Mark leaves us at the end of Chapter 6 with the question we have to face week after week:
 - And that is "Who is Jesus and what has He come to do, but most especially, do you believe He is who He has shown Himself to be time and time again?"
 - It's more than knowing what He can do and being familiar with Him in a convenient way, but do you know Him!
 - Convenient Christianity is not real Christianity. True faith in Jesus is a faith that costs you your convenience, and your perceptions about Jesus.
 - It is about truly abiding with Him and growing to know the bride Groom well.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 7A

Chapter 7:1-13

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- In our last teaching in Mark's gospel, we taught on one of the most well-known signs Jesus performed – His supernatural ability to walk on water.
 - Jesus being able to walk on water is one story that many children learn about in their Sunday school classrooms.
 - However, we discovered that this miraculous sign was done due to the disciples' inability to understand and see who Jesus was.
 - Especially after the miraculous feeding of the five thousand.
 - What should have been a simple computational problem for the disciples to see Jesus' true identity as Messiah, turned into a trial for the disciples.
 - And that trial was to demonstrate who Jesus truly was despite the Messianic confusion found from the crowd at the feeding of the five thousand.
 - It was after that test on the sea that Jesus and the disciples arrive to Gennesaret where Jesus' recognition increased, and faith was demonstrated by many.
 - Tonight, we find ourselves back in a familiar place of scribal and pharisaical scrutiny and skepticism.
 - Only this time, the ministry of Jesus is getting more attraction from the religious leaders in Jerusalem.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's teaching it would be, "The trap of Tradition".
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and turn with me to Mark 7:1-13 for the reading of the Word of God.

Mark 7:1 The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem,

Mark 7:2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed.

Mark 7:3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders;

Mark 7:4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.)

Mark 7:5 The Pharisees and the scribes *asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?"

Mark 7:6 And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

'This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far away from Me.

Mark 7:7 'But in vain do they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'

Mark 7:8 Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."

Mark 7:9 He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

Mark 7:10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, is to be put to death’;
Mark 7:11 but you say, ‘If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),’
Mark 7:12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother;
Mark 7:13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.”

- Let’s Pray.

There was a story that went like this:

- A little girl asked her mother, “Mommy, why do you cut the ends off the meat before you cook it?”
 - The girl’s mother told her that she thought it added to the flavor by allowing the meat to better absorb the spices, but perhaps she should ask her grandmother since she always did it that way.”
 - So the little girl finds her grandmother and asks, “Grandma, why do you and Mommy cut the ends of the meat off before you cook it?”
 - Her grandmother thought a moment and answered, “I think it allows the meat to stay tender because it soaks up the juices better, but why don’t you ask your Nana, after all, I learned from her and she always did it that way.”
 - The little girl is getting a little frustrated, but climbs up in her great-grandmother’s lap and asks, “Nana, why do you cut the ends off the meat before you cook it?”
 - Nana answered, “I don’t know why these women do it, I did it because my pot wasn’t big enough.”
- You see, we have this natural tendency to always do what was done because that’s what we’ve always seen or heard.
 - Yet we fail to ask the question like the little girl, “Where did this come from and what’s behind it all.”
 - When we begin to get to the source of the matter, we will oftentimes find that things aren’t what they were made out to be.
 - Tonight, we find ourselves in an interesting narrative tonight as Jesus and His disciples are confronted with an unorthodox tradition
 - The tradition we will read about was not rooted in the excellencies of scripture, but within the context of distorting the truth because of impure hearts.
 - What began as small detours away from the written word of God, drifted into a way of life that was eventually taught as if it were from the very mouth of God.
 - And all of this passed down from one generation to the next causing the Jewish people to lose sight of the authority of scripture.
 - Let's see just how far tradition took the people of God off on a tangent. Check out verses 1-5.

Mark 7:1 The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem,

Mark 7:2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed.

Mark 7:3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders;

Mark 7:4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.)

Mark 7:5 The Pharisees and the scribes *asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?”

- Mark picks us up directly after the scene at Gennesaret where Jesus has healed many people in the region where much faith has been displayed.
 - We have been observing over time, especially after the feeding of the five thousand, that Jesus’ teaching ministry is continuing to increase.
 - One could assume after word had traveled quickly about what Jesus had done with 2 fish and five barley loaves, that more people would come to inquire about Him.
 - Not only did Jesus’ ministry following increase, but it eventually caused a particular group of people to seek out further information about Him.
 - It will be here in this next scene that the passage moves back from growing curiosity to leadership conflict.
 - The text tells us that the Pharisees and some of the scribes have arrived, presumably back in Capernaum, where they have “gathered around” Jesus.
 - The term “gathered around”, paired with the group in which is encompassing Jesus, speaks to the nature of this assembly.
 - In other words, this is not a “we are so happy to see you moment, Jesus”. This gathering is based upon a more serious inquiry.
 - If you recall in our previous teachings in Mark, whenever there was a gathering of the religious leaders in the region of the Galilee pertaining to Jesus, it was related to an investigative matter.
 - For instance, the Pharisees confront Jesus eating with sinners in Mark 2:15-17. (Matthew becomes a disciple)
 - Or the requirement of fasting of the Pharisees’ “selected days” in Mark 2:18-22. (At Matthew’s celebration feast in his home)
 - We can even recount the Pharisees and their restrictions on the Sabbath in Mark 2:23-3:6. (Jesus and the disciples walking through the grain fields)
 - Now, these Pharisees and scribes have made their way from Jerusalem. It’s like having the Principal come to see you in the classroom.
 - In each instance the issue that Jesus faces is His rejection of the Oral Law (The Mishnah) and its interpretation, versus what the Written Law says (Mosaic Law).

- This situation will be no different only this time, upon the religious leader's arrival, they see yet another issue with Jesus and His disciples.
- Notice what verse 2 states: "the Pharisees and scribes have noticed that Jesus' disciples are eating bread with impure hands."
 - Just as a quick means of observation, it is quite interesting how the Pharisees were so quick to observe what the disciples weren't doing right in their own eyes.
 - This sounds eerily familiar to how legalists today are so quick to inspect what they don't understand or cannot see because if it's not their way it's the wrong way.
- So Mark tells us that according to the Pharisees and their interpretation of the Law (the Oral Law) that the disciples were needing to wash their hands before eating.
 - It becomes clear that the disciples' inaction to wash their hands before eating greatly disturbed the religious leaders.
 - Mark makes this grievance clear by providing his original audience with specific cultural details as to why the Pharisees take issue with the disciples.
- He explains that the Pharisees observed what is known as the "Tradition of the Elders".
 - Interestingly enough, the term "elder" in this phrase and context speaks specifically to the scribes, Pharisees, and other religious leaders in general.
 - In other words, these men were the shot callers, the scholars, the "gate keepers" of all there was to know and be known about God's word.
- So where the Written word of God should have been deemed as sufficient and authoritative in nature, the religious elite took it upon themselves to exalt their interpretation of what "thus saith the Lord".
 - It becomes clear that the reason for the religious leaders' intense scrutiny of Jesus' disciples eating with unclean hands was because they were "supposedly" in direct violation of the leaders' "perceived authority".
 - To the religious leaders, it would seem as though the disciples had violated the very Law of God and Jesus was endorsing it.
 - However, Jesus sees it differently and rightfully so, being that He is the very word of God. (John 1)
- Therefore the question is asked, in verse 5: "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?"
 - Mark shows us two things to consider at this point in the story:
- First, there is a clear distinction between the Oral Law and what the religious leaders hold to versus the Written Law and what Jesus stands by and has come to fulfill.
 - Secondly, and most importantly: What do the Oral Law and the Written Law have to say regarding ritual washing and cleansing (Clean vs. Unclean)?
 - Since we have a general understanding of where the Oral Law stands on ritual cleansing, we need to see what the Mosaic Law (Written Law) states.
- Interestingly enough, when we examine the Hebrew scriptures, more specifically the Pentateuch, we will find that the only handwashing required for purpose of

ritual purity was ascribed to priests before they offered up sacrifices.

- We see this in Exodus 30:18-21 as well as Exodus 40:30-32.
- Really quickly, check out what Josephus said in his writing: “Antiquity of the Jews 13.10.6” regarding ceremonial practices and the Law.

“but of these matters we shall speak hereafter. What I would now explain is this, that the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the law of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers”; (Ant. Of the Jews 13.10.6)

- So what we have here is a confrontation between tradition and written scripture.
 - What the religious leaders have deemed as authoritative and sacred, Jesus deems as a hinderance and rejection of the truth of God’s Word.
 - Furthermore, the religious leaders’ issue with the disciples had little to do with them and all to do with Jesus and his refutation of Pharisaic interpretation.
 - So in the spirit of making things known in a public format, Jesus avoids getting caught up in the trite questioning regarding the value of the Mishnah and tradition.
 - And He in turn poses a gut-punching statement to them that would put them on notice.
 - Check out the next few verses, verse 6-8:

Mark 7:6 And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

**‘This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far away from Me.**

**Mark 7:7 ‘But in vain do they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’**

Mark 7:8 Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.”

- Mark tells us that instead of engaging in a question-and-answer combat with the religious leaders, Jesus simply engaged them with the truth of scripture.
 - He begins by mentioning that Isaiah the Prophet prophesied correctly about them long ago and proceeds to summarize Isaiah’s statement in one word – Hypocrites.
 - The Greek word for “hypocrites” is *hypokrites* which means an actor or pretender.
 - Jesus refers the behavior of the Pharisees and scribes to what Isaiah the prophet prophesied about the children of Israel in Isaiah 29:13. Check out the text:

Isaiah 29:13 Then the Lord said,
 “Because this people draw near with their words
 And honor Me with their lip service,
 But they remove their hearts far from Me,
 And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,

- - Notice that although Isaiah himself was speaking about the children of Israel specifically, Jesus contextualizes what Isaiah’s prophesied.
 - In other words, this pattern of honoring with their lips but not with their hearts was a consistent pattern of the people of God both then and now.
 - This brings up a very important matter regarding the Holy Scriptures.
 - Although these words were written down many centuries ago, not only were they timely and valid then, but they are the same for today.
 - The truth of God’s word is relevant both to and for the believer and non-believer, today.
 - The truth of the word of God speaks to the depravity of humanity and shows us the ugliness of our sin-nature.
 - Yet at the very same time, it provides us with the means of hope to overcome our current adversities and trials and leads us to salvation.
 - Isaiah’s generation dealt with the “lip service” of the people with hearts that were far from the God they claimed to know and love.
 - And so do we experience this same behavior amongst believers today.
 - Ezekiel 33:31 mentions something similar. Check out the text:

Ezekiel 33:31 They come to you as people come, and sit before you as My people and hear your words, but they do not do them, for they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, and their heart goes after their gain.

- If I were to put it bluntly, the worship of the people were empty and fruitless because they pursued and worshipped themselves rather than the Living God.
 - Jesus packages His point beautifully in verse 8 by saying:

Mark 7:8 Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.”

- As long as the rabbis and religious leaders had an appearance of godliness, they were most satisfied.
 - And it was their expectation that the people would follow suit and recognize that their interpretation of the Law was just as powerful, if not more, than the written Law, itself.
 - Friends, herein lies the danger of tradition! What begins as a means or an attempt to seemingly honor the Lord, if not tethered to scripture, can easily turn into a disastrous road of improper teaching and misunderstanding.

- Notice that verse 8 starts with the word “Neglecting”
- This means that there has been some sort of abandoning or leaving from the true and proper intent of the Law.
- This abandoning of teaching the scriptures is what caused Martin Luther to write his 99 thesis which led to the reformation.
 - Luther’s work eventually led to the emphasis on one having a high view of scripture versus that of tradition and simply “taking the preacher at his word.”
 - This is why VBVM is a non-denominational ministry, because we do not ascribe to the traditions of other denominations which have a tendency to brush their theological views in a particular way.
 - We stand firmly on the truth of the text and desire the text to inform our lives by the leading of the Holy Spirit, according to the author’s original intent.
- I love what Cyprian of Carthage wrote in the third century regarding the need to adhere to the very commands of Christ. Check out what he stated:

“For we must inquire whom they themselves have followed. For if in the sacrifice which Christ offered none is to be followed but Christ, assuredly it behoves us to obey and do that which Christ did, and what He commanded to be done, since He Himself says in the Gospel, “If ye do whatsoever I command you, henceforth I call you not servants, but friends.”³ And that Christ alone ought to be heard, the Father also testifies from heaven, saying, “This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.” Wherefore, if Christ alone must be heard, we ought not to give heed to what another before us may have thought was to be done, but what Christ, who is before all, first did.”

- Following verse 8, Jesus provides the perfect illustration as to how the religious leaders alter the meaning of the Law to ultimately establish their own.
 - He states that these men are “experts” at setting aside the commands of God in order to keep their own, in verse 9.
 - In other words, these leaders are crafty at twisting the commands of God in a way that appears godly, but simply distorts the truth and intent.
 - And isn’t this relevant for us in today’s context. Friends, there is nothing new under the sun, as Solomon stated in Ecclesiastes.
 - The Pharisees were so good at what they did that they fooled themselves and others into believing that what they were doing was somehow approved by God.
 - Do you see how wicked and evil the human heart is?
 - And if we’re to be honest with ourselves, we too, have been there before, a time or more.
 - We will take a piece of scripture to justify why we behaved in a certain way or why we responded in a certain way, yet not considering the Spirit’s leading in that situation.
 - This type of behavior is what has led to much legalism within the church today.

- Wanting to uphold the holiness of God’s word while at the same time upholding our own piety and self-righteousness.
- Friends, a gospel that is shaped in our likeness is a constantly changing standard that proves to be no gospel at all.
- Jesus paints us a beautiful picture of just how crafty these scribes are. Check out verses 9-13.

Mark 7:9 He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

Mark 7:10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, is to be put to death’;

Mark 7:11 but you say, ‘If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),’

Mark 7:12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother;

Mark 7:13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.”

- It is here in verse 10 that Jesus illustratively contrasts the commands of God with the commands of men or “traditions of men”.
 - And with this contrast, He will use a familiar commandment regarding that of honor.
 - He uses a combination of Exodus 20:12 and Exodus 21:17 speaking about the fourth commandment which speaks to honoring your parents.
 - Really quickly, turn to Exodus 20:12:

Exodus 20:12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

- It is in the use of the fourth commandment that Jesus reminds the Pharisees what the Law states regarding one honoring their parents.
 - Within Jewish culture, honoring parents included caring for them in their latter years.
 - And with the caring of the elderly meant that there would be some financial obligations that came with that care. (Keep this in mind as we dive further into this example).
 - Now if there was one thing that the gospel accounts mentioned regarding the Pharisees and money, these men were lovers of it.
 - So it’s not unsuspecting for Jesus to use this example to speak to the matters and issues of the religious leaders’ hearts.
 - One way in which the Pharisees were able to take possession of the people’s money “permanently” would be through what was known as Corban.
 - And Mark kindly makes the effort to explain the meaning of the term for his audience.

- Corban means “to be given to God” or “a gift dedicated to God”.
 - This term originates from Numbers 30 regarding one who makes an inviolable vow to God.
 - Check out what Numbers 30:2 says:

Numbers 30:2 If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

- So with such binding obligations before God, the religious leaders used Corban as a means to restrict the people’s gifts (donations) even when dutiful obligations came about to honor their parents.
 - When Corban (Korban) was established it was often times connected to 3 particular offerings to God which were the following:
 - 1. Food (as a sacrifice to God)
 - 2. Property (as a dedication to God)
 - 3. Or Money (as an offering to God)
 - So when Jesus mentions in verse 11 the example of a man who has Corbaned his finances, his mother and father are in need but the religious leaders do not permit the man to invalidate his vow.
 - Where one would assume that the vow could be altered in lieu of the circumstances, the Pharisees would not adjust to meet the need and therefore that individual has broken the fourth commandment.
 - Understand that for one to not honor their parents in their old age during that time, it was deemed a capital punishment, which was death.
 - So because of the greed and evil intent of the Pharisees’ hearts, they overlooked the need to honor for the sake of their own selves at the expense of others’ right standing with Holy God.
 - What should be overwhelmingly shocking is in verse 13 part b.
 - Jesus states this: “and you do many things such as that”. What was Jesus saying here?
 - In other words, this was just one of the ways in which these men abused scripture, for the sake of “their commands and traditions”.
 - Friends, this means of scriptural abuse was simply an indication of their corrupt hearts.
 - What may have started as a gesture of truly desiring to remain holy and upstanding in their honor of God turned into something completely different.
 - What one may have intended to be a “little white lie” in an effort to protect themselves was always a lie in the sight of God.
 - The true hypocrisy in it all is our ability to downplay the reality that we naturally desire to appear more righteous or Holy than the next person.
 - The problem with any person attempting to be seen as the “standard of holiness” is that it changes the standard from one moment to the next.

- If it's not my way then it's the highway, or if your church doesn't do it like this then you aren't truly a "strong church like we are".
- And therefore, everyone is having to measure up to what you do or how you behave. It becomes performance centered rather than scripture centered!
- But the moment that you mess up or fall short... "Oh there's grace for that"
 - For the legalist, grace is only enough for them when they need it, but never enough for others.
 - Friends, the very heart of the Law of God and its reasoning for being established was to speak to God's standard of what Holy is and for the people of God to see that the only way you can be made Holy is through Him and by Him.
- It was to point people to the reality that every human being was in need to be made clean and right before Holy God.
 - As one rabbi mentioned regarding ritual handwashing: "because of the constant use of our hands on a daily basis, the hands of the priest and people would be in a constant state of defilement."
 - Therefore, there would always be a need to be ceremonially cleansed and made right before God for the priest who goes before Him on behalf of the people.
- The cycle would have never ended which was the point that God was making all along – we need God to make us whole.
 - He is the only one that can move us from defilement to being delivered.
- The woman with the issue of blood was socially deemed unclean according to Leviticus, yet Jesus touched her, made her clean, without Himself ever becoming unclean.
 - Jairus' daughter was dead and was therefore deemed unclean, yet Jesus dealt with her in her defilement and raised her to life.
 - Friends, Jesus Christ is the Only One in whom makes unclean men and women permanently clean.
- It's like the old hymn we used to sing:

**"What can wash away my sins,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus."**

- ○ It wasn't another ceremonial washing that made one right before God.
 - It wasn't another ritual cleansing that made one right with God.
 - It is Christ and Him having been crucified that would make one right before Holy God – moving us from death to life.
- However, the Pharisees' hearts are blinded and too self-focused to see their deliverer before them.
 - Their hearts were far from God because, like every human heart, apart from

being rejuvenated by the work of the Holy Spirit, it was dead.

- A darkened heart must be made spiritually alive and new.
- Next week we're going to see that the true mark of a man or woman is not what they do to maintain an exterior appearance of holiness, but what comes out of them that defiles them.
 - Our petty attempts to seem holy pale in comparison to God Himself making us Holy.
- I pray you join us next week as we cover verses 14-23.
 - Let's Pray.

Citations:

- Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, [*The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 355.
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Mark - Lesson 7B

Chapter 7:14-23

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- We pick up tonight in the middle of an event in which Jesus is addressing legalism at its core.
 - We mentioned last week that Jesus has been confronted by the religious leaders from Jerusalem – the center of Judaism.
 - This visit was warranted based upon Jesus rejecting the rules of the Mishnah (Pharisaical teaching) – and rightfully so.
 - The Mishnah were sets of rules and laws created by the Pharisees established apart from the written law and were deemed authoritative.
 - This confrontation, as you may recall, was based solely on rules of ritual hand washing.
 - What we discovered was that this custom was only given to priests according to the Mosaic Law for the purpose of being cleansed before the Lord.
 - However, the Pharisees saw fit to include this routine for all Jews as a means of custom before eating a meal.
 - This tradition, established by the Pharisees, served, not as a means of obedience to God, but rather as a means of piety and self-righteousness.
 - Ultimately, because of the Pharisees’ establishment as the leaders of that day, they expected the people to “fall in line” to this set tradition.
 - It would be at this point that Jesus would call out these hypocrites for their misleading and legalistic expectations set upon the people – and so He did.
 - Jesus would confront their criticisms with scripture, in which these supposed “experts” should have known but failed to acknowledge.
 - Tonight, we pick up where we left off and that is Jesus transitioning from His confrontation with the Pharisees to His conversation with the crowd and His disciples.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight’s text it would be: “Matters of the Heart”.
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and focus our attention on Mark 7:14-23.

Mark 7:14 After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, “Listen to Me, all of you, and understand:

Mark 7:15 there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.

Mark 7:16 [If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”]

Mark 7:17 When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable.

Mark 7:18 And He *said to them, “Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him,

Mark 7:19 because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?” (Thus He declared all foods clean.)

Mark 7:20 And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.

Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,

Mark 7:22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.

Mark 7:23 All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

- Let's Pray.
- There was a clinical study done in the 1800s known as the Test of Insanity.
 - This was where an individual was placed in a room with a sink, a mop, and a bucket.
 - The sink is stopped up and the water is turned on.
 - Once the door closes, the water begins to flow until it overflows onto the floor.
 - The test showed that the insane person reacted by grabbing the mop and feverishly working to clean the floor.
 - All of this happening as the water continues to spill over the sides of the sink.
 - The test ends and they would send a sane person into the same room.
 - The same test commences with the same set up.
 - However, this time the sane person goes over to the sink, turns off the water, and begins to mop the floor.
 - If we were to be honest, you may know someone today that finds themselves in a similar situation as the insane person from the first test.
 - Trying to feverishly satisfy or appease God through constant action or works to be deemed “right with God”, but they are never willing to address the root issue – sin itself.
 - We will address the surface needs but fail to get to the core problem and seek the One source who can completely make us whole.
 - In our study tonight, we will find Jesus addressing both the crowd and His disciples regarding what truly defiles humanity at the core.
 - And it will be to the surprise of most that the issue is not what is outside of them, but rather what is inside.
 - Pick me up at verses 14-16 of Mark 7.

Mark 7:14 After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, “Listen to Me, all of you, and understand:

Mark 7:15 there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.

Mark 7:16 [If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

- After dealing with the confrontation of the religious leaders, Jesus gathers the crowd that has made their way around Him to bring clarity to the conversation.
 - Jesus speaks here in parable as He does in His typical teaching settings and further explains the defilement of men.

- **He states that man is not defiled by what goes inside Him, but rather, man is defiled by what proceeds from inside him.**
- It is here that Jesus will begin to use dietary restrictions as an example to explain that what goes inside our mouths is not the problem.
 - In other words, what you eat and consume physically does not have any bearings on your moral or ethical output.
 - Food goes into our bodies, having no impact on our spirit – it will pass through our bodies to be disposed.
- The question on the table that arises is: **What exactly is it that naturally proceeds from our mouths that defiles us?**
 - It becomes clear that with Jesus speaking in parable, that His focus is not necessarily on things that we speak, per se. (Matthew 12:34 – out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks)
 - There seems to be something prompting and causing these external actions.
- **Jesus here is speaking about the very source of what motivates what we say, think and do – which leads to our external actions.**
 - We ended our time in our last teaching discussing the fact that the motives of the Pharisees were centered on evil intent. (Their man-made traditions)
 - As a matter of fact, Jesus uses the example of one honoring their parents and how the religious leaders used Corban as a means to escape obeying the 4th commandment.
- It became apparent that the Pharisees' legalistic and self-righteous approach to the Law and towards God's people was rooted in a darkened and wicked heart.
 - So Jesus is insisting, if you will, that those who are in the crowd truly hear what He is saying and to understand this truth.
 - What truth you ask?: The truth that it is not the things we do externally that make us right with God.
 - It's not the number of times we wash our hands or the types of foods we eat that makes us right with God.
 - And what we will see later is, it's not even our religion, heritage, or traditions that make us clean.
- Well this begs the question, most especially for the crowd that is in attendance.
 - This question is one that the disciples themselves will be asking as they ponder on the parable that Jesus has shared.
- Here's two questions to consider: **If what is outside of us or the things that we do, don't make us Holy, then what is the root cause of defilement?**
- **Secondly what, or better yet WHO can make us clean, inwardly?**
 - **Know that Jesus is pointing to the reality that what truly corrupts and defiles every human being from within, naturally, is sin.**
 - Secondly, what Jesus is pointing to is the reality that we need to be made right from the inside – out. (We will see how soon).
- **Friends, sin is not what is happening to us externally, but rather, it is the thing that is happening in us.**

- Psalm 51:5 tells us this:

**Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.**

- Our very nature when we enter this world is completely marred by sin. We are naturally born into iniquity.
 - Sin seeks every opportunity to corrupt us to the point that it takes over us, completely.
 - And in a way this is what tradition was doing to the people.
 - As we mentioned last week, the point of the Law was to establish the reality that we naturally cannot keep that which is Holy apart from God Himself making us Holy.
 - This is why the Hebrew writer tells us in Hebrews 10:1:

Hebrews 10:1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.

- So it begins to make sense why Jesus is stressing the fact that the people needed to *akouo* or “to listen with intention”, especially His disciples.
 - As Jesus is teaching, He is ultimately revealing more truth regarding the Kingdom Program.
 - The people’s understanding of holiness and cleanliness, for too long, have been misguided due to the traditions of men therefore the heart of the Law was missed.
 - This is why the people needed a shepherd to guide them in the truth of God and His instructions and teachings.
 - And Mark’s account is speaking to the reality that it is Christ who is the one that guides us into this truth.
 - We will see, as we move throughout the gospel of Mark, that there is this progressive movement towards more revelation of who Christ is and why He came.
 - Jesus is showing that true righteousness is not based upon our merit or traditions, but rather His own righteousness and truth!
 - Unfortunately, because of the misguided teaching from the religious leaders and leadership complex of that day, it becomes apparent that Jesus’ own disciples will exhibit confusion to the ritual cleansing, dietary concerns and matters of the heart.
 - Now before we move on, you may notice an asterisk or brackets surrounding **verse 16** where it mentions:
 - “If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”
 - This statement is not found in the original manuscripts and is said to have been written later through scribal addition.

- It could be assumed that this quote was added to simply reinforce what Christ would say before or after He started a parable.
- We also know that after Jesus teaches the crowds He faithfully followed up by explaining the teaching to His disciples.
- Therefore, it seems that this statement holds true to Jesus' methodology of teaching as He will explain this parable to this confused group of men in the next few verses.
 - Check out verses 17-23.

Mark 7:17 When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable.

Mark 7:18 And He *said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him,

Mark 7:19 because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (Thus He declared all foods clean.)

Mark 7:20 And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.

Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,

Mark 7:22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.

Mark 7:23 All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

- Mark tells us in **verse 17** that once Jesus left the crowd and entered the house that His disciples questioned Him about the parable.
 - Notice, the sudden shift in scenery here.
 - The scene moves from a more public forum to a more private setting – Jesus enters into a home.
 - Now, who's home? The text doesn't give us that information, but we can assume it is potentially located in Capernaum – Jesus' ministry headquarters.
 - It will be behind closed doors, amongst the chosen insiders, that Jesus will further explain the parable to the disciples thereby revealing more about the Kingdom Program.
 - However, notice that Jesus' explanation of the parable does not come without great concern.
 - Where there should be growth in understanding, there seems to be setbacks of confusion and lack of understanding from the disciples.
 - Within Matthew's account we see that the disciple who poses this question is none other than Peter.
 - One question that could be raised is, again: Why does Mark omit Peter's raised question from his account, yet Matthew includes it in his?
 - Some could speculate that, perhaps, Peter doesn't want the reader to know

he asked the question.

- Or it could be that Mark did not want to detract from Jesus' point because of Peter's internal struggle with this particular dietary example.
- Whatever the case may be, the fact that Peter raises the question, and it is documented in Matthew's gospel brings about some key things to consider.
 - With Jesus using dietary restrictions as an example it could be seen that what He was saying publicly was considered revolutionary at best.
 - These men could not wrap their minds around the fact that what they had been taught or heard before regarding unclean foods (Leviticus 11,15) was now seemingly contrary to what Jesus was teaching about foods being clean.
- In other words, Jesus' point and intent of explaining what goes into the mouth doesn't defile you was Him explaining the heart or intent of the Law.
 - **The focus was that "things" are not what makes us unclean. Rather it is our defiled hearts that naturally make us unclean.**
- This would begin to bring into focus Peter's ongoing issues of dietary restrictions and deeming things clean and unclean.
 - **Friends, these items which distinguished the very identity of Jewish culture and heritage from "other" nations was going to be a hard pill to swallow.**
 - But before we get too far ahead of ourselves, let's put a pin here as we will return back to this very point later on.
- It is in **verses 18a** that Jesus restates the point again that is clearly being missed by His disciples.
 - But it will be in verses 19-23 that Jesus provides the "meat of the point" if you will – all pun intended.
- Jesus explains to the disciples that sin is not a physical problem in the sense of what we do.
 - **Rather, Jesus demonstrates that sin is a spiritual problem as it relates to "who we are".**
- **He makes it plain that the mechanism in which naturally governs our mind, will, and emotions, is the heart.**
 - The heart, according to scripture, is the hub by which what we say, do, think, act out etc., flows out of.
- What goes in us physically cannot change our spiritual condition.
 - In other words, things that we do such as external appeasements or religious rituals and restrictions, or mantras cannot cleanse us from the sin that corrupts our very core.
 - This is why Jesus declares in verse 19b "all foods are clean"!
 - **Friends, this reality would have been a huge conundrum for a Jewish hearer, and it seemed to have been a struggle for our beloved Peter.**
- Now before we begin to rush towards judgement at Peter's failed attempt to realize what Jesus was teaching them; **we must observe our constant need for grace and growth, as well, in Christ.**
 - We can oftentimes rush to judgment without realizing that we miss the lesson

time and time again too, and have to be instructed and corrected by the Holy Spirit.

- This, yet again, shows us Jesus' patience towards those who He calls and His commitment to teaching towards full understanding.
 - Now, quickly, I want to go back to an earlier point we paused at regarding Peter and his disposition with the dietary restrictions and the like.
 - Looking at this will help to explain several things:
 - 1. Jesus' unfolding of the Kingdom Program.
 - 2. Bring clarity to the confusion of the disciples.
 - 3. The importance of His Person (Being Messiah)
 - The question that we should be asking at this point is: **What was Jesus alluding to in speaking so candidly about something so sacred to the Jewish people?** (Jewish Dietary Laws in Leviticus 11 and 15)
 - I would like to show us in Acts 10 how, years later, Peter is led to fully understand, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, what Jesus was speaking to in Mark 7:19 regarding the statement **"all food is clean"**.
- Check out how God is committed to leading Peter into truth by the leading of the Spirit.
 - Turn with me to Acts 10:9-19.

Acts 10:9 On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

Acts 10:10 But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance;

Acts 10:11 and he *saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground,

Acts 10:12 and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air.

Acts 10:13 A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!"

Acts 10:14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean."

Acts 10:15 Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."

Acts 10:16 This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.

Acts 10:17 Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate;

Acts 10:18 and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there.

- So Peter, as he is hungry, has this vision, and in it he sees this sheet of food coming from the sky.

- The only problem is that the food presented before him by God is food that Peter deems “unclean” – sound familiar.
- It’s in this vision that God emphatically says, “What God has cleansed no longer consider unholy”.
- And what does Jesus say in Mark 7:19b “all food is clean”.
- The reality was Peter was **still** struggling with this sense of abandoning Jewish dietary law. This was essentially a “Jewish thing”.
 - And now he is faced with God telling him to consider these foods, normally Gentile, normally deemed “unclean” foods, as clean.
- Well it's after this vision that Peter is met by some men sent from a man named Cornelius, who is a Gentile.
 - It would be these men who will escort Peter to Cornelius’ house as God was about to do something quite “untraditional” in the eyes of the Jew.
 - Luke records these words in Acts 10:28-29.

Acts 10:28 And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.

Acts 10:29 That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me.”

- What’s so encouraging is that Peter, being led by the Holy Spirit, will see for Himself what God was doing all along.
 - God will confront Peter with his traditions that are getting in the way of the truth of what God, redemptively is doing, according to His promise long ago.
 - Check out Acts 10:34-35.

Acts 10:34 Opening his mouth, Peter said:

“I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,

Acts 10:35 **but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.**

- It would be after Peter presents the Gospel to Cornelius and His family (Gentiles), that Peter sees for himself that God makes men and women clean.
 - **This realization comes only through and by the Holy Spirit bringing about illumination and conviction by the truth of God’s word!**
 - Why do I mention this?
 - Because if the heart is naturally sinful, then it takes the Holy Spirit to rejuvenate and make men and women clean.
 - Apart from the working of the Holy Spirit, men and women remain in sin and dead in their trespasses and in their traditions.
 - **Jesus is ultimately foreshadowing the extent by which and to whom the Gospel**

was going to and His disciples would need to rely solely upon the teachings of Christ and not their familiar traditions.

- We cannot rely on man-made traditions, born of a wicked heart because it will mar the authority of God's word and His leading.
- And friends, this struggle of our sin nature and our spirit man is an ever-internal battle.
- Paul recognized this internal struggle. It is this wrestling between our Spirit and our flesh.
 - Check out what Paul says about this internal conflict in Romans 7:21-25.

Romans 7:21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

Romans 7:22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

Romans 7:23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

Romans 7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

Romans 7:25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

- The things in which we do, naturally, apart from the Spirit is the result of the evil nature of our hearts.
 - This is why behavioral modification is not a cure to the issue of sin.
 - This is why ceremonial regulations and rituals cannot cleanse us from sin.
 - This is why attending church week after week cannot make you righteous in the sight of the Lord.
 - No matter how many memory verses you memorize, the routine of looking godly and acting godly are a measly attempt to be made right with God.
 - Without the Holy Spirit convicting of sin and illuminating our hearts to Christ and His work, we would all remain forever trapped and bound by sin – forever slaves to our desires and bound for hell.
 - **This is why Christ's atoning and justifying work is enough because He alone cleanses us and makes us right before God.**
 - Check out what David said regarding his own sin nature and struggle in Psalm 51:2-4

**Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity
And cleanse me from my sin.**

**Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions,
And my sin is ever before me.**

Psalm 51:4 Against You, You only, I have sinned

**And done what is evil in Your sight,
So that You are justified when You speak
And blameless when You judge.**

- David, who scripture tells us was a man after God's own heart was in constant dealings with his sin – as are we.
 - David was well aware of his short comings and struggle with sin – as should we.
 - And we are well aware of personal moments in David's life that he fell into sin – as will we.
 - Understand that this wrestling with our sin-nature is not a one and done thing.
 - **The wrestling with sin in our lives is an ongoing battle.**
 - As a matter of fact, Moses writes in Genesis 6:5 this regarding sin's incessant behavior:

Genesis 6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

- Therefore, the only way in which men and women can overcome the power of sin in life is through the atoning work of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - **A question that one could ask here is: If all of humanity has this inherent nature of sin, where did it come from?**
 - Well we need look no further than Genesis 3 where we see the fall of humanity beget in the garden of Eden by Adam and Eve.
 - Paul provides a beautiful discourse that speaks to this continual pillaging of sin. Turn with me to Romans 5:15-17

Romans 5:15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

Romans 5:16 The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

Romans 5:17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

- Friends, this is why Jesus' being born of a virgin and conceived by the Holy Spirit is necessary.
 - Because Christ was not the son of Adam, He did not take on the inherit sinful nature that we have.
 - Christ being born of the Spirit and not of sin allows all who come through Him to

experience the newness of life!

- Those who are born again through faith in Christ are new creatures and are given the Holy Spirit to indwell us in these earthly bodies.
- This is why Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:22:

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

- Understanding this reality, which we now have in full view in Christ, is what Jesus is ultimately explaining to the disciples then.
 - Our measly attempts at “being good” will never meet the standard that God has established.
 - The gift of God is that He provided the standard for us in the person of His Son and belief in Christ alone saves us.
 - Now before we end tonight, I want us to look at the last 3 verses, verses 21-23 again, because there is some theological components to observe.

Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,

Mark 7:22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.

Mark 7:23 All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

- It is here in the last three verses that Jesus lists out, plainly, both the actions and attitudes which originate from the heart of men.
 - The first 6 are the evil actions of men which proceed from the thoughts of men. They are the following:
 - Fornication
 - Theft
 - Murder
 - Adultery
 - Deeds of Coveting
 - Wickedness
 - If you notice, all 6 actions are in the plural which suggest that these are repeated acts.
 - The last 6 will be in the singular and speak to the attitudes produced from the evil thoughts.
 - These attitudes are the following:
 - Deceit
 - Sensuality
 - Envy
 - Slander

- Pride
- Foolishness
- Jesus shows us that sin begins in our hearts, moves to our thoughts, which leads to our actions.
 - The question in which the text brings us to tonight is: If this is the heart of an unregenerated individual, what are the actions/fruit of someone filled with the Spirit of God.
 - Well Paul expresses that to us in his letter to the Galatians in Galatians 5:19-23. Check out the text:

Galatians 5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

Galatians 5:20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

Galatians 5:21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Galatians 5:23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

- Friends, only a new heart renewed in Christ, can move one from unsaved to saved.
 - Only a regenerated heart can cause one's dispositions to move from the need to please God to resting in being Justified through the Son.
 - Only one who has experienced the rebirth through faith in Christ alone by faith alone, can experience this newness of life.
 - And this newness of life can only be found through Christ who is our sin bearer.
 - Our striving and attempts at doing to look good or be right before God are unsatisfactory at best.
 - The only way that our hearts are made clean is through and by Christ's atoning work.
 - As David stated in the Psalms (51:10) "Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a steadfast spirit in me".
 - Our striving to accomplish a work that has already been fully completed in Christ is not only unnecessary but is quite insane in and of itself.
 - Why you may ask? Because the work of perfect righteousness, perfect Holiness, perfect obedience to the Law, has been fully completed in Christ.
 - It is in Christ that we are truly made new from the inside out!
 - The root issue is sin, but the perfect solution is Christ!
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 7C

Chapter 7:24-30

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- Within our first two teachings of Mark Chapter 7, more specifically verses 1-23, we've covered a few things:
 - We discussed the burdens in which tradition has plagued the lives of the Jewish people, in that day – and even today I might add.
 - Tradition, we discovered, can distort the truth for the benefit of those who began the tradition.
 - In the case of the Pharisaical leaders of that day, tradition and practice was conformed to their interpretation of truth (Mishnah) and not God's word as truth (Mosaic Law).
 - More specifically, in context, this particular "tradition of the elders" dealt with that of ritual handwashing.
 - It became apparent through Jesus' refutation of this custom, using scripture, that ritual handwashing was not a matter of Mosaic Law.
 - It became clear that the "traditions of men" were not a means of one being righteous before God, but rather a front for self-righteousness before others.
 - Although traditions may begin with pure intent, if not measured against the heart of the law, it can drive others toward external appeasement rather than recognizing the need for true internal spiritual transformation.
 - Jesus further explained in verses 14-23 that it is the human heart that is desperately wicked and needs to be made anew.
 - Through the parabolic use of dietary restrictions, Jesus makes the point that food is not the source of people's unclean state before God.
 - That point became clear through the later scribal addition stating, "all foods are clean".
 - The essence of this statement was not that the dietary laws were abolished per se, but that they did not contribute to one being made clean before God.
 - It spoke to the reality that it is not what we put inside our bodies that defiles us but what naturally comes out that defiles us.
 - Therefore, the statement "all foods are clean" was pointing to something much bigger regarding the Kingdom program.
 - It would be that all foods being "deemed clean" was in direct connection to the fact that those in whom God was drawing to Himself, even outside of the Jewish race, would eventually be brought into faith in Christ.
 - Tonight, we will see Mark's use of this small statement "all foods are clean" bring clarity and understanding to the Kingdom Program.
 - This Kingdom program that was unfolding would be unprecedented and would foreshadow a glorious day that was in the near, not too far future.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be: "The Children, the Crumbs, and the Dogs"
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 7:24-30.

Mark 7:24 Jesus got up and went away from there to the region of Tyre. And

when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice.

Mark 7:25 But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet.

Mark 7:26 Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophoenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

Mark 7:27 And He was saying to her, “Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”

Mark 7:28 But she answered and *said to Him, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children’s crumbs.”

Mark 7:29 And He said to her, “Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter.”

Mark 7:30 And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having left.

- Let’s Pray.
- Desperation leads to desperate measures.
 - If you are desperate enough, no matter the obstacles before you, you will find a way to get what you’re looking for.
 - This position of desperation is where we find one of our characters in our narrative tonight.
 - Although she will be met with many obstacles before her, in the end she manages to get and ascertain the true prize in it all.
 - Let’s begin here at verse 24.

Mark 7:24 Jesus got up and went away from there to the region of Tyre. And when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice.

- Mark begins this pick up in a transitory way.
 - The scene shifts from a private home conversation with His disciples in the lower Galilee to a region northwest of there.
 - The text tells us that Jesus and the disciples leave the home, potentially in Capernaum, and travel to “the region of Tyre”.
 - If you recall in previous teachings, we discovered that the region of Tyre and Sidon were heavily Gentile regions.
 - The region of Tyre was roughly 40 miles northwest of Capernaum.
 - These regions today are a part of modern-day Lebanon.
 - One question that comes to mind at this point in the text is: What was the cause of Jesus leaving the area, but more specifically to a Gentile region?
 - Well from the immediate context, it’s no surprise that right after Jesus’ mention of “foods not being the source of what makes one unclean”, that Jesus wants to now bring about some practical reality into the mix.

- The example that He used regarding the abandoning, if you will, of the dietary restriction laws is being used for a specific purpose.
- Remember, for a Jew, these dietary laws speak to their identity on a national level and therefore becomes a “tradition” in and of itself.
- This example was hitting at the core of several things:
 - 1. What the Kingdom Program unfolding meant for those who would inherit the Kingdom of God, dispensationally speaking?
 - 2. What it would mean for these Jewish men (future leaders) following Christ?
 - 3. Who the Kingdom of God would be composed of regarding faith in Christ.
 - It would be that the Kingdom and salvation and being “made clean” before God would not be accomplished through means of Jewish traditionalism or custom, but rather through the finished work of the Messiah, that all people would be blessed.
- Now, to provide some cultural context regarding the region they are traveling to, it is well documented that both the Jews and the Gentiles were staunch enemies of one another.
 - These two groups hated one another and to resolve their issues, at all cost, they lived separately as best as possible.
- The Jewish people saw Gentiles as being “ceremonially unclean”.
 - Perhaps it is for this reason the Pharisees addressed Jesus and His disciples regarding the handwashing routine.
 - Because the lack of handwashing was in lock sync and step with what “unclean” and otherwise “defiled people groups and nations” did – which was not participating in their customs and laws.
- Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus records this statement, speaking to the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles:

“Now, the very same thing will I endeavor to do; for I will bring the Egyptians and the Phoenicians as my principal witnesses, because nobody can complain of their testimony as false on account that they are known to have born the greatest ill will towards us,—I mean this as to the Egyptians, in general all of them, while of the Phoenicians it is known the Tyrians have been most of all in the same ill disposition towards us:”

- So it is the region of Tyre where Jesus is going to lead His disciples into healthy exposure for His disciples to confront their unhealthy prejudices towards the Gentile people.
 - Because it will ultimately be these men with the exception of one, who will lead the efforts of the New Testament Church in the right direction.
 - It would be through these apostolic leaders that there would be no room for cultural or racial divides because we are being made one in Christ.
 - Galatians 3:28, Paul speaks to this newness and oneness in Christ this way:

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- The other reason for cause of Jesus departing the area near Capernaum, and probably most obvious, is due to the growing persecution from the religious leaders.
 - If you remember, Jesus' intent originally for the disciples to crossover the Sea of Galilee to the other side was for the purpose of resting.
 - However, the opportunity to do so has not been provided as they were bombarded with the needs of the people in Genasseret and now the criticism of the religious leaders.
 - So in a way, Jesus retreating to a place He knew the religious leaders would not go was a perfect opportunity to get away, but also a teaching opportunity for the disciples.
 - At this point, we should be seeing the growing anticipation of the Kingdom Program becoming more realized.
 - However, before we move too quickly, we see in the text in verse 24b that despite the efforts of leaving and being unnoticed, the text mentions this:
 - "He could not escape notice."
 - Check out verses 25-26 and we will see why.

Mark 7:25 But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet.

Mark 7:26 Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophoenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

- It becomes clear from Mark's account that Jesus and His disciples' attempt at going "unnoticed" for some rest was indeed a "no-go".
 - Mark mentions that word has apparently traveled quickly regarding Jesus' arrival to the region of Tyre because not too long upon their arrival, He is met by "a woman".
 - Although the text does not provide a name for this woman, it does provide her need.
 - According to verse 25, this woman had great need as her daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit.
 - Up to this point, it could be said that this woman, through the grapevine, has heard about what Jesus had done before for others.
 - Perhaps she has heard how Jesus responded to the desperate need of Jairus' daughter and how Jairus kneeled before the Lord for help.
 - After mentioning the woman's need and her physical expression of honor and desperation before Jesus, Mark informs us of the woman's background.
 - Mark tells us that she was a "Gentile of the Syrophoenician race".
 - Syrophoenician is a word that combines the two terms: Syrian and Phoenician.

- And Phoenicia was a part of the larger Roman province of Syria.
- Interestingly enough, Matthew's account informs us that this woman is a "Canaanite".
 - Now this detail may not mean much to the average hearer, but it plays a crucial role in understanding the unfolding of the Kingdom program.
- The fact that Matthew's account mentions the word Canaanite should begin to bring up some historical/cultural implications between the Jews and Gentiles.
 - Within the Hebrew scriptures, it was God's intent that the Canaanites be driven out of the land which belonged to the Jewish people. (Book of Joshua)
 - However, because of Israel's failure to drive them out of the land, it causes further corruption (morally) for the Jewish people.
- So, the implications of Mark mentioning that this woman was a Gentile (Greek more specifically) allows a Roman reader to grasp the cultural controversy at that time.
 - What I want to draw our attention to is verse 26, because it would seem as if her presence and persistence was of double annoyance to the disciples.
 - Notice the text states: "And she repeatedly asked Him to cast the demon out of her daughter."
 - The question that we must address here is: "What was the cause of the woman's consistent plea to Jesus regarding her daughter's condition?"
 - There has to be a reason for her persistent pursuit of Christ while He and the disciples are in the region.
- Well in order for us to grasp the reason as to the cause of her persistence we need to go to Matthew's parallel account. (Matthew 15:22-23)
 - Check out what Matthew states:

Matthew 15:22 And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed."

Matthew 15:23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us."

- Well, it becomes quite clear why the woman was so persistent in her plea: Jesus was ignoring her!
 - Within Matthew's account we can further see the desperation of the woman and the disturbance of the disciples.
 - The Greek language in Matthew 15:22 suggest that where the boundary of the Jewish territory and the Gentile territory met, she crossed it. (Exit)
 - Her shouting and pleading before the Lord apparently was bothersome at best in the eyes of the disciples.
 - And to that end, they implore Jesus to "Send her away!"
 - What we can't miss here at this point in the story is the woman's sense of need but also her recognition of Jesus' person and power.

- She approaches Jesus in a way that shows deep respect (falling to her knees in reverence), but beyond that, she uses a particular Messianic title:
- She calls Jesus “Son of David”
- Clearly, this Gentile woman knows something about the Jewish Messiah that Jesus’ own people didn’t fully see or recognize yet.
- As a matter of fact, this woman is so sure of who Jesus is that the Greek language suggest that she was not going to leave until her daughter was healed.
 - Friends, if that isn’t a demonstration of faith, I don’t know what is!
- For a moment, recognize the risk this woman took for the sake of her daughter being healed: She defied the cultural, ethnic, and religious expectations of that day.
 - This shows us the dire need she was in because nothing else and no one else could meet her needs like Jesus could.
 - It is often when we get to the lowest point, outside of our own abilities and skillsets, that we seek the only true help that was there all along.
- Desperation is the environment in which God demonstrates His Divine illumination so that we may see Him for who He really is.
 - Let’s keep moving. Check out verses 27 and 28.

Mark 7:27 And He was saying to her, “Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”

Mark 7:28 But she answered and *said to Him, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children’s crumbs.”

- It is here where Mark brings us to one of the most controversial and debated pieces of scripture within culture.
 - This particular section of scripture has been misused, misapplied, and misinterpreted by believers and non-believers, alike.
 - So, before we approach this section, understand that we will approach it in its proper literal exegetical hermeneutic.
 - Jesus, after having attempted to ignore and avoid the woman’s request and pleading over a period of time, finally responds.
 - Jesus states the following: “Let the children be satisfied first for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”
 - There are a few things that we need to observe from this parabolic conversation. Those things are the following words:
 - 1. Children
 - 2. Bread
 - 3. Dogs
 - The question from this becomes: “How are all of these things related and connected?”
 - Another question that you could be raising in your mind right now is: “Who is

Jesus speaking about regarding letting the children eat first?”

- Well, reading through Matthew’s account again will provide us context to this statement.
- Turn with me to Matthew 15:24. This is what it reads:

Matthew 15:24 But He answered and said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

- This Matthean statement speaks to the purpose of Messiah reaching and dealing with the Jewish people first.
 - We see Paul explain this reasoning in Romans 1:16:

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

- So we see that salvation is to everyone who believes, meaning that salvation goes beyond just the Jew.
 - However, the way in which it goes to the Gentile is that it first is made known and brought to the Jew.
 - Therefore, the reference to the “Children” is speaking to the Jewish people, more specifically, “the remnant of Israel”, those who have placed faith in Christ.
 - In other words, the priority of the Gospel message to be initially given to the Jew is why Christ came, and it would be through the Jewish people that the nations would know who Christ is!
 - The prophet Isaiah mentioned this means of dispensation in Isaiah 49:6 in this way:

Isaiah 49:6 “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also make You a light of the nations
So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

- So if the Children are the remnant of the house of Israel, and the message of salvation is the bread and is consistent with that of the sustaining life and nourishment found in Christ, then by process of elimination that means the reference of the dogs, refers to the Gentiles.
 - Why would Jesus use this term to describe the Gentile people?
 - Wouldn’t this term have been offensive to the Gentile people during that time?
 - Again, we must remember that this vernacular was a means of custom during that day. This does not make Jesus a racist or any other nonsensical title one chooses to use.
 - We also must read the text in context and not through our particular cultural lens.
 - The term “dogs”, here in Greek, is *kynarion*, which is different from *kuon* in

Hebrew and conveys a different tone.

- Where *Kuon* in Hebrew means “a scavenging and ravenous, scraggly dog from the streets”, *Kynarion* means “puppy” or a “tamed house dog”.
- So the difference of terms changes the tone in which one would interpret the text.
- So with the word *Kynarion* in mind referencing the Gentile people, what Jesus is saying is: “You don’t feed the “puppies” while the children are eating at the table.”
 - Now I want to emphasize the phrase “while at the table” because it is not to say that the dogs will not get fed.
 - It simply means that once the children (the remnant of Israel) has been satisfied, meaning responded in faith to Christ and received God’s intended promise, then the Gentiles will have their time to receive their portion.
- This begs the question: “When will that time in its fullness arrive?”
 - In other words: When would that time be for the Gentile people to respond to or receive Christ as Messiah in faith for salvation?
 - Well friends, we are in that dispensation today and that time is known as The Church Age which exists within the Age of the Gentiles.
- We can’t miss here what Jesus is doing. Every opportunity He has with His disciples is a learning opportunity for them.
 - Although the disciples do not fully understand it at this time, they are witnessing a crucial aspect of the unfolding Kingdom Program.
- Remember, the way in which Jesus is communicating to “outsiders”, in which this Gentile woman is one, is always in parable.
 - The question that arises in our text at this point is: Does this woman understand and see what Jesus is saying in light of the offensive language used?
 - We find our answer in verse 28.
- Verse 28 seems to show us that this woman not only understood what Jesus was saying, but it demonstrated her faith in who He is and what He came to do.
 - One thing that is to be considered is the fact that despite the pushback, she is committed to getting a response no matter how long it takes.
 - There is something that this woman is convinced of, and will not budge on it.
- As R.T France in his commentary on the Gospel of Mark states:

“the mission of the Messiah of Israel, while it must of course begin with Israel, cannot be confined there.”

- The Gentiles could still benefit from what Messiah brought at that time (i.e healing, etc.), but the greater grace was salvation that would be fully realized in the age of the Gentiles.
 - It is possible that this Gentile woman heard Genesis 12:3 taught in and around the synagogue.

- Genesis 12:3 promised this:

**Genesis 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”**

- Whatever the case may have been, this woman was confident in knowing that it would be through the Jewish people that she would be blessed.
 - And that it was through the Person of Jesus Christ, the promised One, the Son of David, that she would be blessed.
 - Let’s keep moving to our last 2 verses of the night. Verses 29 and 30.

Mark 7:29 And He said to her, “Because of this answer, go; the demon has gone out of your daughter.”

Mark 7:30 And after going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

- Mark’s account shows us that the woman was able to understand what Jesus was telling her parabolically.
 - The woman’s response of “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children’s crumbs” greatly displayed her understanding of Christ and His Person.
 - Matthew’s gospel gives way for us to understand that her faith is to be noted and not simply the healing of her daughter itself.
 - This is what Matthew’s account says in Matthew 15:28:

Matthew 15:28 Then Jesus said to her, “O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed at once.

- The word “great” here in Greek is *megas* which means “remarkable or out of the ordinary in degree, magnitude or effect”. What made her faith so remarkable?
 - Her faith was not in a heritage or tradition.
 - Her faith was not in a thing.
 - Her faith was not in a national identification.
 - Her faith alone was in Christ alone.
 - Friends, this is what Jesus was ultimately trying to show His disciples and the lost sheep of Israel.
 - This message of the Gospel goes beyond cultural connectivity and relation.
 - This message of the Gospel goes beyond national identity, heritage, or dietary laws.
 - Your means of salvation is not in how patriotic you are or how you vote or what you do or your social pedigree.

- Salvation is found in a single person; His work, His death, His life, and on the basis of His work alone.
 - This is what Peter would ultimately understand in the vision the Lord would give him in the book of Acts regarding the vision of food coming from the sky and descending on a mat.
 - This gift of salvation will come through the Jewish people to make known to the world how the Nations will be blessed and how the Nations can be saved.
- There are so many people in the world seeking meaning, hope, and joy through means of cultural identity, spiritual enlightenment through burning of incense, even attempting to be their own masters of their fate.
 - But all of these are measly attempts to somehow connect with God, but yet failing to realize that He has come to meet us where we are!
 - If you want to talk about true contextualization of the Gospel, God fulfilled that through His Person by living amongst us, taking on our sin, and becoming our High priest.
 - Hebrews 4:14-16 tells us this:

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 4:16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- What I find so encouraging in this text is that humility drove her to see, rightly, her present condition and her only help!
 - She did not negate or dismiss the reality of her physical/ethnic condition – she realized she was deemed unclean.
 - It is through her humility and recognition of the person of Christ that the woman's needs were answered.
 - The text gives us a beautiful picture of how one comes to know Christ and that is, it requires one to come to the end of themselves:
 - Their traditions
 - Their striving
 - Their perceptions
 - Their worries
 - Their cares
 - Their all
 - And simply come to the end of themselves.
 - For it is when we come to the end of ourselves that we come to see Christ most clearly.

- Not only does the woman come to Christ believing who she knows Him to be, but she leaves knowing that what He said was what she would see.
- The text tells us in verse 30 that when the woman had gotten home that she found her child in the bed and the demon gone.
 - What a relief that must have been?
- One could imagine that the sight of the woman's daughter upon arrival would have once again drawn her to her knees in worship of Christ.
 - I could only imagine, being a fly on the wall in that room, the woman is possibly weeping, knowing that she had come face to face with Messiah and a promise from the God of Israel.
- It would be that moment that every idol god she worshipped before would have been discarded, changing her mind about all that was and used to be.
 - What we take away in seeing from this woman's faith and understanding of Jesus' teaching here is that this woman understood Messiah's coming better than that of the Children of Israel themselves.
- Friends, it was a Gentile woman who was considered the first to truly understand the mystery of the Kingdom of God.
 - Herein lies the great mercy of God: that His great mercy and message of Salvation is not just for the Jew, but for the entire world to know.
 - And it is through Christ alone, that we men can be saved!
 - Jesus, our bread of life; Jesus, our sustainer; Jesus our provider; Jesus our present help in trouble; Jesus our teacher; Jesus our great servant-King. Do you know Him?
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 7D

Chapter 7:31-37

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- Before we dive into tonight’s teaching, I want to begin by providing some further clarification from our Mark 7C teaching.
 - I believe this clarification will provide valuable insight as to where we are moving to within Mark’s gospel account.
 - Our clarification must first begin with terms and the two terms that I want to speak to are:
 - 1. The Age of the Gentiles
 - 2. The Church Age
 - Last week, I mentioned that the Syrophoenician woman was the first person (non-Jew) to understand what Jesus was saying through His parabolic teaching.
 - If you recall, this is where Jesus made the comment saying: “Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” (Mark 7:27)
 - This comment was speaking to the reality that Jesus’ mission was to present Himself to the Jewish people as their Messiah.
 - This promise of a coming Messiah was to be given exclusively to the Jew.
 - However, it is the woman’s response that grasped Jesus’ attention.
 - The woman’s response was: “Yes Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the Children’s crumbs”. (Mark 7:28)
 - Her response revealed her understanding of God’s word and her faith in the Messiah that God would provide.
 - She came to this conclusion because of the promises found in the Hebrew scriptures that God would bless the nations, including the Gentiles.
 - This is why she states Jesus’ Messianic name “Son of David”.
 - She knew that although Messiah would come, first for His own (Jews), that eventually the Gentiles would partake in their blessings, fulfilling the promises of old.
 - And to this end, Jesus’ response to her response and faith in the promises of God was both encouraging and to be greatly commended.
 - It was from this revealing of truth that I posed a question: “When would that promise regarding this blessing for the Gentile responding to salvation have taken place from that time (her vantage point)?”
 - What dispensation (age/time) will this occur?
 - Well as you know that time is what we are in now, known as the Church Age.
 - And this time known as the “Church Age” is in existence until the “fullness of those who will respond to Christ in Faith in this time/age come – this includes the Gentile (non-Jew).”
 - And this Church Age is happening within this present “Age/Times of the Gentiles” meaning Gentiles being in ruling authority in the world.
 - This period and soon to be revealed time was a mystery to the disciples and the people of God as it was not revealed to Daniel in the Old Testament.
 - I mention these terms and these ages within time because as we move into

tonight's teaching, we are going to witness an interesting detail.

- This detail is going to provide us with potential clarity as to the disorientation of the disciples' understanding of the Kingdom Program.
- As well as provide us with how Israel's rejection of Jesus as Messiah was making the purpose of His first coming ever so clear.
- If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would simply be: "Can you hear me now"
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 7:31-37.

Mark 7:31 Again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis.

Mark 7:32 They *brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they *implored Him to lay His hand on him.

Mark 7:33 Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva;

Mark 7:34 and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He *said to him, "Ephphatha (Eph-pa-tha)!" that is, "Be opened!"

Mark 7:35 And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly.

Mark 7:36 And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it.

Mark 7:37 They were utterly astonished, saying, "He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

- Let's Pray.
- There was a game that dates back to the late 1870s, just after the invention of the telephone, called the Telephone game.
 - The rules to the game were simple: You gather a group of 3 or more people.
 - The person who starts the game begins with the phrase or statement that is to be passed down from one person to the next.
 - The goal is to get that original message to be passed down correctly from the first person to the last without allowing the phrase to be repeated.
 - Therefore, it's up to the person passing the phrase down to listen closely and repeat the phrase carefully and accurately.
 - It never becomes a surprise however, that the phrase that is initially uttered never ends up being the same phrase towards the end.
 - The phrase that begins like "Super-cala-fraga-listic-expi-ala-docious" turns into "The dandelion was super cool"
 - You see, if a message does not remain consistent from start to finish by listening to the one who is articulately stating the phrase, we end up garbling the message.
 - In a way, the religious leaders of that day were, for far too long, garbling the words of God and making it their own.
 - In turn, the people of God get a message that began with clarity, passed down

through the Torah, and have begun moving toward invalid interpretations.

- But thank God for Jesus! Because it would be through the incarnational reality of Jesus entering into the world, that He would be called out on mission to make clear what was made known centuries ago.
 - Tonight, we are going to see how, through Jesus' missional and teaching ministry, He is trying to get His disciples to see who He is – once again.
 - The question on the table tonight however is: Can they hear Him, now?
 - Pick me up at verses 31-32.

Mark 7:31 Again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis.

Mark 7:32 They *brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they *implored Him to lay His hand on him.

- It's after Jesus has healed the Syrophoenician's daughter from demon possession in the region of Tyre that Jesus and His disciples continue their expedition.
 - This travel takes them on an elaborate path around the region of Sidon.
 - You may recall that this region in Phoenicia (modern day Lebanon) was a majority Gentile region.
 - And Mark informs us that they are making their way towards the region of the Decapolis – known as the “ten-cities”.
 - Now before we move any further, let me give us some quick context here:
 - It's only a few chapters ago that we read about Jesus and His disciples having gone to this region where Jesus healed the man with a “legion of demons”.
 - It would be in this region, after Jesus had demonstrated great authority and power over the legion of demons, that Jesus received negative results from the people, all except one man – the one who was formally possessed.
 - It would be this Gentile man who would plead with Jesus to become His disciple.
 - This man recognized Jesus' authority and power, yet Jesus was not taking on Gentile disciples at the time.
 - However, Jesus gives the man an instruction before His departure and that was to proclaim to the ten-cities what Jesus had done for him. (Mark 5:20)
 - Check out how the man responds, in immediate obedience. Look at the text:

Mark 5:20 So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

- ◦ So it is this region that Jesus and the Disciples are traveling to from the region of Tyre.
- According to this route in which they traveled, this trip may have taken several weeks or even months”

- The question then becomes: “What was Jesus’ point of taking such a long detour around the Gentile region to the Decapolis?”
- Could it be that Jesus was using that extra time to teach His disciples?
- Some have argued that the terrain allowed easier travel from Sidon moving around to the Decapolis – that is definitely a possibility.
- However, I believe the answer is a bit simpler than that.
- Remember that Jesus has just been confronted with the religious leaders of Jerusalem.
 - Jesus’ ministry is experiencing increased persecution from the Pharisees which could potentially lead to pre-mature death.
 - Therefore, in an effort to escape the steadily growing rejection of the Jewish people and the pressure from the religious leaders, why not go to an area they wouldn’t dare frequent?
- In any case, it is upon the arrival of Jesus and the disciples in the Decapolis, Mark mentions that Jesus and His disciples are greeted by a group of people.
 - Now, we should find this detail quite intriguing and encouraging, because it seems as if a previous heralding of Jesus’ ministry from 2 chapters ago was successful!
 - Jesus’ ministry and presence go from having been previously rejected by the people of Decapolis, to now being warmly welcomed.
 - It becomes quite evident that the testimony of what Jesus did before with the man who had legions of demons has traveled far.
- There is a key applicational point here and that is: Consistency in proclaiming the Gospel message matters, even when it seems it's reaching no one.
 - A message that is worthy to be heralded is a message worthy to be received in its timing.
 - Even when you think no one wants to hear the news you carry, don’t stop sharing the message.
- It’s here in verse 32, that some of the people of Decapolis have brought before Jesus a man who “was deaf and spoke with difficulty”.
- Mark tells us that the man’s ailments consist of him not being able to hear and that he has some sort of speech impediment – perhaps because of his hearing condition.
 - The word “difficulty of speech” in the Greek is the word *mogilalos* (mog-ee-lalos) which means “speaking with difficulty or having an impediment of speech.”
 - It also means mute or unable to articulate.
- What’s interesting about this Greek word is that it’s rare.
 - It’s so rare that it only occurs here in the Greek New Testament (Mark 7:32) and in the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew bible.
 - It is within Isaiah 35:6 that we find the other use of this word.
- Isaiah 35:6 is a passage promising the coming of God’s rule on earth. We will look at this text in a bit. Put a pin here for now.

- This promised intervention was already taking place in Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 7:37; 1:15).
- What we can surmise from Jesus' excessive route choice in these Gentile regions was merely a shadow of what the Syrophoenician woman was expressing from earlier.
 - In other words, the coming rule of God on earth (The Messianic Kingdom) would be accomplished through Jesus Christ.
 - However, it would not come about how the Jewish people anticipated it.
- In His first coming, these signs and actions in which Jesus would perform were to point to His Authority as Messiah and His Power as God.
 - Isaiah 35:5 speaks to these works/acts as a sign of the Messiah. Check out the text really quickly:

**Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened
And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.**

- It will also be that in His Second coming, Jesus' power and majestic reign will be widely known as He will reign in a physical, literal kingdom in the earth as King over all.
 - Recognize, that although these actions of Christ are being exhibited before the disciples' very eyes (the children of the house of Israel) they are still missing the identity of Christ as a whole.
 - It seems as if once again, the Gentiles are recognizing the uniqueness of Christ and His person far beyond what His disciples are seeing.
 - And perhaps there is confusion as to the Messiah they are seeing versus the Messiah these men have been told about.
 - This is what was stirring confusion with John the Baptist as he sent His disciples to ask Jesus if he had pointed to the wrong Messiah.
 - This confusion for the disciples is rooted in both the improper teaching of the religious leaders as well as Israel's national rejection of their Messiah.
 - So these teaching moments between Jesus and His disciples will be ongoing, until their eyes are open to see and their ears to hear for understanding.
 - Well it is this crowd, having brought this man with these physical ailments, that Jesus responds to the need. Check out verses 33 through 35.

**Mark 7:33 Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva;
Mark 7:34 and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He *said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!"
Mark 7:35 And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly.**

- Mark tells us that upon hearing the need of this man and his condition, that Jesus

takes the man aside, privately to deal with him personally.

- I think it is worth slowing down to process this point because it speaks to the care of Christ.
 - That He is willing and able to deal with our struggles, our needs, our problems, privately.
 - We will see later on, even more, great care from the Christ.
- Now some may ask the question, beyond what I have just mentioned: “Why take the man aside? Why not heal him in front of everyone?”
 - The reality is that Jesus most certainly could have chosen a more public forum by which to demonstrate His power and healing ability.
 - However, I believe as mentioned before, this healing that Jesus was going to do had to be one in which this man needed to experience by himself.
- Let’s consider the facts: The man is deaf and he is mute.
 - Could it be that with the large crowd around him, that it could have been a potential distraction for him?
 - This experience of healing had to move beyond simple public formality and had to be a private reality for the man.
- Notice in verse 33, the method in which Jesus uses to heal this man. It’s unlike any healings that He has done up to this point.
 - Understand that Jesus has healed in many ways before. There is no set formula for healing that the Messiah had to follow.
 - In some instances, He simply spoke and things happened.
 - In other situations, He would touch the individuals because of their physical ailments, and they would be healed.
- But with this healing, Jesus did something quite unordinary, especially according to today’s standards. This went beyond the simple use of His hands.
 - He used His saliva to perform the healing.
 - Some of you are probably gaging right now just at the thought of another person touching you with their saliva, especially during the COVID era.
 - However, I want us to step outside of our 21st century bubble and consider the context of the first century.
- Within Jewish custom, including some Greek cultures, Jewish rabbis considered saliva to be a valid treatment for healing.
 - There are several ancient accounts of the use of saliva especially in curing blindness.⁵
- There is a famous story told by Tacitus (Hist.4.81) about how a blind man from Alexandria was cured by the saliva of the emperor Vespasian. (Take this for what it’s worth).
 - The implication of this story is that it was not the spittle in and of itself that healed the blind man but it was *specifically the emperor’s saliva, which was effective. Similarly here it is Jesus’ saliva which cures; it is effective.*
 - Some scholars think that Mark’s mention of this particular miracle could have

been documented for the purpose of showing his audience that Christ reigns supreme, even above the Roman rulers of that time.

- The Talmud also mentions an interesting story regarding spittle and its healing ability of “the first born”.
 - Check out this quote from the Talmud: Bava Basra 126b.

“A certain person once came before R. Hanina and said to him, 'I am sure that this man is firstborn'. R. Hanina said to him, 'How do you know?' — The person replied to him: 'Because when people came to his father, he used to say to them: "Go to my son Shikhath, who is firstborn and his saliva heals'. Might he not have been the firstborn of his mother only [but not of his father]? There is a tradition that the saliva of the firstborn of a father heals, but that of the firstborn of a mother does not heal.” (Bava Basra 126b)

- So with this context in mind, understand that this method was not foreign to those in the 1st and 2nd century.
 - Mark tells us that with this healing, Jesus does touch the man.
 - The question at this point can be raised: “Why can’t Jesus just say 'Ears be open, and Mouth speak!’?”
 - Wouldn’t that have been the easier solution?
 - Well with the healings of many throughout Mark’s account several were accomplished through touch as a sign of compassion for the people.
 - We see examples of this is in:
 - Mark 1:31 where Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law
 - Mark 1:41 where Jesus healed a Jewish leper (The first Messianic Miracle)
 - Mark 5:33 with the woman who had the issue of bleeding for 12 years
 - Mark 6:56 when Jesus and the disciples reach Gennesaret and are greeted by many who are looking to be healed.
 - In every instance, there is this visible representation of the compassion of Jesus in meeting the needs of the people through touch.
 - So this situation would not be too different – with the exception of the saliva.
 - It is here after Jesus puts his fingers in the mans ears, spits in his hand, and applies saliva to the man’s tongue, that Jesus looks up to heaven and takes a deep sigh.
 - In a way, we can see the significance of Jesus looking up to heaven as his hands are holding the man’s head.
 - This would allow the man to observe Jesus’ focus as to where and from whom this healing is coming from.
 - This opportunity of healing has been provided by way of the Father’s provision, the power by means of His Spirit, and the agent of healing by way of the Son.
 - In all things, we witness that the Son is dependent upon the Father for His needs.
 - And what a reminder that should be for believers in Christ!

- That if the Son is dependent upon the Father for all things, how much more should we be dependent upon the Lord for all things?
- Now notice that Jesus takes a “deep sigh”.
 - What is Jesus groaning about at this moment?
 - The word “deep sigh” in the Greek is *stenazo* which means to “express oneself involuntarily in the face of an undesirable circumstance.”
- Consider the conditions of this man for a moment:
 - Lord knows how long this man has been in this predicament.
 - The best means of communication at this time is gestures, pointing to things or places to convey thoughts or direction.
 - With 2 of the 5 senses down, the other senses become all the more alert – and one sense that this man is keen to is his sight.
- Jesus’ deep sigh comes from a place of much compassion as Jesus sees this man’s condition and feels, for a moment, maybe the needs of this man.
 - I can only imagine the weight of how sin has ravaged the human condition, that Jesus is beginning to feel the weight of His coming.
 - Paul says these words to the Galatians in Galatians 3:13:

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—

Galatians 3:14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

- ○ This man was about to witness for himself, personally, the very demonstration of the One in whom had come to become a curse for him and others who would place their faith upon Him as Messiah.
 - The question becomes: “Will this experience lead to revelation for the man as to who Jesus is?”
- It would be in verse 34 and 35 that after Jesus’ touch and unique method of the use of saliva, that He utters the words: “Ephphatha (Eph-pha-tha), which means “Be Opened.”
 - Mark is quite helpful in his account as he has his audience in mind.
 - He makes sure he translates the phrase Jesus uses for his audience as the phrase used is Aramaic. So he includes the meaning.
- The text lets us know that the opening or the loosing of the tongue was an immediate response.
 - By the word of the Lord being spoken, by the power of the Spirit, what was once bound was now set free.
- Understand that the healing power of this miracle is not found in the words Jesus spoke, or in the touch of His hand, or even the spit from his mouth – the power was found in His very Person, who He was; The Messiah.

- It is Christ who came to bear our sins and our griefs upon Himself so that we would be free from the bondage of sin and death.
- In a way, the saliva that the man would have witnessed being placed on his tongue to set his speech free from bondage, would simply be a foretaste of the blood shed from Christ's body that would be the means by which men and women would be cleaned from sin through faith in Christ.
- We now arrive to our last two verses of the night. Verses 36 and 37.

Mark 7:36 And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it.

Mark 7:37 They were utterly astonished, saying, "He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

- Well, it is after this miraculous healing that Jesus orders the group of people who brought the man, not to say a word about what took place.
 - Now, at the first chance possible these men would have told everyone they came across what Jesus had done – it makes sense.
 - Yet, Jesus orders (commands in the Greek) these individuals not to say a word.
 - Now this is a bit of a different response from Jesus than what took place before.
 - Jesus told the man who had legions of demons possessing him at one point to go throughout the Decapolis and tell them about what was done.
 - Now it seems like the tone has changed and something else is happening here. Why is this the case?
 - We see this similar silencing of the Jewish leper regarding what miraculous thing Jesus had done in Mark 1:44-45.
 - This means of a "call for silence" was intended for a reason and that reason was to keep the main thing the main thing.
 - In other words, the purpose was for those who experienced what had happened to sit and think about what had happened.
 - Or recognize the reality that what just happened could only be accomplished by God coming to meet us here.
 - As I have said before, "Demonstration leads to Revelation".
 - It would be because of the Jewish leper who failed to listen to Jesus that there became a large inquiry regarding Jesus' ministry that was eventually leading to further escalation of His death – possibly pre-maturely.
 - The question that we must ask ourselves is: "Would this inquiry lead them to know who Jesus truly is as the Jewish Messiah who would come to make all things new (Messianic Kingdom) and provide salvation by means of faith in His Person and Work to those who believed, or would they simply see Him as an amazing miracle worker?"
 - May we not rush too quickly past this point and that is: Many people seek Jesus for what He can do for them rather than experiencing His goodness and responding to Him in obedience.

- Verse 36 mentions that there is a sense in which Jesus had repeatedly given the command of silence, yet the men continued in overwhelming awe telling those they knew.
 - The word “utterly astonished” in the Greek is the word *hyperperissos* (Hyper-per-issos). It means even beyond an extreme degree.
 - So the more that Jesus told them to tell no one, the more they proclaimed.
 - It's like the excited kid who tells their friends about the new toy they received but yet can't hear the parent's instruction upon their arrival to the birthday party.
- So where Jesus is trying to be discreet in His travels and further teach His disciples, through His compassion for others, it creates a new crowd of people who hear about Him and what He has done.
 - The work in which Jesus has performed for this one man in a private setting has now made its way to a whole new crowd of people.
 - What was intended to be a private blessing to this man has now become a public proclamation about a man named Jesus and what He could do.
- I find it quite telling of the wonders and great things in which Jesus was accomplishing in this region and how the parallel between Verse 37 and Isaiah 35:6 are so strong.
 - Check out Isaiah 35:6 as we close tonight:

**Isaiah 35:6 Then the lame will leap like a deer,
And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy.
For waters will break forth in the wilderness
And streams in the Arabah.**

- Oh the joy in which these men experienced: To know that “He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”
 - This is only something in which Messiah could do.
 - This type of joy, this type of freedom, this type of healing, this type of power, is only something that comes from God.
 - The reality is that the same way in which these men were leaping and responding now was just how the very creation itself will respond in the consummation of the Messianic Kingdom on earth.
 - Much joy, much shouting, why because it will be Christ coming in His full Glory (at His Second Coming) having made a way for the lame and the lonely, the sick and the shut in, the lost and the weary.
 - And it will have been through the compassion of Christ in His first coming by way of the passion of Christ that those who trusted in Him by Faith will accompany Him in the Kingdom that is to come!
 - One question that would come about is: “If word traveled fast before about Jesus from one man encountering His compassion, how many more from this healing would come to inquire about Christ?”
 - In one way, Jesus' name and fame is increasing in the area, yet with that

comes further inquiry and persecution from the religious leaders.

- What was supposed to be a time of rest for Jesus and His disciples turned into more ministry.
- Well it would only be a matter of time now that shortly after this event, that Mark will lead the reader into the next revealing event – the feeding of the 4,000.
- Let's Pray.

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Mark - Lesson 8A

Chapter 8:1-10

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- As we move into Chapter 8 of Mark, we find ourselves, still, in Gentile territory.
 - Up to this point, Jesus and His disciples have been in the area for some time.
 - That journey began in Tyre with the Syrophoenician woman whose child was cruelly demon possessed.
 - It was through this woman's faith in Jesus, recognizing His unique title as the "Son of David" that she goes home to find her daughter had been healed.
 - From there, the text told us that Jesus and His disciples took a few days journey around Sidon to the region of the Decapolis.
 - You might recall, this was the region where Jesus healed a man possessed by a legion of demons (Mark 5:1-20).
 - Only this time, Jesus is now met by a man who was both deaf and mute.
 - We witnessed Jesus showing this man compassion by meeting his needs through healing him.
 - What made this healing so unique, amongst the others, was that Jesus used His saliva – something He hadn't done until now.
 - It was at the conclusion of that healing that the man and the crowd left with overwhelming joy at the miraculous healing.
 - Although, Jesus cautioned the men not to tell anyone, because of the nature of the healing, the men could not contain themselves and spoke of the mighty work all around.
 - Tonight, we will find ourselves in a separate event within the same region, yet with the similar circumstances from a previous miracle in Mark 6.
 - And what we will discover is this event is not just a demonstration of the compassion of our Savior, but a teaching moment for the disciples to have compassion for those around them while moving closer to understanding the Kingdom Program.
 - If we were to outline tonight's teaching, it would be structured in the following way:
 - 1. The Compassion of Jesus
 - 2. The Provision from Jesus
 - 3. The Satisfaction in Jesus
 - And what you may discover in tonight's lesson is that this teaching moment is not just for the disciples, but it is necessary for every believer and every church, today.
 - I want to simply title our teaching tonight: "The Feeding of the 4,000: Even me and Even You"
 - Open your bibles and meet me in Mark 8:1-10 and let's start by reading the text together.

Mark 8:1 In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and *said to them,

Mark 8:2 "I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat.

Mark 8:3 If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from a great distance.”

Mark 8:4 And His disciples answered Him, “Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?”

Mark 8:5 And He was asking them, “How many loaves do you have?” And they said, “Seven.”

Mark 8:6 And He *directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people.

Mark 8:7 They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well.

Mark 8:8 And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces.

Mark 8:9 About four thousand were there; and He sent them away.

Mark 8:10 And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

- Let’s Pray.
- This week, after dropping off my kids to school, I stopped for some tea at Starbucks, a coffee and tea shop.
 - While waiting for my tea, I sat down to do some work and reading.
 - While working, I noticed in my periphery a lady in the corner of the store sitting on the couch gazing at some pictures on the wall.
 - Some time passes and I now have my drink, and continue working.
 - However, I notice, still in the same seat, in the same position, the woman on the couch.
 - Still no drink, no food – just her wrapped in a blanket of some sort.
 - Soon a gentleman comes in, places his order, and sits down next to the woman at a table.
 - A few minutes pass by and while working I hear the man ask the woman if she has eaten.
 - He proceeds to escort her to the counter, has her give her order, pays for it and returns to his seat.
 - And all the while in my mind, I ask myself: “How did you miss that?!”
 - There had been at least 15 people who had gone in and out for their orders and it didn’t dawn on me or anyone there to ask a simple question:
 - “Ma’am, do you have a need?”
 - Needless to say, I left embarrassed and convicted because I had overlooked a need because I was so focused and fixated on my own stuff.
 - Yet, in that conviction I could feel the grace of the Lord remind me that there is always opportunity to find a need and meet it.
 - It will simply require me to look beyond myself and “keep my eyes open”.

- We are going to witness Christ demonstrate great compassion in the feeding of the 4,000 while at the same time see the disciples' dismissal of the need.
 - Although the disciples have been walking with Christ for some time, there is much more training to be done and for them to see what Christ is preparing for them to do.
- Let's see how Christ compassionately corrects the disciples while lovingly leading them in the process.
 - Let's begin, pick me up again at verses 1-3.

Mark 8:1 In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and *said to them,

Mark 8:2 "I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat.

Mark 8:3 If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from a great distance."

- Mark begins with this transition to the next chapter of events by using the phrase "In those days".
 - With a start like this, it begs the question: "What days is Mark referring to here? What has occurred within this period of time?"
 - As we discovered, 2 significant events have occurred within the last chapter alone and in both contexts they have taken place in a predominantly Gentile region.
 - And based upon the most recent context we find ourselves in geographically, it makes sense to assume that we are still somewhere within the region of the Decapolis.
 - Notice that within this "period of time", Mark denotes there is a **large crowd** that has been following Jesus during His time there.
 - The question that we should ask ourselves is: "Where did this large crowd come from?"
 - Maybe it could be assumed that due to the healing of the Syrophoenician woman and the deaf and mute man, that word traveled fast regarding Jesus' miraculous works.
 - If this is to be true, then Jesus' ministry is gaining more traction.
 - Now if you have been tracking with us for the past few teachings, you might be thinking: "How is it that Jesus' healing in the Decapolis has garnered such following?"
 - According to Mark's account, there is only 2 indications of healings up to this point.
 - Now, we could make generalized assumptions, or we could look in the text and find the answer to the "**how**".
 - We need look no further than Matthew's gospel in which clarifies this "**cause**" of immense following of Jesus in the Decapolis.

- This is what Matthew 15:29-31 states:

Matthew 15:29 Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there.

Matthew 15:30 And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them.

Matthew 15:31 So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

- Matthew's account mentions these events having occurred after the healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter.
 - **So it appears the very passing and presence of Jesus in the region continues to grasp the attention of many who were in need.**
 - What is most interesting regarding Jesus' healing journey throughout the Decapolis is, as verse 31 mentions, the people were **"glorifying the God of Israel"**.
 - This word "glorified" is the Greek word *doxazo* which means "To positively acknowledge, recognize, or esteem one's character, nature, and attributes."
 - We can't move past this too quickly because Matthew's mention of the people "glorifying the God of Israel" points to a critical theological theme.
 - **It helps the reader understand that this Gentile crowd recognized Jesus' unique Person and Power.**
 - But beyond that the people were connecting the blessing in which they were receiving in that day with these promises found in the Hebrew Scriptures.
 - One could only surmise that they were coming to this conclusion beyond simply seeing Jesus do these miracles. Was He teaching as well? Potentially!
 - I say potentially because Mark mentions in verse 2 that the people had been following Jesus for some time – as they had been with Him now for about three days.
 - The text continues by stating that the people's resources have run low during their journey with Jesus.
 - In response to their needs, Jesus shows compassion by preparing to supply and fully satisfy their needs.
 - Understand, with following Jesus, there was no itinerary, per se. There could have been a change at a moment's notice.
 - "Today we are going here and tomorrow we are going here."
 - So this crowd had to pick up quickly and would faithfully follow Jesus to His next assignment.
 - **In other words, the people simply want to be where Jesus is because where His compassion is seen, there His grace is found.**
 - However, watching from a distance are the disciples observing the compassion that Jesus is showing the Gentile people.

- This compassion in which Jesus has for the people is that Greek word *splanchnizomai* (splanchniz-ome). This “deep within the bowel” sympathy for those in need.
 - **It’s the same word in which Jesus uses in Mark 6 in the feeding of the 5,000.**
- It’s at this moment that Jesus makes known, **verbally**, to His disciples that He has compassion for the people.
 - Well, this is different! Because this is the first time in which Jesus lets His disciples know **how He felt** regarding the Gentile people.
 - Why would Jesus need to tell the disciples **how He feels first** before He moves to meet the need?
 - This explanation requires that we recall a detail from the feeding of the 5,000.
- In Mark 6, **we see that the disciples verbally** recognized the need to let the people go to eat in a timely manner.
 - **Yet they failed to realize that Christ was able to provide the means by which they needed to be sustained in that desolate place as He had provided for them in their first mission trip.**
- But now we have Jesus, in the feeding of the 4,000, addressing the needs of the people which will lead to another grand meal for the multitudes.
 - The question at this point becomes: “What is the cause for Jesus’ compassion towards the crowd to be made known **vocally**?”
- In the feeding of the 5,000 **the disciples** speak up and have something to say, however in the feeding of the 4,000, they have nothing to contribute in the conversation until asked “how many loaves are available”.
 - **Why is this the case? It all goes back to the cultural conflict of the day.**
- Remember, the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles is a strained situation to say the least.
 - So imagine at this point, the Gentiles are following Jesus around the Decapolis like puppies behind their Master – “waiting for the crumbs to fall” (Are you seeing what Mark is painting here?)
- All the while there is this festering ugliness within the hearts of the disciples.
 - So how do you grasp the attention of the disciples to get them to see what you see and get the purpose of the mission? You give a verbal clue to make known the point.
- **Where the disciples’ compassion meter is extremely low, Jesus sees it and redirects their focus.**
 - Jesus’ emphasis on compassion towards the crowd was a visible light for the disciples to see regarding the Kingdom Program and how the disciples would need compassion to carry out the mission.
 - Check out verses 4-5 on Jesus’ method of provision. The details may sound quite familiar.

Mark 8:4 And His disciples answered Him, “Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?”

Mark 8:5 And He was asking them, “How many loaves do you have?” And they said, “Seven.”

- By now you should be seeing more of a familiar pattern unfolding here from Mark 6.
 - And that familiar pattern is all the more revealed in what seems to be the frustration of the disciples regarding Jesus’ familiarity with the crowd. (Gentiles specifically).
 - But more importantly this similar story reveals, yet again, a lack of the disciples understanding of this Kingdom Program training.
 - It’s as if you want to give a good pop on the back of their necks in order for them to understand what Jesus is trying to get them to see.
 - Jesus uses the exact set up here in Mark 8 as He did in the feeding of the 5,000 in Mark 6.
 - And what this repetitive event does for the reader is present us with a key observation, and that is:
 - **The Lord’s use of a particular event becoming repetitive in the disciples’ lives is a means to teach them something that they are obviously missing.**
 - It’s evident that there was still some character development that needed to be accomplished in their lives as disciples/apostles.
 - Isn’t it funny how the Lord uses this same pattern of correction and instruction in our lives as well today. For example:
 - When the Lord is trying to correct some character issues in your life to conform you more to Christ; the more it comes up the more it shows you’re still missing it.
 - And Christ is fervently committed through the inward working of the Spirit of God to get you right where you need to be.
 - This reality should be deeply encouraging for us because it shows us that the Lord is compassionate towards us even in our lack of understanding.
 - The patience of Christ is evident towards His disciples in their moments of training.
 - I love what Paul states in 1 Corinthians 13:4-6. Check out the text.

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

1 Corinthians 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

1 Corinthians 13:6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

1 Corinthians 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- So in a loving draw towards compassion, Jesus appeals to the disciples once again.

- He proceeds by asking them “How many loaves do **you** have?”
- Don’t miss this small yet significant detail.
- Remember, it is at the first feeding that the disciples searched through the crowd for what they could find.
 - Now the disciples are called to search among themselves for the very resources that Jesus would use to provide for the people.
 - Have you ever heard the saying: “Kill them with kindness”. There is definitely some truth to that statement.
- What better way to learn compassion towards others who you disregard or don’t get along with and vice versa, than by giving them the last of what you have for the sake of them benefiting?
 - Understand that sacrifice is a defining attribute of those who claim to be followers of Christ.
 - We can be sacrificial because of witnessing the greatest sacrifice – Christ dying on the cross for our sins.
 - 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us this sacrificial truth:

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- Again, this is training ground and leadership lessons being taught to the disciples while in training for the Kingdom Program, yet they still aren’t getting it.
 - By this time, many people would have given up on these 12 men because it seems that their rate of retention is quite low, yet Christ is committed to these men.
 - In Philippians 1:6 Paul tells us this:

Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

- Now before we move on, I want to draw your attention to some numerical details.
 - You may be noticing that between the two feedings (Mark 6 and Mark 8) that the values of some of the items have changed.
 - In one way, this speaks to the validity of Mark’s account as the feeding of the 4,000 being a **separate event** from the feeding of the 5,000.
 - But secondly, it brings about some key theological implications to the forefront.
 - We will see in our last section of the text tonight what these theological implications are. Check out verses 6-10:

Mark 8:6 And He *directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people.

Mark 8:7 They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He

ordered these to be served as well.

Mark 8:8 And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces.

Mark 8:9 About four thousand were there; and He sent them away.

Mark 8:10 And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

- We continue to see the feeding of the multitude playing out as expected at this point, but as we mentioned, there are some variations.
 - Notice in Mark 8, Jesus tells the crowd to “recline on the ground” just as He instructed the crowd in Mark 6.
 - However, notice the difference in description of “grounds” in both passages. Mark 6 speaks to the people reclining on green grass, whereas Mark 8 speaks to the people reclining on “the ground”.
 - You might be asking: “What’s the point of making this detail known?”
 - If you recall our teaching on the Feeding of the 5,000 in Mark 6, the “green grass” detail contained significant ties to the Hebrew scriptures.
 - The connection we drew was an interesting parallel between Moses and Jesus – **Jesus being the greater/better Moses**.
 - It was Christ who provided the **abundance of bread** in which surpassed Moses’ provision.
 - At this point, we are forced to juxtapose the two feeding events to see what Mark is showing us, by the leading of the Spirit.
 - In one way, we can see a clear distinction between the Children of Israel and the Gentile people.
 - And I will be as so bold to say that this distinction here addresses, head on, the improper teaching that the church somehow replaces Israel.
 - That is known as Replacement/Covenant Theology and is unbiblical.
 - God has a plan and purpose for both Israel (nationally) to know Him and for the Gentiles to be blessed by God through the Jewish Messiah.
 - The blessing for the Gentiles (non-Jew) is that by God’s grace we can be recipients of salvation found only in Christ by faith.
 - Mark continues in verse 6 by stating that Jesus takes the 7 loaves from the disciples, and both breaks it and blesses it.
 - Now what may be missed here, if not carefully observing the text, is that the blessing over the meals are different.
 - Where Jesus prays the Jewish blessing over the bread in Mark 6, Jesus gives a simple “thanksgiving” here in Mark 8.
 - Again, signifying the fact that although both groups are distinctly different, they are both partakers of this gift of salvation as “One in Christ”.
 - **And again this not based upon their merit, but solely upon faith in Christ alone.**
 - It’s after the blessing of the food that the disciples distributed the food to the

people.

- Not only will the Apostles pass out the bread to the Gentiles in the immediate context, but they will ultimately share the “bread of life” (gospel) with the Nations in a missiological effort.
- Check out the reaction of the Gentiles after they have eaten.
- Mark states not only were the Gentiles satisfied through the provision of Christ, but that there was an “abundance of leftovers”.
 - Within the feeding of the 4,000, the text mentions that there were 7 large baskets full of broken pieces.
 - We will see the significance of these numbers momentarily.
- So it’s at the end of this meal that Jesus sends the people away and departs with His disciples to “the district of Dalmanutha (Dal-ma-nutha)”
 - The district of Dalmanutha is believed to be within the vicinity of Magdala.
 - However, when you read through Matthew’s gospel, we see in verse 39 of Chapter 15 that when Jesus and the disciples left, that they went to “the region of Magadan”
 - With three different names mentioned, many critics have suggested that this account couldn’t be accurate.
 - Others suggest that Mark was not familiar with the regions and therefore couldn’t get this detail right.
- Friends, the critics couldn’t be far from the truth.
 - Within the last ten years, UK Archeologist discovered Dalmanutha, a town dating back more than 2,000 years.
 - **It was in fact discovered on the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee in Israel’s Ginosar valley.**
- I believe this further proves the fact that Mark is the first Gospel written, because Mark gives us some precise details and location as to where Jesus and the disciples sailed to amongst other things.
 - Jesus and His disciples will now be headed back to the Jewish side of the Galilee.
- **What Mark is doing here is laying, very methodically, this visual aid of the Kingdom Program and how the Gospel message would eventually go forth.**
 - Lastly, I want to show us a summary breakdown chart of the two feeding accounts (Mark 6 and Mark 8).
 - Notice the similarities and differences, yet how it all paints a beautiful tapestry of God’s promises and redemptive plan through history.

Scripture Ref.	Event:	Feeding of the 5,000	Feeding of the 4,000
Mk 6:30-44, Mk.8:1-10	Crowds Following	Jewish	Gentile
Mk.6:31, Mk 8:4	Location	Desolate Place	Desolate Place
Mk.6:34, Mk 8:2	Compassion towards the crowd: Reason?	"...they were like sheep without a shepherd"	They had needs
Mk.6:36-38, Mk 8:2-4	Recognition of the needs	The disciples speak to the late hour and need for the people to eat in a timely manner	Jesus acknowledges the needs of the people
Mk. 6:38, Mk.8:5	# of loaves and fish	5 barley loaves and 2 fish	7 loaves and "some fish"
Mk.6:42, Mk.8:8	Provision from the meal	"all ate and all were satisfied"	"and they ate and were satisfied"
Mk.6:43, Mk.8:8	# Basket of leftovers	12 baskets (kophinos)	7 baskets (spyris)

- We can sum up Jesus' two feedings of the crowds in two points:
 - **1. Jesus came to Israel first, not only.**
 - Meaning, Jesus came for Israel, but also for the world and ultimately it will be the Church that maintains this missional focus. (Romans 1:16)
 - When I say world here this is not to mean geographically, but rather ethnically.
 - The Jewish people weren't opposed to ministering to others around the world, they were simply focused on ministering to other Jews.
 - As we have seen throughout these teachings, Jesus is wanting His disciples to embrace faith shown from whoever presents it through the response of the Gospel.
 - The disciples held the Syrophoenician woman's ethnicity against her as we witnessed in Matthew's gospel, her being called a Canaanite woman.
 - What they failed to realize was this Gentile woman was worthy of mercy just as much as the next Jew.
 - God's grace reaches beyond our faults and meets us right where we are.
 - We see this reality also imbedded in the numbers of the miracles themselves.
 - In the first miracle, the feeding of the 5,000, the number 5 in scripture means grace.
 - And lo and behold what was Jesus teaching these men during their time in Decapolis: "How to love and show compassion towards others!"
 - In the second miracle, the feeding of the 4,000, the number 4 in scripture is representative of the whole world, in the sense of "Nations"/"Nationalities."
 - This ultimately was showing the disciples that your ministry and training

is not just for those in your ethnic group, but it goes out to the world.

- **And it would be through the Church that the world would be evangelized, hear the gospel and do the work/deeds Christ called her to accomplish.**
- Isn't it fascinating that in Matthew 28, Jesus commands the disciples to "Go therefore and make disciples of all Nations."
- That word "Nations" in the Greek is *ethnos*. In other words, go out amongst the non-Jewish world and tell them about the Gospel.
- And in your sharing the Gospel and making it known, make disciples – make students for My Glory.
- **2. When the Lord teaches a lesson, it would behoove us to watch carefully and listen closely.**
 - We often hear people say that they graduated from the school of "hard knocks" or that life is a good teacher – and in a way it is.
 - However, the objective of tests and trials is not to stay stuck in the same trial as a cycle.
 - But rather, it is key that you learn what God is teaching you in the trials and tests you face so that you don't have a new trial with the same lesson.
- The comforting thing in it all is when you find yourself in this cyclical test/trial, seek the Lord as to what you are missing so that you may pass the test.
 - As we have eyes for eternity remember that this life is simply preparation for the next.
 - Are you serving compassionately now?
 - Are you working well to the glory of God, now?
 - Are you loving your neighbor well even if they don't vote like you?
 - There are needs all around and the greatest need that all have is to know the Gospel.
 - As Charles Spurgeon said in his book, "The Soul Winner":

"I believe that much of the secret of soul-winning lies in having bowels of compassion, in having spirits that can be touched with the feeling of human infirmities."

- Let's Pray.

Citation:

- Bailey, p. 80.



Mark - Lesson 8B

Chapter 8:11-21

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- At this point in the journey of our study through the Gospel of Mark, you should be sensing a building momentum.
 - Last week, we walked through the feeding of the 4,000 and Jesus' compassion upon the Gentile people in the region of the Decapolis.
 - We witnessed His compassion for the people, His provision for the people, and lastly, arguably the most important, the reality that they could find full satisfaction within the Person of Jesus Christ.
 - This all along has been Mark's point in his account – that Jesus is the Messiah in whom the people have been waiting for and desperately need.
 - The key for the disciples at this time is for they themselves to recognize this truth that has made itself visibly known.
 - However, as we have been witnessing, up to this point, the disciples have yet to recognize the identity of Christ and His mission.
 - It would be here in tonight's teaching that Jesus will make explicitly known, the reality of the disciples' misunderstanding of who He is and why He has come.
 - We will witness that the hardness of their hearts is a result of their lack of spiritual awareness causing them not to see.
 - **The disciples' eyes will either be opened to the truth of who God because He will make Himself known, or they will remain hardened.**
 - And it is only through and by the illumination of the Spirit in which moves men from spiritual blindness and unbelief to seeing truth clearly.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be: "Do you still not understand?"
 - With that being said, meet me in Mark 8:11-21, as we read the text together.

Mark 8:11 The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him.

Mark 8:12 Sighing deeply in His spirit, He *said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."

Mark 8:13 Leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side.

Mark 8:14 And they had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them.

Mark 8:15 And He was giving orders to them, saying, "Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

Mark 8:16 They began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread.

Mark 8:17 And Jesus, aware of this, *said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart?"

Mark 8:18 Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember,

Mark 8:19 when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They *said to Him, "Twelve."

Mark 8:20 "When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many

large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?” And they *said to Him, “Seven.”

Mark 8:21 And He was saying to them, “Do you not yet understand?”

- Let's Pray.
- There is an old Persian proverb that goes like this:

**He who knows not, and knows NOT that he knows not, is a fool; shun him.
He who knows not, and KNOWS that he knows not, is a child; teach him.
He who knows, and knows NOT that he knows, is asleep; wake him.
And he who knows, and KNOWS that he knows, is wise; follow him.**

- It would seem that we find the disciples in a place of spiritual disorientation, if you will, and needing to be awakened to the spiritual reality before them.
 - That is, the One in whom they have been walking with is Messiah, Emmanuel, God in flesh, having come to provide salvation for those who believe in Him and in Him they have all they need.
 - As the Kingdom Program continues to unfold and the pressure continues to mount from the religious leaders from Jerusalem, the clock continues counting down.
 - The question becomes, **when** will the disciples realize that Christ is the One is whom they all have been waiting for?
 - Are they blinded to truth or simply not connecting the dots? Let's find out.

Mark 8:11 The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him.

Mark 8:12 Sighing deeply in His spirit, He *said, “Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”

Mark 8:13 Leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side.

- It's not too long after Christ's arrival, that He and His disciples are **greeted with a hostile welcome** by the Pharisees in the region of Dalmanutha.
 - The text tells us that the Pharisees begin to argue with Jesus – what a welcome that is!
 - The original language actually suggest that the religious leaders came debating with Jesus, “seeking a sign from Heaven”.
 - The word “seeking” in Greek is *zeteo* which means to inquire for something.
 - It is this sense of demanding someone to prove something to you as it pertains to matters of identification.
 - For example, whenever my wife and I go to check in on our kids at school, I can give them my child's name, but the front office is going to require my ID to verify who I am.
 - So in a way, the religious leaders are demanding that Jesus “prove” to them who

He is by “performing another sign”.

- Well the problem here is Jesus has, in essence, provided His identification on multiple occasions both in front of these men and away from them.
- Jesus has performed countless miracles and, up to this point, two Messianic Miracles, specifically:
 - 1. The Healing of the Jewish Leper
 - 2. The Casting out of the Dumb demon
- We must also keep in mind that Jesus has been the subject of 2 Sanhedrin Investigations.
 - And the fact that 2 investigations have occurred speaks to the fact that there were many worthy claims speaking to His identity as Messiah.
- One could only imagine the annoyance and frustration that Jesus had towards these men.
 - He has provided them with sign after sign, miracle after miracle, and yet they demanded more.
 - However, the reality was that more proof of who Jesus was would only reveal the further blindness and unbelief of their hearts.
- **Truth made evidently known, consistently, yet failed to be acknowledged and responded to appropriately, is a rejection of the truth altogether.**
 - The reality was, even if Jesus had entertained their request for another sign, the Pharisees and Sadducees would have still ascribed that Power to Beelzebub (Satan) and not God Himself.
- You may recall this moment when Jesus healed the blind and deaf man (The Dumb Demon) in Matthew 12:22-24.
 - Even with the evidence provided and the proof made known about who Jesus was, their rejection of His work and the means by which that work was accomplished not only caused the offer of the Kingdom to be rescinded for that time, but that generation would not be forgiven.
 - Check out Matthew 12:22-24 quickly:

Matthew 12:22 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw.

Matthew 12:23 And all the people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?”

Matthew 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.”

- We will come back to this phrase, “this generation” soon.
 - So, in an effort not to entertain or engage in the Pharisees’ empty debate, Jesus poses a rhetorical question in **verse 12** after “sighing deeply”.
 - Now this word “sighing deeply” in Greek is a groan of intense and deep displeasure.
 - And this groan of deep displeasure is followed with the rhetorical question:

“Why does “this generation” seek for a sign?”

- In other words, Jesus could have performed more signs till He was blue in the face and yet those signs wouldn't be good enough for them.
- What was the cause of the religious leaders missing these signs and Christ's identity?
- Friends, this was the result of hardened hearts which resulted in Spiritual blindness and unbelief – a complete rejection and denial of truth.
 - These men were set in their ways, set in their type of teaching, while all at the same time, shepherding the children of Israel into that same darkness.
 - **In other words, there was no changing their minds through means of signs.**
- They were seeking a sign that confirmed their own Pharisaical positions and teachings.
 - They wanted truth interpreted in their own light and not the “Light of Truth”
- And it would be because of this reality that Jesus hits the Pharisees and Sadducees with this “mic drop” statement.
 - **“Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”**
 - Understand that this term “this generation” is speaking to a specific generation during a specific time.
 - **It is those who physically saw Jesus and witnessed His miracles and signs in that day – that is the generation spoken of here in context.**
- Now Jesus' statement here is quite telling, from the vantage point of Mark's Gospel.
 - Because it is in Matthew's gospel that we see an exception to **a sign** which is not provided in Mark's record.
 - Check out Matthew 16:1-4:

Matthew 16:1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.

Matthew 16:2 But He replied to them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’

Matthew 16:3 And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?

Matthew 16:4 An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.” And He left them and went away.

- So, where Mark mentions no sign will be given, Matthew's account says the only sign that will be given is **“the sign of Jonah”**.
 - Matthew and Luke's gospel provides detail as to the significance of **this sign** in which “this generation” should look for.
 - Check out Matthew 12:39-40:

Matthew 12:39 but he answered and said to them, "an evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;

Matthew 12:40 for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

- Now what is quite comical is **how** Jesus, in Matthew 16, leads up to the explanation of “the sign of all signs”, if you will.
 - He tells the Pharisees and Sadducees in few short words, “You have the ability to read and assess the weather based upon the patterns they see in the sky, but yet you can’t discern “the sign of the times”.”
 - **Now, the sign of the times simply pointed to the first coming of the Messiah.**
 - So, in other words, you are smart enough to predict the weather, yet unable to put one and two together to see that the very Messiah you have read about in the scriptures is standing right before you.
 - What becomes quite intriguing in this present reality, contextually, is that when Jesus did rise from the dead, those same religious leaders still refused to believe.
 - It was at this point that Jesus leaves them with that nugget to chew on and departs with His disciples to the other side – heading towards Bethsaida (Mark 8:22).
 - Before we depart from this point, there is a critical question to be asked here and that is:
 - **In instances where people do not respond to Truth (Gospel), what is the proper perspective for the believer to have?**
 - If people reject the gospel that you share with them day in and day out, don’t wear your feelings on your shoulder – **you aren’t responsible for that person’s response to the Gospel.**
 - **God is solely responsible for those in whom will respond to His truth and those who will not.**
 - There is no need to engage in endless debates when the reality is some will take time, according to God’s timetable to respond while some will never accept the truth of the Gospel.
 - For many this is a hard pill to swallow, but the reality is it is biblical.
 - Let’s keep moving. Check out verses 14-16.

Mark 8:14 And they had forgotten to take bread, and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them.

Mark 8:15 And He was giving orders to them, saying, “Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”

Mark 8:16 They began to discuss with one another the fact that they had no bread.

- It's after Jesus and the disciples depart from Dalmanutha that Mark leads into **verse 14** in a peculiar way.
 - It seems as if Mark wants the reader to notice that with the disciples leaving in haste, that they weren't fully equipped for their travel.
 - And in this case, their food supply was limited.
 - Notice how limited they were – the text tells us they had “no more than one loaf”
 - The last time that bread was brought into discussion was the feeding of the 4,000 and now we see the discussion of bread back in the details.
 - We can surmise that with Mark's detail of bread here, off the cusp of the feeding of the 4,000, that there is a lesson of some sort on the horizon.
 - The question becomes: “What is this lesson in which Jesus is going to teach the disciples and how will it further impact the unfolding of the Kingdom Program and the sense of the disciples' development.
 - We will see this further unfold in verses 15-21.
 - After Mark's detail of the disciples' lack of planning, Jesus gives the disciples a heeded warning.
 - In verse 15 Jesus gives the disciples orders.
 - Understand that these instructions in which Jesus gave were beyond simply suggestions – these were orders.
 - The word for “giving orders” in Greek is *diastello* which means “to order precisely and clearly – leaving nothing to implication”.
 - In other words, Jesus wanted to be as succinct as possible in His cautioning the disciples of what seems to a reoccurring theme with them.
 - He tells them to “**Be Aware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod**”.
 - May I suggest that perhaps the use of the term **leaven** and Mark's mention of the disciples “**forgetting to bring bread**” are intricately interconnected?
 - Jesus' warning to them was, in a sense, a red flag for the disciples that they too were “missing the obvious signs” just like the Pharisees.
 - The only difference between the disciples and the religious leaders is that Jesus has handpicked these men to journey, personally, with Him as Apostles.
 - **This detail simply confirms for the reader that the disciples have not been understanding who Jesus was.**
 - But we also see another element at play and that is the mentioning of the leaven of Herod.
 - For us to understand what Jesus is saying to the disciples at this time, we need to first understand the term “leaven”.
 - Leaven, in scripture is a picture of sin and “a corrupting influence.”
 - Within the Mosaic Law, leaven is often connected to the gradual increase of sin and its corrupting hold upon the hearts of men.
 - Matthew 16:12 and Luke 12:1 provides us with context as to a definitive

understanding of what the leaven of the Pharisees is referring to in context.

Matthew 16:12 Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

- Here is what Luke 12:1 tells us:

Luke 12:1 Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

- So, where Matthew’s gospel tells us that the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees is their teaching, Luke’s gospel tells us that the leaven is their hypocrisy.
 - **1.** We witnessed in **Mark 7** that the sin of the Pharisees was seeking the Kingdom by means of self-righteousness and legalism, all wrapped up in the name of Pharisaic Judaism (man-made religion)
 - These men flaunted the importance of exterior righteousness yet were inwardly corroding and dead inside because they did not obey God.
 - And it was their leadership and teachings that were taught as “Law” to the children of Israel.
 - It is no wonder that Israel struggled with understanding who their Messiah truly was, because the Pharisees had their own Messiah in mind and Jesus didn’t fit that mold.
 - We even witnessed some of this Messianic confusion from a few places in the Gospels such as:
 - Nathaniel in (John 1:46) stating “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”
 - The crowd’s discount of Jesus as Messiah referring to Him as “Joseph’s son or the carpenter’s son” in (Luke 4:22)
 - Or even John the Baptist’s confusion regarding what Messiah’s first coming would truly look like when he asked if he needed to look for another: (Luke 7:20)
 - **2.** The sin of the Sadducees was seeking the Kingdom of worldliness by wealth, status, and Power.
 - This sin of dependency upon the need for social status and power were **never** the means of one entering into the Kingdom.
 - Deliverance is not going to be found in your 401K investments and retirement plans, or even who you vote for.
 - **But rather recognizing that your only true source of security and hope is found in Christ alone.**
 - We now find ourselves at the last-mentioned leaven category, and that is the “leaven of Herod”.
 - Interestingly enough, Mark’s Gospel is the only one that mentions the “leaven

of Herod”.

- And this ultimately begs the question: “What is the leaven of Herod?”
- Since we know that the leaven is not connected to any “physical bread” regarding these groups, but rather their “spiritual condition”, we must examine our immediate context regarding Herod.
 - Well this brings us back to none other than Herod Antipas and his dealings with John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ.
- We are aware at this point that John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod Antipas because of Herod’s failure to respond to truth.
 - You may recall, I mentioned the phrase “flirting with the truth” some time ago.
 - And what we found interesting about Herod Antipas is he had a love/hate relationship with truth.
- Herod Antipas’ primary reason for protecting John the Baptist from being killed was based on two things:
 - 1. His fear of the people and a potential civil unrest.
 - 2. His fear of John as a man of God.
- However, Herod’s means to show face before the commanders of his region and wanting to uphold a publicly made, faulty oath, resulted in the death of John the Baptist.
 - 3. So what we see from the “leaven of Herod” is this danger of choosing comfort of societal order and pleasing man’s bottom line versus truly responding to truth.
- Friends, here is the reality: We see this type of leaven especially found in many churches and in believers today.
 - For the sake of more butts in chairs in the church and more money in the offering plate, the message of the Gospel becomes compromised to be more palatable for the world to receive.
 - More comfort and less conviction is becoming the way of many churches with Pastors who began in sound orthodoxy but over time compromised for whatever reason.
 - And I believe there is a key observation that should be recognized here and that is that the human heart, apart from being regenerated, will always seek its own desires.
 - In other words, the only way in which spiritual blindness can be resolved is if the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of that blind heart to hear and receive what is being shown.
 - And for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, to guard your hearts against the mentioned leavens.
- And what a timely word from the Lord regarding believers guarding themselves and being mindful of these things.
 - Because the slightest bit of leaven can leaven the whole lump.
 - Check out what Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 5:5-7:

1 Corinthians 5:5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1 Corinthians 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?

1 Corinthians 5:7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

- The scene that Mark is beginning to paint for the reader becomes this juxtaposition between being Spiritually Blind versus Spiritually Aware.
 - And it seems as if the disciples are struggling with becoming more spiritually aware even with being in close proximity to Christ.
 - It seems that the clarity of what Jesus is trying to show the disciples is still out of sight and out of mind because in **verse 16** the disciples began discussing the fact that they had no bread.
 - At this point, I can imagine Jesus sitting on the boat looking at these men saying “And this is what I’m working with?!”
 - Where the disciples are concerned about their physical lack and need, Jesus is trying to lead them to become more spiritually aware and embrace the truth they are seeing.
 - The success of these men in the Kingdom Program is not going to be based upon their abilities, plans, and personal efforts.
 - Rather, their work and mission for Christ regarding the Kingdom Program requires that they operate with Spiritual eyes to see the Spiritual things.
 - But most importantly through total dependence upon Christ and His ability!
 - What did Matthew say in Matthew 6:33:

Matthew 6:33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

- After hearing their concerns on the physical lack, Jesus retaliates with a firm rebuke to their missing the point, yet again.
 - Check out verses 17-21 again:

Mark 8:17 And Jesus, aware of this, *said to them, “Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart?”

Mark 8:18 Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember,

Mark 8:19 when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?” They *said to Him, “Twelve.”

Mark 8:20 “When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?” And they *said to Him, “Seven.”

Mark 8:21 And He was saying to them, “Do you not yet understand?”

- Can you imagine Jesus at this point: His hands raised, head tilted, intently looking at each disciple as if to say, “Really, dude?!”
 - What I don’t want us to miss here is the fact that Jesus is aware of the disciples’ lack of understanding.
 - I find that to be quite comforting because the reality is, Jesus knows exactly where I am in my walk with Him and at the same time, in Him, is everything I need.
 - The question becomes: **“Am I humble enough or aware enough in my walk with Him, to call upon Him knowing that He alone provides my needs?”**
 - And it must also go without saying that the only way in which one comes to **this** realization is if God has made His provisions and truth known.
 - It is this point in which Jesus makes known to the disciples that they are missing the point here.
 - This lesson had nothing to do with the bread supply that they had or the lack thereof.
 - **They could not yet see or understand that there were spiritual implications at play.**
 - As Dr. Edwards in his commentary on Mark states: **“Where the disciples are anxious about lack of bread, Jesus is anxious “concerned” about their lack of faith.”**
 - Where the disciples have been privileged as “insiders” to hear the parables explained...
 - Where they have been sent out by Jesus, two by two, with power in His name to share the news of the Kingdom...
 - Where they have seen Jesus heal the sick, and the lame, restore sight to the blind and the like...
 - Where the closer inner circle witnessed a child being raised from the dead...
 - Where they witnessed two separate feedings of over thousands of people eat off the little that was available...
 - **In all of that, they somehow still struggled to see, hear, understand, and remember that all these signs were accomplished by the One promised of Old.**
 - These miracles that were meant to serve as a message for the disciples, pointing them to the fact that Jesus was the Promised Messiah, turned to be missed messages because of their hardened hearts.
 - It’s like your professor saying you have a 30-question quiz and it’s open book, open notes, and phone a friend – Are you going to use the resources you’ve got or not?
 - And here they are in the boat once again trying to figure out who missed the memo for more bread for the boat.
 - The reality was, the disciples were suffering from the same issue the Pharisees

were, just in a different way.

- The Pharisees couldn't see or understand the signs of Christ because they were made spiritually blind and lacked divine illumination to understand.
- So, in their lack of illumination they responded in their ignorance and human ability.
- 1 Corinthians 2:14 Paul states the following:

1 Corinthians 2:14 But a natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

- Friends this is in fact why the Pharisees were seeking to trap Jesus in meaningless debate.
 - The reality is, a person who has not been turned on by God to the truth of God will not respond to the word of God.
 - And therefore truth becomes jarred and fashioned in their own way.
 - Now the disciples on the other hand were not able to understand Jesus' teaching and lessons because they weren't using what was made available to them.
 - In other words, they had spiritual eyes to see and ears to hear yet their thinking was still tied to worldly means and not heavenly means.
 - What we see is that Jesus' warning to the disciples to avoid the "leaven of the Pharisees and Herod" is the trap of worldly reason and rationale which is sin, and realize the heavenly manna that is found in the Person of Christ.
 - To have a true picture of Messiah requires one to abandon what they knew and were previously taught and embrace Messiah who is before them.
 - All of this is accomplished first by the Spirit making known the Son by opening your eyes so that you may see and understand.
 - Apart from the Spirit, it is impossible.
 - I want to show us a graphic of how the Spirit is at work and brings illumination to the hearts of men, as best I can.

Heart Condition:	Spiritual Blindness (Closed Heart)	Spiritual Awareness (Open Heart)
Response to Truth	Irresponsive	Receptive
Approach to Seeking Truth	Human Intellectualism and worldly arrogance	Humility and desperation
Conclusion about Truth	Rejects it	Responds to it

- Isn't it interesting how Jesus speaks about the Pharisees' ability to measure the weather, yet their lack of knowing the signs of the times?
 - In other words, one's intellect and skills, no matter how "spiritual" they think they are, are incapable of knowing the things of God unless God Himself makes it known to them.
 - As we approach **verse 21**, we arrive to a cliff-hanging moment.
 - Jesus ends this section of the text by asking a question: "Do you not yet understand?"
 - This section ends with a gripping question yet a sobering reality.
 - **That one can be so familiar with Christ yet not experience the fullness of Christ.**
 - The disciples have been walking with Him for some time and yet the very men, with the exception of Judas, who will be essential in the establishing of the Church still are a bit fuzzy on the main detail:
 - "Who is this man that even the wind and the seas obey Him?"
 - However, as they continue following Christ, their understanding of His coming, His mission, their mission and His purpose will become more defined and understood.
 - And as we will find out soon enough, what seems like a delay in the disciples' understanding of Christ and the Kingdom Program, will soon become clear.
 - My prayer for each of us tonight is that we caution ourselves in the same way Jesus cautioned His disciples:
 - Be not succumb to the trivial things of this world and what this life may bring, but rest upon the truth in which the Spirit has revealed in thee.
 - I want to end with the classic Hymn, "I know not why God's wondrous grace" written by Daniel Webster Whittle:

**I know not how this saving faith
To me He did impart**

**Nor how believing in His word
Wrought peace within my heart
I know not how the Spirit moves
Convincing me of sin
Revealing Jesus through the Word
Creating faith in Him.**

- ◦ All that we need for life and godliness is found in Christ alone and His Word alone reveals the greatest gift known to man.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 8C

Chapter 8:22-26

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- Tonight, we arrive to one of the climatic points of Mark's account – the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida.
 - You will find that Mark's gospel is the only gospel record with this healing in it and we will see why this healing is so "Markan".
 - What we have encountered up to this point, as a quick summary, is there is a growing rejection of Messiah from the religious leaders.
 - We mentioned that the failure of seeing who Jesus truly was, was rooted in the religious leaders instructing in the "commands of men" versus "the commands of God."
 - The teaching of that time was centered in and upon what we have noted as Pharisaic Judaism. (The Oral Law)
 - This was a conglomerate of additional rules, obstacles, and manipulated interpretations of the Hebrew Scriptures taught as "authoritative".
 - Therefore, the commands of God were not taught by the leaders of that day.
 - Jesus, if you remember, spoke of the religious leader's rejection of God's instructions in Mark 7:9.

Mark 7:9 He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition."

- ◦ Ultimately, the disregard of teaching God's commands and instructions was rooted in the wicked hearts of these men, as they were blinded to truth.
- You may recall in Mark 7, Jesus and His disciples are confronted by the Pharisees for their failure in abiding by these "man-made" rules.
 - And Jesus calls these men out. Turn quickly to Mark 7:6-7:

Mark 7:6 And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

**'This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far away from Me.**

**Mark 7:7 'But in vain do they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'**

- So Jesus makes known to the crowd, His disciples, and the Pharisees that the things you say or do doesn't make one right with a Holy God.
 - But rather, their hearts needed to be made anew. This is a work that only Sovereign God can do from the inside out.
 - So this has been our build up thus far: Man must encounter Divine illumination to see that one must be made right internally to receive the Kingdom.
 - Then we witnessed Jesus' warning to His disciples regarding their hardened hearts which we came to understand in this context simply meant "lack of understanding".
 - To put it plainly, the disciples, although they had faith in Christ, did not fully

comprehend His Identity and purpose regarding His mission.

- Well that begs a question: “How could it be that the disciples have been walking with the Messiah for the time they were with Him yet still miss the truth of His purpose and first coming?
- It would seem as if they were somehow blinded to this reality and needed clarity on the matter.
- We then came to find out that this blindness of who Jesus is, from the people, was reinforced by the misunderstandings of the identity of the Messiah by the religious leaders.
 - They were expecting a conquering King who would overtake the Roman government and free them from political oppression.
 - The Pharisees were anticipating a Messiah who would endorse their Pharisaical teachings of the Mishnah.
 - Yet no one was anticipating a Messiah who would come to die for the sake of the sins of the people (Isaiah 53/Psalm 22) – what they truly needed, what humanity needed.
- Therefore, Jesus attributes the blindness of the people to what He describes as the “Leaven of the Pharisees” and the “Leaven of Herod”.
 - If you want more details regarding the particulars of the Leaven, I encourage you to watch or listen to our Mark 8B teaching.
 - Due to time, I will summarize what we learned from the leavens mentioned:
- We saw that the “Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod” were rooted in wrong teaching, hypocrisy, and self-righteousness, all under the guise of Pharisaic Judaism.
 - So with these power systems at play, governmentally, religiously, and superficially, what was required for the people to do upon encountering Jesus’ ministry was: completely abandon what they knew.
 - The people had to abandon the teachings and instructions of the Pharisees which were leading them further from the truth and they needed to turn to the Truth found in Christ and His teaching.
- This ability to turn to truth was in fact the message in which Jesus has been talking about for some time in the Galilee region.
 - And that message was that man needed to “Repent and Believe in the Gospel”
 - In other words, turn away from Pharisaic Judaism and this path of self-righteousness and receive the Kingdom by faith and not by works.
- This turning from one thing to another is what we understand as Repentance: Repentance is a change of mind or change of perspective about what one has taught.
 - The old must be abandoned and the new must be embraced. Plainly put: They must choose to embrace the Messiah in whom has made Himself known, plainly.
 - But as we have witnessed time and time again, some are responding in faith while others are rejecting even with seeing the evidence before them.
- And although the disciples have been walking with Jesus, their ability to see Christ

most clearly is, at this point, a bit dim or blurry if you will.

- So what we will see in this particular healing, which is unique to Mark's account, will be a foreshadowing as to how Christ will bring clarity to His identity and His purpose in His first coming.
- If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be: "Was blind, but now I see"
 - And what we will see tonight is how God takes unable, unqualified, broken men and women and brings them to see clearly who He is.
 - With that being said, I invite you to open up your bibles and meet me in Mark 8:22-26.

Mark 8:22 And they *came to Bethsaida. And they *brought a blind man to Jesus and *implored Him to touch him.

Mark 8:23 Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?"

Mark 8:24 And he looked up and said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around."

Mark 8:25 Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly.

Mark 8:26 And He sent him to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."

- Let's Pray.

Mark 8:22 And they *came to Bethsaida. And they *brought a blind man to Jesus and *implored Him to touch him.

- Well it's here that Mark records, after Jesus and the disciples' hostile encounter with the Pharisees and Sadducees in Dalmanutha, that they arrive to a town called Bethsaida.
 - If you remember, it was on this boat ride to Bethsaida that Jesus warns His disciples about being aware of the "Leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod."
 - This detail will be key as we witness the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida later tonight.
 - Now, Bethsaida was a town on the northern shores of the Galilee and was the home of Philip, Andrew, and Peter.
 - The name Bethsaida means "house of the fisher," and it's no surprise that the chief industry there was fishing.
 - It was in and around the area of Bethsaida that Jesus had performed several miracles for the people to witness for the means of seeing His Identity and Purpose.
 - Of these miracles performed were:
 - 1. Jesus walking on the water in Mark 6:42-52.
 - 2. The Feeding of the 5,000 which took place near the district of Bethsaida

in Luke 9:10-17.

- 3. And lastly, the healing of the blind man which we will be covering tonight.
- What's even more telling about the village of Bethsaida is they had quite an interesting encounter with Jesus' teaching ministry, along with 2 other cities.
 - We find in Matthew's gospel (Mt.11:21-24), that Jesus pronounced woe or judgment upon several cities for their unbelief and unrepentant hearts.
 - With the many miracles and signs performed in those cities, like the Pharisees, the people refused to see. Check out what Matthew 11:21-24 says:

Matthew 11:21 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Matthew 11:22 Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

Matthew 11:23 And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.

Matthew 11:24 Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.”

- So Matthew's account tells us that Bethsaida, Capernaum, and Chorazin were denounced and condemned for not repenting, having visibly seen the miraculous signs of God through His Messiah.
 - And in a way, this was the frustration in which Jesus makes known about the Pharisees as well as His own disciples.
 - We see the big issue come to a head in Mark 8:17-18. This is what the text reads:

Mark 8:17 And Jesus, aware of this, *said to them, “Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart?

Mark 8:18 Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember,

- Although the disciples had eyes to see, in a sense, because they walked with Jesus and were explained His many parables, they still didn't fully realize His true identity and purpose regarding His mission.
 - This lack of the disciples' spiritual awareness was caused by much misinformation about the Christ and what He would come to do.
 - As we discussed in prior teaching, with false messiahs that had come and Pharisaic Judaism that was on the rise, clarity had to be brought to make known who Christ truly was – and this would be a gradual feat.
 - These selected men would need to know, very clearly, the purpose of Jesus' mission and what He came to do.

- And it was only Jesus who could provide that clarity and that insight needed to see Him in His fulness of His Person and work.
- The disciples' reliance on what they thought they knew about Jesus or what they heard from others about Him had to be re-evaluated based upon what Jesus was showing them.
 - And friends, this becomes a crucial point to recognize as we minister and share the gospel with others.
 - We must show people and teach people the Christ of scripture and not a Christ of the times molded by the wishes and whims of society.
 - In other words, a Messiah not connected to scripture is no Messiah at all and Christ has made Himself clearly known both verbally and visually.
- So despite the great unbelief of those cities at that point in time, there seems to have been some who were drawn to Christ and were convinced of His identity.
 - I mention this because the text tells us in verse 22, that upon Jesus' arrival, a group of people brought a blind man to Him and implored Him to touch him.
 - There seems to be some sense of faith being exhibited here.
- I say that because Mark's use of language in the Greek suggests this.
 - The word "brought" in Greek is *phero* which means to aid in carrying or bringing someone somewhere with you accompanying them.
 - In other words, these men believed that Jesus was able to heal this man to the point that they were willing to carry him to Jesus.
- This sense of anticipation should remind you of the paralytic who was brought to Jesus by his friends and lowered from a roof to be healed by Jesus. (Mark 2:3)
 - It was there where the man not only received forgiveness of sins, but was healed of his ailment.
 - Again this is the healing power of Christ and the great demonstration of faith in the person of Jesus.
- So these men, in faith, carry this man or lead him towards Christ even with such great unbelief amongst the land.
 - And how comforting is it to know that even today with the rejection of truth and scripture increasing, that men and women are still brought near to Christ in faith!
 - It simply shows that as believers, we must remain faithfully committed to the preaching and teaching of scripture even in a dying world.
- So, we see Jesus here compassionately responding to the needs of this man with much mercy. Check out verses 23-26:

Mark 8:23 Taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes and laying His hands on him, He asked him, "Do you see anything?"

Mark 8:24 And he looked up and said, "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around."

Mark 8:25 Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and

was restored, and began to see everything clearly.

Mark 8:26 And He sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”

- With a loving and merciful response, Jesus takes the man by the hand and leads him out of the village to a private setting.
 - By now, you may be seeing a similar means of healing that Jesus uses with the man who was both deaf and mute (Mark 7:31-37)
 - He takes both the blind man and the deaf and mute man aside in a private manner. (Mark 7:33)
 - And what we are going to find here with Mark’s writing is his literary skills and emphasis on events and the actions of Christ are quite clever.
 - All of this again being prompted and led by the Spirit of God.
 - In a way, it seems as if these 2 miracles serve as illustrative bookends, reflecting the spiritual condition of the disciples.
 - From Mark 7:31 to Mark 8:26, it seems as if Mark is making this point of the cause or hinderance of the disciples’ “lack of understanding”, fully, Jesus’ Person and Purpose.
 - It begins with the healing of the deaf and mute man and now we find ourselves at the healing of the blind man.
 - Could it be that these two healings are foundational to the disciples’ problems, spiritually speaking? I do believe so.
 - In any case, we will see that Jesus will be the One in whom will provide the means by which understanding will become clear and their spiritual sight, even clearer.
 - There is now another question that arises in verse 23 where Jesus takes the man outside the village.
 - And that question is: “Why is it necessary for Jesus to take this man aside in order to bring the man’s sight back?”
 - Wouldn’t performing this miracle inside the village served as a better opportunity for others to see what He will do?
 - Keep in mind the recap from earlier: Another miracle from Jesus for this town would not have caused others to repent and place faith in Christ.
 - This was in fact what the religious leaders were asking Jesus in Dalmanutha, “Show us a sign from Heaven”.
 - These men’s minds were made up and there was no change of mind from those cities.
 - As a matter of fact, history tells us, according to the Woe’s Jesus pronounced, that those cities today are in ruins – a ghost town if you will.
 - All that lies there today in Bethsaida, Capernaum, and Chorazin are ruins of what was.
 - However, from that place, was a man that came to the realization that his only hope for sight and reorientation into human community was found in Christ alone.
 - Therefore, it only makes sense that this demonstration of Power would only

be done in private with those who recognized the uniqueness of Christ's person.

- As a side note, the needs of people seeking signs for the sake of proof to accept Jesus' claims or not, speaks further to their blindness and hardness of heart.
 - Friends, true repentance or change of mind, begins with recognizing that we are sinners in trouble with a Holy and Just God.
 - Repentance is what I consider to be that "rock bottom" moment.
 - It's where you realize that your attempts to get God's acceptance of you and your way versus His way, fail and that there is no other way but God's way.
- To put it plainly, God's means of judgment and holiness and righteousness are completely separate from our way.
 - The only way in which we can fully receive God's approval and be kept from His wrath is through the provision that He has provided and set forth.
 - And that provision that He has made for us is only found in Christ, the God-man, the Messiah – He alone can forgive sins and make us stand faultless before the throne of Grace.
- Secondly, we see Jesus taking the man aside in private because it shows this reality that the Lord reveals Himself personally to individuals.
 - In other words, your salvation in Christ is a personal experience between you and the Lord where you place faith in Christ.
 - Your mother, grandmother, aunties, uncles, nor your Pastor can initiate a relationship for you with God.
 - They can introduce you to the Gospel and walk the horse to water, as the old adage goes, but they can't make you drink.
 - To put it plainly, it requires Christ to personally reveal Himself to you by His Spirit.
- So as Jesus takes this man aside, we see yet another similar pattern of healing as He did with the mute and deaf man.
 - He uses spittle and lays His hands on the man's eyes (v.23)
- Now what you will find most remarkable to witness here is how Jesus goes about accomplishing this particular healing.
 - After Jesus puts His hands on the man's eyes, Jesus asks him, "Do you see anything?"
 - Well this is different! It is only here in Mark's gospel that we see Jesus ask a question of one in whom He has healed about the healing.
- Well this begs a question doesn't it: "What is the purpose of Jesus asking the question to the man?"
 - It is as if Jesus is choosing to do this healing in steps or phases in effort to show something.
- Understand that Jesus could have healed this man with a simple touch, or even a present or sent word, yet He chooses to do this healing in phases.
 - Clearly, there is something in this present situation that the disciples are to both see and understand at this point.

- And the point that is being shown here in the text is that this physical phase of healing is revelation of a lack of spiritual awareness for the disciples.
- Let's see what it is.
- In verse 24, Mark tells us the man's response to this first touch from Jesus. He said "I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around."
 - At first glance it seems like the man has gained partial sight!
 - He has just expressed a sense of the outline and forms of people moving around, yet not with much clarity.
 - It's like someone in need of their glasses trying to make out the signage that is 50 feet in front of them.
 - They see a sign there yet they don't know what it says.
- But before we move too quickly, there is a question that comes to mind: "How does this man who was blind, know what men and trees look like?"
 - Friends, one can only presuppose that this man, at one point, could see.
 - And what becomes quite telling is that the man now has "eyes to see but can not fully perceive who these figures are."
- It seems as if the current condition of the man is in sync with the very question that Jesus asked His disciples in Mark 8:18:
 - "Having eyes, do you not see?"
- The progressive healing of this man's physical eyes was the means by which the Lord would address the disciples' spiritual eyes.
 - They were not blinded, they simply needed to be given spiritual clarity.
 - This is why, when Peter mentions in next week's teaching that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus tells him this powerful statement:
 - "Flesh and blood did not reveal that to you, but my Father in Heaven did."
- What is so comforting here in the text is that God has not only provided partial sight to the man, but He will soon provide full sight.
 - And in the same way, where the disciples are a bit confused and fuzzy on Jesus' mission at the moment, there will be a time of full clarity.
 - The disciples had moved from non-understanding, to misunderstanding, but will eventually have complete understanding.
 - Check out verses 25 and 26.
- In verse 25, Mark tells us that Jesus proceeds to lay his hands on the man's eyes again.
 - And it's upon the second touch that the man receives full sight.
- When you intently look at this healing in its entirety, you begin to gain clarity as to what Jesus is foreshadowing regarding the disciples gradual spiritual clarity.
 - As well as how one comes to faith in Christ, today.
- Jesus, as we will find in next week's teaching, will provide for them that "first touch", in a way, by the Spirit.
 - They will see that Christ is in fact the Messiah. But what they will understand

is His purpose regarding His first coming.

- Isaiah 35:5 tells us this reality of truth in Christ first coming as well as this reality in His second coming for Israel (nationally) to receive their King.

**Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened
And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.**

- And this revelation will not be given based upon human willing and working, but rather through Divine illumination.
 - Friends the reality is, this is the only way in which you and I come to know Jesus.
 - The Holy Spirit opened your eyes to the truth of Christ.
 - And for some, this drawing ranges from an instant response to responding in faith to over a series of months or years.
 - Some of you may have heard the gospel, put it on the shelf and then revisited it later.
 - Others, it was through a series of events in which God gained your attention to see Him.
 - This divine illumination takes place on God's timetable, by God's drawing, by God's power!
 - Here is a quick pop quiz...if the disciples' first "touch" of clarity will be Peter's great confession, what will be their "second touch" – Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.
 - What mercy it is to receive this sight and to know that God has made Himself known to you that you may be saved through His death, burial, and resurrection.
 - Knowing the power of Christ and the richness of His love, one cannot stop but think of the words to this hymn:

**Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see.**

- Finally, we see in verse 26, that after Jesus heals the man, He sends the man home and tells him, "Do not even enter the village."
 - Again, why not becomes the question?
 - Simply put: Others will have to see for themselves what they are not willing to see presently.
 - And the only way they will see who Messiah and His first coming is about is through the path that will lead Jesus to Golgotha and upon the cross.
 - For, in order to see things clearly, one must be given the proper lenses to see through – and that only God can give.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 8D

Chapter 8:27-33

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- Last week, we encountered the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida.
 - This healing was one that was quite remarkable!
 - Because we discovered that the physical condition of the man was simply a reflection of the disciples' spiritual condition.
 - In other words, the disciples' understanding of Jesus' identity and purpose were quite blurry.
 - They understood Christ to be the Messiah, yet their understanding of His purpose was tied more to a political figure rather than a suffering King.
 - And the reality is, if anyone needed to understand His purpose well, it would need to first be the twelve – for this knowledge would be foundational for the Church.
 - You will see tonight that there was much speculation as to who Jesus was.
 - But despite the oversight, the time had arrived for the twelve to truly know the One in whom they have been walking with for nearly 2 years and why He came.
 - And as the healing of the blindman taught us, the only way in which they would come to know Jesus' identity would be through Divine illumination.
 - It's at this point in Mark's gospel that everything has been building to this moment.
 - And it will be from this point forward that everything flows out.
 - For one to truly understand the identity of Messiah requires one to know His purpose.
 - And we will see, as I mentioned last week, that a Messiah not connected to scripture is no Messiah at all.
 - That God has made His Messiah both verbally and visibly known as well as His purpose for coming.
 - And what will be made plainly clear is that where the people's understanding of Messiah is misunderstood, Jesus will clarify His purpose and Mission regarding His first coming.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would simply be: "Full Disclosure: From Suffering to Glory".
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 8:27-33.

Mark 8:27 Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, "Who do people say that I am?"

Mark 8:28 They told Him, saying, "John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets."

Mark 8:29 And He continued by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter *answered and *said to Him, "You are the Christ."

Mark 8:30 And He warned them to tell no one about Him.

Mark 8:31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and

be killed, and after three days rise again.

Mark 8:32 And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

Mark 8:33 But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and ***said, “Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”**

- Let’s Pray.
- If you have ever watched commercials advertising a new prescription drug, they have become quite comical, to say the least.
 - In one sense, this new drug can cure a particular disease or issue – which is great.
 - However, the part that many fail to pay close attention to are the side effects.
 - And oftentimes the side effects of the medical drug cause more damage to the body than the actual disease itself.
 - And what makes these commercials so comical is the announcer on the commercial sounding like a horse race announcer (speeding through the exhaustive list of side effects).
 - The commercials claim to give you the “full disclosure” without making it plain to distract you from the side effects and focus you more on the benefits.
 - However, when it comes down to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, not only does He provide you and I with a full disclosure.
 - But He provides the terms and conditions of what He is offering, very plainly, according to the Father’s will.
 - Tonight, we will see that the Father is going to reveal plainly through the Son, by the Person of the Holy Spirit to the disciples, Jesus’ Identity and Purpose.
 - The question becomes: “Will this reality be a difficult pill for these men to swallow or not?”
 - The outline for our time together tonight will be the following:
 - 1. A Divine Inquiry (v.27-30)
 - 2. A Divine Confession (v.27-30)
 - 3. A Plain Teaching (v.31-33)
 - 4. A Divine Rebuke (v.31-33)
 - So with that being said, pick me up at verses 27-30.

Mark 8:27 Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, “Who do people say that I am?”

Mark 8:28 They told Him, saying, “John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets.”

Mark 8:29 And He continued by questioning them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter ***answered and *said to Him, “You are the Christ.”**

Mark 8:30 And He warned them to tell no one about Him.

- It's after Jesus and His disciples leave the district of Bethsaida, after healing the blind man, that they make their way to the villages of Caesarea Philippi.
 - Caesarea Philippi, named by Herod Philip after himself and Tiberius Caesar, was known prior to its new name as Paneas.
 - Caesarea Philippi is located about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee near the base of Mt. Hermon (Map).
 - Mt. Hermon is the highest mountain peak in the Promised Land, rising over 9,000 feet above sea level.
 - And its southern slope is located about 1,150 feet above the sea level as well.
 - The area is very lush and full of vegetation and life.
 - As a matter of fact, Jewish Historian Josephus mentions that this area is considered the chief source of water for the Jordan River.
 - It was here in Caesarea Philippi that the Canaanite people had built a sanctuary to Baal and where the Greeks and Romans built sanctuaries for sacrifices.
 - And these sacrifices were done near a place called the "Grotto of Pan".
 - Pan was a mythical god among the Pagans and was known as the "god of nature". He was said to be half-man and half goat.
 - This cave was colloquially known as the entrance to the underworld or the gates of hell.
 - And this would be the place in which the Lord Jesus is journeying with His disciples and where Peter's great confession will be made.
 - While on this journey towards Caesarea Philippi, Jesus administers a test of sorts to the twelve.
 - And the test began with a question which was: "Who do people say that I am?"
 - The word "people" in Greek is the word *anthropos* which means people, human being, or man.
 - In other words, what does human wisdom say regarding my identity?
 - It's in verse 28 that the disciples begin to layout for Jesus what the general conclusions of the people are regarding His identity.
 - Check out quickly Mark 8:28:
 - They told Him, saying, "John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets."
 - Now before we move too quickly, one could ask the question: "Why does Jesus feel the need to lead with this line of questioning, first?"
 - Why start with what people think or are saying?
 - To put it plainly, in order to get to the heart of who He is, one must understand who He is not.
 - Check out the list again:
 - Some are saying John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others say, one of the Prophets.
 - The next question that might come to mind here is: "Why would the people

assume these figures?”

- With hindsight and having the whole canon of scripture today, we can say with confidence that there was much Messianic confusion amongst the people.
- In one case, we hear that John the Baptist’s name is floating around because Herod Antipas has heard of Jesus’ ministry and mighty works.
 - You might recall this from Mark 6:14-16. Check out the text.

Mark 6:14 And King Herod heard of it, for His name had become well known; and people were saying, “John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why these miraculous powers are at work in Him.”

Mark 6:15 But others were saying, “He is Elijah.” And others were saying, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.”

Mark 6:16 But when Herod heard of it, he kept saying, “John, whom I beheaded, has risen!”

- ○ Now, what about Elijah? How did His name get floated around as a possible option regarding Jesus’ identity?
 - Perhaps it was in connection to Malachi 4 as Elijah being the forerunner before the great and terrible day of the Lord.
- In either case, for the people to say Jesus was like any other of these men was a complete denial of His uniqueness and dismissal of His Divine Identity and Purpose.
 - Friends, this is the equivalent to non-believers saying Jesus is a great teacher, or amazing healer, yet not identify Him as who He really is – God.
 - So it is after Jesus has asked the disciples what human intellect says, thinks, or believes about Him, that He then turns the question on them.
 - Herein lies the Divine Inquiry: “But who do you say that I am?”
- What I love about Jesus’ question here is that it is pointed and two fold in nature.
 - In one way, He begins by His disciples expressing the Messianic misconceptions based upon human wisdom regarding His Person.
 - While at the same time He is strategic because the apostles will need to know who He is without the “outsider” influence.
- As a matter of fact, Jesus’ question here in Greek is quite revealing based upon the Greek syntax.
 - The original language reads: “But you, who do you say that I am?”
- In other words: I don’t want to know what human reasoning says. I don’t want to know what “people’s truth” is, or what is “relative to their reality”. I want to know what my Apostles who have been following the Light, say!
 - Well, it’s in verse 29b that Peter, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, says out loud, representing the entire twelve, “You are the Christ.”
 - You are the Christos, the Anointed One, You are the Messiah.

- To truly grasp the weightiness of Peter's confession, we need to look quickly to Matthew's account. (Matthew 16:16)

Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

- Here is what Mark has been building up to this point. This was in fact his very thesis statement in Mark 1:1 – The beginning starts with Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus' Identity has now, for the first time to the twelve, been made plainly known.
 - It is as if the blurry vision they had before has now come into view regarding Jesus' Person.
 - The line in the sand has been drawn and what a relief it is because at this point this confession now leads to a commendation.
 - To see this more accurately, let's go back to Matthew's account for Jesus' response to Peter's Confession. (Matthew 16:17)

Matthew 16:17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven."

- Jesus commends Peter, because Peter coming to this conclusion was not based upon "flesh and blood" – in other words, this was not human revelation.
 - It did not come about through reason or process of elimination.
 - But only the Father in Heaven has revealed this truth.
 - Our very faith rests upon this revealed truth that Jesus is the Son of God!
 - And the only way by which men can come to this understanding of who Christ is, is if God makes known to humanity this truth, personally.
 - As scripture mentions in Isaiah: "Eyes must be opened, ears must be unplugged, and hearts must be softened to the truth."
 - It is this Divine revelation of Jesus being the Son of God that Jesus tells Peter, in Matthew's Gospel, that upon that truth, the Church will be built upon. (Christ is the Son of God)
 - Friends, this is the reason why the gates of Hell will not stand against the church, because its very foundation is built upon God Himself.
 - And I don't find it surprising that the very statement that Peter confesses, by the Spirit, is made in the same vicinity where, colloquially, the entrance of Hell was located.
 - Understand that the moment that the church moves away from this proclamation of Jesus Christ, His death burial, and resurrection:
 - The moment that the church compromises on Christ and Him crucified, for the sake of relativism or philosophical truth, is the moment that the church has moved away from the Gospel.
 - Well it is after Peter makes this Divine Confession, regarding Jesus' Identity, that

Jesus gives a firm warning – to not tell anyone.

- Well, this begs a significant question: “Wouldn’t the point be to let people know that Jesus is indeed the Christ?”
- Wouldn’t this clear up the Messianic confusion?!
 - Not necessarily. Remember, we have been seeing the rejection of Jesus grow more and more.
 - And even with the evidence of His Person made known, many people still refuse to repent and believe.
- The people’s understanding of Jesus is misinformed at best and not aligned with His mission and Purpose.
 - This only further confirms that the only way in which Christ can be made known to man is if the Spirit opens up eyes and illuminates hearts to understand.
 - If the people at the feeding of the 5,000, according to John’s gospel, had gotten ahold of Jesus, based upon their understanding of Messiah, they would have taken Him over to make Him a King fitting their own Messianic agenda.
- However, the way by which men would be made right before God in preparation to receive the Kingdom would require Messiah to suffer.
 - This missional reality in connection to His Divine identity would become the next barrier in which Jesus would have to address with the Disciples.
 - And this reality would be a tough pill to swallow. Check out verses 31-33.

Mark 8:31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Mark 8:32 And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

Mark 8:33 But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and *said, “Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”

- After the disciples are told the Identity of Jesus, Jesus now begins to teach, focusing their attention upon His mission as to why He came.
 - To gain a true understanding of Messiah’s identity, one would need to understand His purpose, missionally.
 - And it’s in verses 31 and 32 that Jesus expresses several points pertaining to the purpose of Messiah.
 - And it will be these points Jesus makes that will catch Peter and the other disciples off guard.
 - It’s here that Jesus begins to teach the disciples privately and explicitly that the “Son of Man” would have to:
 - 1. Suffer many things
 - 2. Be rejected by the elders, chief priest, and scribes

- 3. Be killed
- 4. And after three days, He would rise again.
- Now this new information regarding Messiah having to suffer and even die was completely unexpected and not anticipated neither by the people, but most especially, the disciples.
 - In one way, one could say: A suffering and dying Messiah was somehow missing from this victorious and triumphant Messiah as described in Daniel.
 - Check out the description of Messiah in Daniel 7:13-14, where Messiah is described here as “Son of Man”.

**Daniel 7:13 “I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.**

**Daniel 7:14 “And to Him was given dominion,
Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and men of every language
Might serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.**

- ○ Daniel describes here that “One like the Son of Man” – who we know as Jesus Christ – came and approached the Ancient of Days, which refers to God the Father.
- So when we look at verse 13 and 14 knowing what Persons of the Trinity are at play here, we see that the Father gives the Son, dominion, glory, and a Kingdom.
 - As Daniel describes in verse 14, this Kingdom will have no end and cannot be destroyed.
- Well, this can only mean that if this Kingdom that is given to the Son of Man cannot be destroyed then it presumes that the Messiah cannot end as well.
 - So in a way, we can understand why the disciples have a bit of a Messianic Dilemma.
 - Because, in their understanding, how can there be a Kingdom that will reign in victory over its enemies if its King is dead?
- In other words, the disciples weren’t able to see how both death and victory coincide together.
 - This idea of Messiah having to suffer and die was foreign to the disciples, so much so that Peter pulls Jesus aside and has the audacity to rebuke Him.
 - After Peter has received the keys to the Kingdom and has been deemed, in a way, the chief Apostle, he has this cocky swag about himself and now finds the need to address Jesus’ missional purpose.

- Isn't it astounding that in one breath, Peter is illumined by the Spirit to clearly see the Identity of Christ.
 - Yet, in the very next breath, finds himself rebuking the Lord Jesus.
- Understand that this type of rebuke that Peter gives is not a light rebuke.
 - The word “rebuke” here is the Greek word *epitimao* (epiti-mao) which means to warn or express strong disapproval of.
 - In other words, “Jesus, this is not about to happen if I have anything to do with it, I forbid it – far be it from me!”
- Now to some this response would seem like an honorable response in an effort to defend Jesus, the one in whom you love.
 - However, to attempt to deny Jesus of His High call and purpose, according to His Father's will, is to tell the Living God, your plans are off – fall in line.
 - Friends, this is a direct attack against God, Himself!
- And I believe this speaks to a very clear point as we minister the gospel to people: No matter how accommodating we try to be as a church, we must not bend or alter our mission!
 - For some, there is the intent on wanting to reach the world in a way that makes the message we preach more favorable and palatable for others because it's convenient for them.
 - However, the reality is the Gospel is offensive and the Gospel is a weighty message. It's a costly message!
- The Gospel confronts us with our sins. It confronts us with our depravity. It confronts us with our brokenness, yet it meets us with a gracious Savior.
 - Let the message of the Gospel serve its purpose no matter how uncomfortable it may sound or seem. Truth always Triumphs!
- So in Peter's failure to have a proper perspective (heavenly perspective on the matter), Jesus ushers Peter a firm rebuke. Check out verse 33b.
 - “Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's”
- What was Jesus' point in calling Peter, Satan here?
 - In Matthew's gospel, Jesus has bestowed the keys to the Kingdom, changed his name, and yet He calls Peter, Satan. What's up with that?
- Well, what we have just witnessed is Jesus putting Peter in His place.
 - Where Peter gets beside Himself, Jesus reminds Him as only Jesus can.
 - And in that effort, Jesus tells Peter to “Get behind Him”: In other words, “Know your place, Peter!”
- It's at that point where Jesus calls Peter, Satan.
 - Now some argue the case: “Don't you think calling Peter, Satan, is a bit of a stretch?”
 - I would argue, not really.
- Because the moment that you set yourself up against the plans and purpose of God, is the moment that you are acting on behalf of the enemy himself.

- It is clear that Peter is not operating in humility under the direction and instruction of Christ because verse 33b tells us this:
 - “For you are not setting your “mind” on God’s interest but man’s.”
- The word “mind” here is *phroneo* which means to set one’s mind upon or to understand something.
 - In other words, Peter was to set his mind upon God’s direction and instruction and not his own.
 - One question comes to mind here: “What was Peter’s mind set on that he felt necessary to tell Jesus that He would permit His Divine plans to be accomplished?”
- Peter’s mind is set upon his own interest. We witnessed this reality earlier on in Mark 1:35-39, where Peter got perturbed with Jesus going off by Himself to pray.
 - Where Jesus saw the need to dwell with the Father before ministry work commenced, Peter saw an opportunity to increase Jesus’ ministry, thereby increasing Peter’s popularity.
 - This reveals further more that Peter and the disciple’s understanding of the purpose of Christ needing to die, was not understood.
- The disciples’ minds are set upon what their understanding of Messiah’s coming means, and that is victory, ruling, authority, dominion, and Power.
 - And not upon what Christ has plainly made known to them regarding His Purpose.
 - Watch what Paul says in regard to the believers’ spiritual priorities in Colossians 3:2:

Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

- ○ Paul also mentions this in Romans 8:5-8:

Romans 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Romans 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

Romans 8:7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,

Romans 8:8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

- A mind that is not in alignment with the Lord and His Spirit, is a mind that is at war with God.
 - This is why Peter is called Satan – Peter’s agenda needs to be realigned with that of the plan and purpose of Christ.
 - This process requires humility and if we were to be honest, as followers of Jesus,

we need to be reminded of this truth.

- I'm reminded of what the Lord God tells Job in Job 38:4-7 after Job has been stricken with such great loss and trying to figure out why he is suffering the way he was.
 - Check out God's response to Job:

Job 38:4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell Me, if you have understanding,

Job 38:5 Who set its measurements? Since you know.

Or who stretched the line on it?

Job 38:6 “On what were its bases sunk?

Or who laid its cornerstone,

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together

And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

- Here's the point, like Job was not found in contributing to the laying of the foundation of the earth, neither was Peter.
 - In other words, God did not and does not need your counsel on His matters.
 - Our attempts to somehow think we have anything to contribute or add to the Gospel is at best fanatical and narcissistic.
 - This is, in essence, the problem that we face not only in American churches, but in Churches around the world.
 - We feel that we have the authority or ability to contribute to God's cosmological conversation and missiological redemptive plan.
 - We must learn that our best efforts in understanding God's plan is found in knowing Him and His word!
 - Rather than Peter humbly submitting to Jesus' teaching and seeking to understand what was being provided through His suffering, Peter jumped the gun to protect his interest and his King.
 - And although the attempt, to some, seem valid, it was an unwelcome and unsolicited counterintuitive approach to God's redemptive plan.
 - Friends, the only way in which a Kingdom would come and a people would be made ready to receive the Kingdom is if the King paid a price with His life.
 - This is the message of the Gospel. And this message is not written on the backs of men or sustained by the government and kingdoms of this world.
 - It is held together by the very word of God, Himself. (Colossians 1:17)
 - The reality is, the same approach that Satan took to prematurely kill Jesus was the same approach Peter took in trying to keep Jesus from accomplishing the Father's will.
 - You see, when we recognize that we are created beings and that God is the Creator, it puts everything into proper perspective.
 - As Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us:

Isaiah 55:8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord.
Isaiah 55:9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

- What Peter and the disciples were failing to understand was although this physical pain was inevitable for Jesus, His victory over death was guaranteed.
 - And as we will see later in Mark’s account, Jesus will make known why His death is necessary.
 - For a sneak peek, turn with me to Mark 10:45:

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

- However, this realization of death and suffering was not able to yet penetrate the disciples’ understanding because they were still focused on “visions of a glorious earthly Messiah”
 - Christ came for the very purpose to die, and this would be a reality that would need to settle into the hearts of the disciples.
 - For to truly receive Christ was to accept the terms and conditions of His coming and purpose.
 - To attain the gift of salvation and the Kingdom that He offers requires one to embrace the suffering He would endure for the safety and security found only in Him.
 - A dying Messiah, the religious leaders could not and would not promote or see. And to this day, they fail to acknowledge Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22.
 - Yet if they truly read Isaiah 53:11, particularly, they would see the following:

Isaiah 53:11 As a result of the anguish of His soul,
He will see it and be satisfied;
By His knowledge the Righteous One,
My Servant, will justify the many,
As He will bear their iniquities.

- To set our minds upon the truth revealed in scripture regarding Christ, is to set our minds upon heavenly things.
 - To set our minds upon this truth is to set our minds upon the Gospel.
 - To set our minds upon this truth, is to set our minds upon the means of God’s perfect plan to lead us into right fellowship with God.
 - For if there was no suffering, there could be no salvation.
 - And if there were no salvation, there could be no fellowship.

- And if there were no fellowship, the bad news would be that we would all be justly and rightly placed in Hell.
- But thank God that because of God's perfect and Holy plan, He made a way that we might be saved from the wrath of God and eternal separation from the Father.
 - It is with this great cost, that we will find next week, that true discipleship requires a cost.
 - And the reality is, not all are willing to count it.
- Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 8E

Chapter 8:34-38

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- In our last session, Jesus concluded a private discussion with Peter, by way of a Divine Rebuke.
 - And this rebuke came about because Peter's mind was not set upon the things of God (heavenly things) but upon earthly things.
 - Peter's focus was more tethered to power, influence, and a current earthly rule alongside the Messiah than that of a suffering King, now.
 - However, Jesus saw fit to recorrect Peter's understanding in effort to ascertain the Messiah's proper mission and purpose.
 - For, to fail to understand Jesus' need to die in His first advent was to fail to understand the power of the Gospel.
 - The power of the Gospel is found perfectly in the suffering of the Promised One.
 - Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 that what is of first importance in understanding the Gospel is to know Christ and Him crucified, being buried, and raised from the dead.
 - And it is Paul that makes this point clear to the church at Corinth because Christ had made the point plainly clear at this point in His ministry.
 - You might recall Christ expounded on His unique mission right after Peter made the great confession that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, by the leading of the Spirit.
 - It is this clear distinction of Christ being Messiah that God's means of salvation would be known versus what the people were anticipating.
 - And it would be in having a proper identity of Christ that the disciples would now need to have clear understanding of Messiah's mission.
 - As we have made clear before, Christ's first coming was not what the people nor His disciples anticipated. (Why?)
 - They were expecting a military conquest, rule, and power over the Gentile rulers in an effort to establish Jewish rule of the world.
 - However, the Father's plan was to prepare the people to receive the Kingdom which would not be based upon one's Jewishness.
 - It required that man be made right before Holy God.
 - The reason being was man's means of attaining righteousness was impossible without the supernatural workings of the Holy Spirit activating the hearts of men.
 - Without God's illumination and intervention, we could never reach God's perfect standard of Holiness, which is perfect perfection.
 - To be off, even the slightest bit, failed the litmus test of holiness according to the Father's standard.
 - On top of that, the means of being made right before God required an internal calibration and transformation.
 - It required one to be "born-again" and the only means by which that could be done was by God transforming the hearts of men.
 - This type of transformation could only be accomplished from the inside out.
 - Therefore, for one to be saved and receive the Kingdom, as previously discussed

in the Mark series, required one to “Repent and believe the Gospel” (Mark 1:14-15).

- If you remember, the word Repent (Capital R) in the Greek is the word *Metanoeo*, which means to have a “change of mind”.
- This is where one abandons their former dispositions which results in a new perspective, outlook, and understanding.
- So when one comes to Christ, they have abandoned their means of prior understanding and system of thought of what it means to be made right with God.
 - And in turn, by the illumination of the Spirit comes to the realization that the only way that one can be made right is through the Father’s righteous person – The Messiah, the Son of God.
 - And what becomes so beautiful in this reality is that the effort and the work is solely placed upon God having provided the means!
- Therefore, for one to come to salvation – there is only one way. And that is that salvation is found in Christ alone, by faith alone, through grace alone.
 - Friends, our faith has an object, and that object is a person and that Person has done a work that only He alone could achieve perfectly.
 - This is the work that Jesus has expressed explicitly and specifically to His disciples.
- That missional work of Christ required Him to die so that, those who would come through Him, in faith, would be saved by His work alone.
 - And not our measly attempts, external striving and efforts and the like, but solely Christ’s work.
- This is what the religious leaders were missing and could not get because they were blinded.
 - They had become their own “gods” in a sense – establishing their own “authoritative truth” (The Oral Law).
 - They had established exterior works, to make one seem to be righteous, from an exterior perspective, while all the while they were rotting from the inside out.
- So with that recap, as to where we have been from Mark 7 to this point, we now find ourselves arriving to verse 34.
 - It will be here where Jesus begins to address both His disciples and the crowd that has followed them at this point.
 - And Jesus is going to address this crowd of both insiders and outsiders in a unique way.
 - Therefore, one can safely assume He will be speaking in parabolic form.
- And what we will discover tonight is that Jesus will be teaching a lesson regarding this unique distinction between one being saved and one becoming a disciple.
 - The question that will have to be asked tonight is: “Have you counted the cost and if not, will you count the cost of being a disciple?”
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight’s text it would simply be: “A Cost worth Counting”

- With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me at Mark 8:34-38.

Mark 8:34 And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

Mark 8:35 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.

Mark 8:36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?

Mark 8:37 For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Mark 8:38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

- Let’s Pray.
- Rhea Miller wrote a hymn in 1991 entitled, “I’d Rather have Jesus” which was composed by George Shea. Listen to the first sonnet of the song:

I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold
 I’d rather be His than have riches untold
 I’d rather have Jesus than houses and lands
 I’d rather be led by His nail-pierced hand.

Than to be the king of a vast domain
 Or be held in sin’s dread sway
 I’d rather have Jesus than anything
 This world affords today.

- Such truth spoken within the first few lines of this song.
 - That the cost of Christ is much greater than this world’s mere delight.
 - May we see the beauty of this truth as we walk through each verse to mine the reality of the text.
 - Let’s dive into verse 34.

Mark 8:34 And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

- We find Jesus here addressing the crowd and His disciples as He begins to establish this clear distinction between that of Salvation and Discipleship – and we will see it graphically momentarily.
 - Jesus begins to establish what discipleship is but beyond that what discipleship

costs.

- He states “If anyone wishes to come after Him..” that they must do the following:
 - 1. Deny themselves
 - 2. Take up their cross
 - 3. Follow Christ
- Jesus makes it clear here that Discipleship requires much consideration for one to become a true disciple of Christ.
 - He explains this cost consideration by first mentioning the denial of oneself.
- As we approach what Jesus is saying here, we must recognize what Jesus has just mentioned privately to the disciples as well as what He is saying with the crowd here.
 - In verse 33, Jesus had just finished calling Peter “Satan” because Peter sought not to understand Jesus’ purpose for dying, but rather to emphasize his own means of self-promotion.
 - This ultimately resulted in Jesus getting Peter “back in line” in an effort for Peter to set his mind on heavenly things and not earthly things.
- Therefore, Peter’s issue was not a matter of who His faith was in (Jesus Christ) but rather the means by which Jesus’ purpose would have to be accomplished.
 - Peter would have to abandon His understanding of what the religious leaders spoke about Messiah.
 - He would have to embrace what Jesus was teaching regarding His identity.
 - And as Peter would abandon His own ideas and perspectives of what Messiah would do, pertaining to His Purpose, the disciples would join in this coming suffering that came with being connected to Christ.
- Here is where we must truly understand the distinction between Salvation in Christ and being a Disciple of Christ.
 - Salvation in Christ requires one to have placed faith upon the Person of Christ and His work.
 - Salvation, as Paul mentions, rests upon Christ having died, been buried, and raised from the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)
 - Our faith rests upon what Christ has done – solely. God’s Son being crushed on the cross was the means by which salvation was achieved.
 - This is the only means by which one can be saved and is justified before God.
- Discipleship on the other hand goes beyond that first step.
 - If we were to put it a different way, salvation is the starting line.
 - Discipleship, however, requires one to take the next steps in fully identifying in the rejection that Christ faced and the suffering that He ensued.
 - In other words, Discipleship is joining Christ in His sufferings by willingly pursuing Him despite what it might cost us, socially.

Philippians 3:8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the

surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, [Philippians 3:9](#) and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, [Philippians 3:10](#) that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; [Philippians 3:11](#) in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- This is why we see Jesus begin by mentioning that one must deny themselves.
 - It requires that one, like Christ, considers the pleasures and fleeting fantasies of this world as loss in exchange for a worthy calling to pursue Christ.
 - We then see Jesus mention that those who seek to follow Christ must take up their Cross.
 - Now hearing this in the first century was literally being asked to take on a death-sentence gracefully and willfully.
 - Jesus' use of this language here sought to "evoke a vivid and horrifying image of the death march with all its shameful publicity."
 - In other words, to follow Christ was to be invited to come and die, literally.
 - And to the extent of which the journey of following Him cost, it meant that one needed to consider the temporary implications of their decision knowing that they were attaining something much greater beyond this life.
 - You might recall in our Mark 1A study, I mentioned the audience of this letter were Roman believers under the persecution of Nero.
 - And as these fellow believers faced death in the eyes, having previously read through Mark's letter to them, I could only imagine that this section here was quite encouraging.
 - That these fellow believers were able to personally identify themselves with their Savior who had experienced what they were about to.
 - This goes beyond simply having a knowledge of death, but God in flesh, Jesus Christ, tasted death for a time in order to save us.
 - This blows every other religion out of the water!
 - Why? Because there is no other religion in human history that their "god" condescends to be with creation.
 - Therefore, this denial of self and taking up one's cross was what one theologian called "radical abandonment".
 - For to completely identify oneself with Christ's death requires one to have their eyes set on heavenly things, eternal things. (Eyes for Eternity)
 - Christ goes into further discussion to bring this point to a closer focus. Check out verse 35.

[Mark 8:35](#) For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

- It is in verse 35 that Jesus teaches, in parabolic form, that there is a profit/loss statement in following Him.
 - He provides somewhat of a chiastic structure to this teaching by mentioning:
 - Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it.
 - But whoever loses his life for Christ and the Gospel, will save it.
 - Now for us to understand what Jesus is speaking about here, we need to understand some terms.
 - One of those terms is the word here for life. That word in Greek is *psyche*.
 - It means soul, or the condition of living or state of being alive.
 - Therefore, as we understand this passage we must approach it in the literal sense in that what is being spoken of here is not related to salvific matters.
 - The reason why we can assume that is because the word “save” here in verse 35 is the Greek word *sazo* which means to deliver or rescue.
 - So what is Jesus talking about here regarding those who are wanting to follow Him or considering to follow Him?
 - Jesus is speaking here of heavenly matters, more specifically – eternal rewards.
 - So, if we were to put this another way, any saved individual not willing to count the cost and pursue the things of the Kingdom (heavenly things), suffers the loss of their eternal rewards.
 - However, whoever has counted the cost, seeks to identify with Christ and abandon the things of this world, will attain these eternal rewards which are found in a forever pursuit of Christ while here on earth. (Opportunities)
 - The matter at stake here is not regarding salvation for the believer, but matters of loss of rewards, as we mentioned before. (You can’t lose salvation)
 - When the believer is more focused on casual Christianity in the sense of simply “making it to heaven” yet without pursuing Christ richly, there is much loss in things of great eternal value. (Sanctification Issues)
 - There is also another thing that we must consider here which remains true for unbelievers and that is for those who do not respond in faith – they will not be saved.
 - The reality is that when one comes to faith in Christ, as Paul mentions in Romans, there are two competing things within the believer.
 - And that is both the flesh and the Spirit.
 - The flesh is warring against the things of God and is at enmity with the plans of God.
 - And the Spirit is at war with the flesh seeking for the believer to fully submit under the instructions of God.
 - As Pastor Steve mentioned prior in Matthew 16E: “Which dog are you feeding in the fight?”
 - To be a disciple of Christ requires the whole of the individual to be completely submitted under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
 - Every opportunity that God provides for you to serve Him is an opportunity to

earn the rewards prepared for you on the other side of glory. (Growth in Spiritual maturity)

- When we understand what Jesus is saying here regarding pursuing Him and the Gospel, we realize that our means to attain eternal rewards comes with a temporal cost of suffering just as Christ suffered.
 - The question becomes: Do you have what it takes to truly follow Christ to the fullest?
 - And the hope for every believer in Christ is that they move from simply having faith in Christ, to moving towards deep allegiance to Him.
 - If He is your King and your Lord, let your life reflect that reality!
 - Let's keep moving. Check out verses 36 and 37.

Mark 8:36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?

Mark 8:37 For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

- We now get to Jesus' explanation of heavenly things in a hyperbolic way.
 - Jesus establishes here the measure of discipleship regarding the eternal versus temporal ramifications.
 - And He establishes this by means of a rhetorical question. Check out the question again:
 - "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul."
 - As we mentioned earlier, Jesus was speaking to the believer's ability to focus on the eternal matters for the benefit of eternal rewards.
 - This statement becomes an extension of what I just mentioned, but in the negative position for believers.
 - In other words, what does it benefit a believer to pursue the temporal things of this life and in the end have nothing to receive for it in the Kingdom?
 - It is this principal of investment, when you think about it. What are you investing in?
 - If you invest in temporal things the only return that one will receive is temporal satisfaction – there is no lasting benefit!
 - What we should be able to see from Jesus' rhetorical question here is the significance of eternal matters.
 - This world's achievements, treasures, and pleasures pale in comparison to the everlasting riches of knowing Christ and receiving an imperishable reward.
 - Paul states this reality in 2 Timothy 4:8. Check out the text:

2 Timothy 4:8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

- Jesus wraps up the point by stating the eternal truth that all of humanity must face at the end of the age and that is: What will a man give in exchange for his soul (life)?
 - In other words, what will you have truly lost in wasting your time and resources with things that will one day burn up and cease to be no more? (1 Corinthians 3:11-14)
 - The key to true life and living as a believer is to lose your grip on what goes on in this life and begin to seek the present opportunities that allow you to make eternal investments.
 - Paul tells the church at Corinth this in 1 Corinthians 15:57-58:

1 Corinthians 15:57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

- ◦ John puts this reality a bit more bluntly for the reader in 1 John 2:15-17. Check out the text:

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

1 John 2:17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

- So, what is Jesus showing us here in Mark's gospel regarding the measuring of discipleship regarding both the eternal and temporal matters?
 - The things of this world, as believers in Christ, may seem great, look great, and at times even feel great, but they are not good for the spiritual well-being of the believer.
 - Our true citizenship is found in Heaven! As the church mothers used to say growing up: "Oh baby, we are only passing through!"
 - Here's the question believer: "Are you passing through or are you trying to set yourself a tent?"
 - Believers in Christ, you must be willing to deny the pull of the world in effort to pursue Christ all the more.
 - There is also another thing at play here and that is the finality of the unbeliever's unwillingness and inability to know Christ as Messiah.
 - And that reality is: At the time of the appointed judgement, everything that they have done in opposition against Sovereign God will be held to account.
 - Friends, there is no escaping the judgement of God for both believers and non-believers.

- The only thing that separates these judgments is the fact that one group has placed faith in Christ and the other hasn't.
- Believers will face judgement for what we have done for Christ in this life and will have our works accounted for.
 - Non-believers on the other hand will have to account for what they have done and experience the consequences of their failure in trusting in Christ after He has been plainly made known to the world both verbally and visually – in person and through the proclamation of the Gospel.
- What a sobering reality for us to face!
 - We now arrive to verse 38.

Mark 8:38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

- Jesus now moves to the culminating point regarding the reality of what it means to follow Him versus one who does not put their faith in Him. (Unbelievers)
 - He uses the term “ashamed” to build this tension in the text for one to recognize the commitment of being a disciple of Christ versus being an unbeliever.
 - The word “ashamed” in Greek is *epaischynomai* (e-pai-schyn-o-mai) which means to experience a sense of loss of status because of a particular event or person.
 - Because Jesus is speaking to both His disciples and this crowd, the question becomes: “Who is Jesus addressing here?”
 - Well based upon the context where we find ourselves, we can safely assume that this statement relates to believers.
 - And in this address, it also directs our attention to the opposite result for the unbeliever.
 - This relates to the believer in the fact that we would naturally have some sense of affection regarding our relationship to Christ because we have placed faith in Him.
 - No unbeliever would feel shame or sense of loss of status regarding Christ because their trust is not in Him.
 - So if the believer experiences some sense of shame in light of what Christ has done richly for them because their affections are more towards this world than the next, it results in a reduction of honor for that believer.
 - As RT France states in his commentary on Mark: “Shame here and now is a small price to pay for acknowledgement and honor then.
 - In other words, Jesus is saying: The loss is not in salvation (that is secured) the loss is in rewards.
 - There is an opposite result regarding that of the unbeliever here that is to be addressed and that is this:
 - The truth of Messiah and His message has been made plainly known to all through the scriptures and evangelistic efforts.

- God condescended into the form of a human being so that those who did not know Him personally could come to know Him.
 - He became our High Priest so that He may sympathize with the likeness of man, yet without sin.
- So to come to the light of this truth yet deny His Person and His work is to deny the very means of salvation which eliminates one from being saved.
 - The reality is, there will be a time when we all will face the Creator and have to give an account for our lives.
 - The question hearer is: “What will the end of your story be?”
- Will it be that you were sold out for Christ in pursuing His plans for your life and taking advantage of the opportunities He provided for you to serve Him and His purposes?
 - Or will it be that the world seemed a lot more attractive than the life that is to come? (Believer)
 - Or is it that you never believed resulting in a life with no hope ending in an eternity in hell separated from the Creator? (Unbeliever)
- Understand that the goal for every believer in Christ is to move you from spiritual immaturity to spiritual maturity.
 - To get you into the game means you are placing the things of God before your own pursuits and the things of this life.
 - And that you are seeking opportunities to serve the Lord now despite suffering for the Gospel.
- As Paul told young Timothy in His last account as his life was ending, he told him this: 2 Timothy 1:8-13.

2 Timothy 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,

2 Timothy 1:9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,

2 Timothy 1:10 but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

2 Timothy 1:11 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

2 Timothy 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

- Paul’s focus for the young Timothy and the church was that we all grow in our faith based upon what Christ has done richly for us and has done in us.
 - In other words, once you become saved, you don’t want to stay on a kindergarten level of knowledge of Christ.

- We are called to grow in the knowledge of Christ and that is found all the more when we continually die to ourselves in pursuit of becoming more like our Savior.
- The unfortunate reality is there are some who are in churches where they are comfortable remaining on milk.
 - But the Spirit desires to move men and women from the milk of the word to the meat of the word.
 - Because as we grow in our spiritual nourishment, our spiritual muscles develop, and we are able to understand how to suffer well with our savior.
- Suffering with Christ is not the requirement for salvation, but it is the requirement for discipleship.
 - Friends, the question on the table is: “Are you willing to count the cost and get in the game?”
 - Let’s Pray.



Mark - Lesson 9A

Chapter 9:1-8

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- Up to this point, the disciples have been inundated with much information regarding Christ's Person and His mission regarding the Kingdom Program.
 - We witnessed in the past two teachings a few things in the region of Caesarea Philippi:
 - It was at the Grotto of Pan where Peter, by the power of the Spirit makes the great confession that Jesus was the Son of the Living God.
 - This spoke directly to the identity of Jesus.
 - And from that confession, Jesus was able to give full disclosure as to what His purpose was as Messiah – and that was that He came to suffer and die.
 - Unfortunately, Peter having been deemed the chief Apostle, in a way, pulled Jesus aside and tells Him, “Far be it from me Jesus”.
 - In other words, that’s not happening on my watch if I have anything to do about it.
 - It would be at this point that Jesus would give a firm and Divine Rebuke in effort to get Peter’s mind set upon the heavenly things and not the earthly things.
 - To put it plainly, for Peter and the disciples to carry out this mission of the Church after Jesus was gone, it first required Jesus to die.
 - So, it was because of Peter’s misunderstanding and unwillingness to see Messiah suffer that Jesus provides further clarifying statements.
 - This is where we found ourselves last week.
 - In Mark 8E, Jesus’ point that He conveyed to His disciples was that the disciple's interest and priority must be set upon God’s interest and not their own.
 - In other words, God’s interests are eternal and authoritative whereas man’s interest are finite and temporal.
 - And the way in which Jesus conveyed this eternal truth regarding God’s plans and priorities would be through an enigmatic statement.
 - It would be in Mark 8:35 that Jesus parabolically tells the crowd this:

Mark 8:35 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.

- Jesus’ point here was that humanity will ultimately be dealt the hand in which they give regarding their acceptance or rejection to the Gospel.
 - You will either prioritize the life that is to come by letting go of this one or risk the loss of reward because of your tight grip to this life.
 - The reality is, as believers, this life in which we live right now is simply a trial run for the next.
 - So how you live now, how you serve now, how you give of your time now, determines the rewards awaiting you in the Kingdom.
 - But what becomes of great significance in this dialogue is that death is not the end of the plan regarding the Kingdom program – it’s only the beginning.
 - And this becomes the point in which Jesus is articulating to His disciples

regarding both His mission as well as theirs in His physical absence.

- For it will only be through the Messiah's death and suffering that men and women can even enter the Kingdom and receive salvation.
- And although a suffering Messiah was not on the forefront of these men's plans, they would have to get with the plan of the King.
 - But as a good King and faithful God, Jesus would not leave these men without "a preview of coming attractions".
- If I were to outline our time tonight, we will see the following:
 - 1. A Promised Pronouncement (v.1)
 - 2. A Promise Fulfilled (v.2-3)
 - 3. A Peculiar Encounter (v.4)
 - 4. Premature Postulation (v.5-6)
 - 5. A Prominent Voice (v.7-8)
- If I were to put a tag on the text tonight it would be: "A Peak behind the Veil"
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 9:1-8.

Mark 9:1 And Jesus was saying to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."

Mark 9:2 Six days later, Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John, and *brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them;

Mark 9:3 and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

Mark 9:4 Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.

Mark 9:5 Peter *said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

Mark 9:6 For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified.

Mark 9:7 Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!"

Mark 9:8 All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.

- Let's Pray.
- If you're a fan of the Marvel movies, as my family and I are, you know that the Marvel trailers are a must.
 - You know that you have hit "Marvel Fan Status" when you remain in the theater after the credits for their "after credit trailer".
 - These final 1 to 2 minute showings are beautiful displays of a "preview of coming attractions".

- They give you insight to the sequel of the show and if you miss these short blurbs of goodness, you miss critical insight into the next movie.
- What we will witness tonight in Mark 9:1-8, is this glorious preview of coming attractions.xs
 - God is going to provide a preview of Glory to 3 of Jesus' disciples as a means to properly direct them and correct them on matters they have misunderstood.
 - And as they witness this, it should serve as a means to further the Kingdom Program and provide unwavering confidence down the line.
 - With that said, pick me up at verse 1 of Mark Chapter 9.

Mark 9:1 And Jesus was saying to them, “Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”

- Well, it's after Jesus has encouraged the disciples and the crowd that He mentions the true priority in this life is to prioritize the next and to be ready for the judgment to come.
 - Jesus paints this picture for them to realize that death is not the end of this life for some, but rather it is the beginning to eternal life.
 - So the objective for those who will follow Jesus as His disciples, would be the need to let their grip of this life and its possessions go.
 - And in exchange, build upon things that are eternal now so that once He returns they may receive their reward in full.
 - So to further expound upon this point, Jesus provides them with this promised pronouncement, if you will.
 - And it is with this promise, that there would be some that would see it fulfilled in their day.
 - You might be asking: “What is this promise in which Jesus made?” Well, we find that promise here in verse 1.
 - He begins by telling them “Truly I say to you” which could be translated “I tell you the truth” or “This is what the Lord has spoken”
 - In other words, you can take what I am telling you now and cash that check in the bank because it will not return void.
 - And the promise that He gives is that there will be some who are standing before them who will not taste death before they see “the Kingdom of God after it has come with power.”
 - Now, this statement has been the debate of many interpreters and commentators, but with proper context it literally interprets itself.
 - To best understand what Jesus was saying here we need to understand the Greek language and two words.
 - The first word here is “Kingdom” and this word in Greek can be translated as “reign or royal power”.

- We can easily eliminate the thought that there would be some who would see the physical literal Kingdom in their lifetime because it has yet to come.
 - Therefore, a more accurate translation of the word Kingdom here is “royal power”.
- The second word is “taste death”.
 - Mark’s use of this phrase here is in direct connection to Mark 8:38 and Mark 9:1 as Jesus was just speaking about death.
 - This further solidifies the reality that death in this fallen world has become the means by which one translates one to either an eternity with God or not.
- So regarding the Kingdom Program, because of Israel’s national rejection of the Messiah, the Kingdom’s full consummation in that day was postponed.
 - However, the training in which the disciples were experiencing for the upcoming Church age was to get the people ready who received Messiah now.
 - The question for them at that point becomes: “If there isn’t a Kingdom coming now, when will it arrive and how will we know?”
- Friends this is the work that Jesus is moving towards in preparing both a people for the Kingdom as well as providing a glimpse of coming attractions.
 - The reality is these men would need some foretaste or picture of what they were working towards – especially with no timeline provided.
 - So Jesus is going to allow a select few (3 disciples) to experience this “preview of coming attractions” to provide a sense of hope of things to come.
 - And what a blessing for them, that they would see this promise sooner rather than later. Check out verse 2 and 3.

Mark 9:2 Six days later, Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John, and *brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them;

Mark 9:3 and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them

- Mark tells us here that this previous promise pronounced will now be a promise fulfilled.
 - The text mentions that it was only six days later from the time in which Jesus made this pronouncement that “some would not taste death until they witnessed the Kingdom come with power”.
 - It is here that Jesus took with Him Peter, James, and John to a high mountain where they would share a powerful moment with their Lord.
 - Now, the text does not tell us what mountain exactly the transfiguration took place on.
 - But what we can gather is that they were in Caesarea Philippi just a week prior.
 - And as we discussed, the highest mountain in the Promised Land is that of Mt. Hermon.

- So although the text does not grant us specifics, it provides us context and the context reveals that the geographical location could be that mountain.
- However, the mountain is not the focal point – The Transfiguration is.
- And Mark tells us that once they had reached the top of the mountain that Jesus transfigured before them.
- In verse 3, this description of the transfiguration of Jesus is quite consistent with the Hebrew scripture details regarding the very Shekinah Glory of God.
 - The word transfiguration in Greek is *metamorphoo* which is where we get our English word metamorphosis which means “to be changed”.
 - In other words, the Jesus in which these men had been walking with for all this time looked completely different descriptively in all respects.
- This event is so dynamic that the synoptic gospel writers document very similar details both conclusively and specifically.
 - Matthew’s gospel says that His face shone like the sun and His garments were as white as light.
 - Mark’s gospel records that this scene of the transfiguration was one of exceeding radiance.
 - And Luke says they saw “Jesus’ glory”.
- Jesus’ garments became radiant and exceedingly white as like no amount of cleaning (bleaching) could make it.
 - It was as if from His very human-being, His Divine being and nature burst forth in this unhindered and glorious light.
- Friends, what Peter, James and John witnessed on this mountain was indeed a demonstration of His “royal power” just as Jesus promised in verse 1.
 - What becomes quite comical is that Luke’s gospel details that while this powerful moment is occurring, that the selected disciples were previously overcome with sleep.
 - And I believe it speaks to the humanness of the disciples in the sense that we can oftentimes overlook the miraculous things because we get too comfortable in routine with God.
- Notice while Peter, James, and John are awakened from this deep slumber, they witness something else quite spectacular in this glory moment. Check out verse 4.

Mark 9:4 **Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.**

- So as Jesus is standing before them in His full Divine Glory, Mark mentions that the Prophet Elijah and Moses were standing next to Jesus talking to Him.
 - Luke mentions in Luke 9 that both Elijah and Moses were glorified as well – as if in a similar state of splendor.
 - Now in this one verse alone comes many questions regarding this peculiar encounter of familiar figures.
 - Here are some of the questions that come to mind:

- 1. How are these 3 able to perceive who these men were if they never met them?
- 2. What were they possibly talking about?
- 3. What is the purpose of both Elijah and Moses being in this moment with Christ in this Glorified state?
- Let's begin with the first question: "How are these 3 able to perceive who these men were that are standing and talking to Jesus, if they never met them?"
 - Well, one could assume the disciples were provided spiritual insight regarding the identities of Elijah and Moses by God Himself.
 - As we lean into this a bit more, especially considering that death is the content of this context, it forces us to consider how Elijah and Moses died.
 - And once we begin to observe this event through the proper context you can begin to see what the greater purpose in this scene is – which brings us to the second question:
- "What is the purpose of both Elijah and Moses being in this moment with Christ in this Glorified state?"
 - As we mentioned, context is key here.
 - And where we find ourselves at this point is dealing with eternal matters and embracing the life that is to come.
 - On top of that we mentioned that with Jesus having made known His path to establishing the Kingdom in a future time and that it would first require Him to die, we have to deal with death itself and what it accomplishes.
- This was the difficulty that the disciples were struggling through, especially Peter.
 - How can there be a Kingdom with no King?
 - How can there be victory found in dying?
- Well if you remember, Jesus mentioned that the reason why there is victory through death is because Jesus would defeat death by being raised victoriously!
 - So this event of the transfiguration along with these two figures standing with Jesus, who have played such significant roles in God's redemptive historical out-workings, portrays a significant picture for the disciples.
- The significance of this picture will be found in the third question we posed and that is: "What were they talking about in conversation with Jesus?"
 - Friends, this question is the key to further understanding the significance of this event.
 - And to do that, we have to go outside of Mark's gospel to know the answer.
- Luke 9:31 tells us Moses and Elijah are speaking with Jesus concerning "...His departure which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem."
 - Now, when you look at the word "departure" in Greek, it means exodus which is in direct relation to a particular event – the Passover.
 - The term "exodus" can also refer to a path or departure from the living to death.
 - And as we see the context of this statement, Luke mentions Jesus' departure

to accomplish His purpose in Jerusalem.

- In other words, Moses and Elijah were asking Jesus about His plan in fulfilling the Passover by dying on the cross.
 - So for the disciples to hear this conversation must have been a huge clarifying conversation as to the fulfillment of what Christ came to do. (Or so we would think)
- Jesus' death wasn't a sign of defeat, but rather it was a fulfillment of the Passover that pictures Israel's victory over slavery and death in which they had faced in Egypt.
 - Well this begs the question: "How does this tie into the figures standing before them?"
- Moses was the leader that established God's Laws and physically led the people out of Egypt and slavery to the edge of the promised land.
 - However, the Hebrew scriptures recorded that Moses dies before the journey was complete.
 - As a matter of fact, Deuteronomy 34:5-6 tells us that Moses was buried in a place that no man knew. Check out the text:

Deuteronomy 34:5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 34:6 And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day.

- Friends, the fact that no man knows where Moses was buried points us to an eschatological picture.
 - We must also note that Moses mentioned in Deuteronomy this "preview of coming attractions" regarding "a Prophet like him".
 - Check out what Moses recorded in Deuteronomy 18:15-19:

Deuteronomy 18:15 "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

Deuteronomy 18:16 This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.'

Deuteronomy 18:17 The Lord said to me, 'They have spoken well.

Deuteronomy 18:18 I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

Deuteronomy 18:19 It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.

- So it becomes clear even from Moses that there will be one in who will be raised up from among them who "they must listen to".

- We will see this significance a bit later, tonight.
- But before we get there, we must also examine our second figure and his significance – Elijah.
- Elijah, was a mighty prophet of the Lord and scripture tells us that when Elijah's life ended, God ushered him into heaven, "without passing through death first".
 - Check out the text in 2 Kings 2:11:

2 Kings 2:11 As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.

- What becomes even more interesting in the Hebrew scriptures is that just like Elijah's departure was mysterious, so is Elijah's return:
 - Turn with me to Malachi 4:5-6.

Malachi 4:5 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

Malachi 4:6 He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

- So, we see with both Elijah and Moses, they have very interesting departures, and yet both are here in a glorified form (not resurrected) talking with Jesus.
 - We will have an opportunity to dive more into Elijah next week, but right now let's look at what's happening.
 - Remember, context is key and the conversation being discussed is regarding: Messiah's death, a coming Kingdom, and eternal things.
 - On top of that Jesus is wanting to give the disciples a foretaste of what is to come regarding eternal matters – so how does all this tie together.
 - This is what we see:
 - Elijah's sudden departure into heaven is directly connected to His future return regarding the end of the age (a literal physical return of Elijah).
 - And just as it will be for Elijah, so it will be for Christ in His second coming to physically rule in a literal Kingdom on earth.
 - And in the same way that Moses led the people from slavery to freedom, Christ will lead those who have placed faith in Him from sin to salvation.
 - Lastly, what we witness with both Moses and Elijah is that with Moses, he was the recorder of the Law.
 - This is where we begin to see within the 1st century many of the scribes and religious leaders referring to the Law as "The Law of Moses".
 - And in the same way we see the Prophet Elijah, who was considered a prominent prophet during His day, in a way, here he is representative of the summation of the Old Testament prophets.

- And in-between both the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah), we find Jesus Christ.
 - It is Christ who is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.
 - Christ pictures the true fulfillment of the Passover in that those who are in Him, that death is not the period, but rather is the means into eternal life and the coming Kingdom.
- It would be after seeing this scene on the high mountain that the one and only Peter felt the need to provide a “premature postulation”. Check out verses 5-6:

Mark 9:5 Peter *said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

Mark 9:6 For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified.

- So rather than Peter taking this moment in and maybe seeking to understand what was being witnessed, Peter opens his mouth and assumes.
 - Although Peter makes a correct assumption it is in fact premature because it is not the right time timing.
 - Peter sees the glory of the Lord shining from Jesus and assumes that the Kingdom was arriving on earth at the moment.
 - So, Peter makes the suggestion to make three tabernacles or “booths” one for each – being Jesus, Elijah, and Moses.
 - It’s clear that Peter had the right idea (the right motives) but the wrong timing.
 - He was applying the Hebrew scriptures idea of Sukkot to the matters concerning the Kingdom.
 - I mention this because in the Law, the Lord established an annual fall feast for Israel called the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. (Leviticus 23:41-44)
 - The Feast commemorates the wilderness wanderings of Israel with the Lord.
 - It served as a picture of God’s people living in a temporary existence on earth as they await their entry into the promised land (the Kingdom).
 - These feasts that the Lord gave Israel served to point to something much greater.
 - There is this sense of remembering what God had done in the past while also having a prophetic element regarding future happenings. (Dual purpose)
 - For instance, the Passover celebrated the exodus from Egypt while also serving as a future picture of Messiah’s death as a means to pay for the sins of the people. (Witnessed with Yom Kippur)
 - And in that same way, the Feast of Tabernacle served in this dual way.
 - So where the feast memorialized the wilderness wanderings regarding temporary dwelling, it also pictures God’s people dwelling with the Lord in the Coming Kingdom (Jesus’ Second Coming)
 - Check out Zechariah 14:9 and Zechariah 14:16

Zechariah 14:9 And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.

- ◦ Here is Zechariah 14:16:

Zechariah 14:16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

- So Peter has a theological understanding of this celebratory moment, yet he is misunderstanding the two-fold nature of Messiah and His Comings.
 - He recognizes Jesus' identity, but He has much to learn in these last few months before Christ is brought to the cross in order to continue the Kingdom Program.
 - So, Peter mumbles off his best effort because he has no true words for this Holy moment
 - It's like the song we hear every Christmas, "I can only imagine": If we were standing before the Lord in His Shekinah Glory, we truly would have no words.
 - And even our best attempts at putting a sentence together would miss the mark.
 - So in an effort to recorrect Peter and his thinking regarding Christ's two-fold nature, Peter and the other two disciples are met with "a prominent voice".
 - Check out verses 7-8.

Mark 9:7 Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!"

Mark 9:8 All at once they looked around and saw no one with them anymore, except Jesus alone.

- It is at this point in the text where we witness a powerful act of God as Mark mentions that the very voice of God is now heard audibly for the second time.
 - We first experienced this audible voice at Jesus' baptism from John the Baptist. (Heavenly voice in Hebrew is *Bat kol*).
 - We now experience the second audible voice here in Mark 9:7.
 - And what becomes so encouraging is that the voice of God, echos a similar message that the Father spoke earlier.
 - And I believe this is so key for us to understand because it speaks to the Father's consistency in His messaging.
 - He is not an Author of confusion, but rather, He displays a consistent message throughout time regarding His Son and His Purpose.
 - And this situation is no different. He must give Peter, once again, this slap on the back of the neck to focus on the spiritual wisdom that is being given.
 - Rather than getting in His own way or ahead of the plan for that matter.

- Mark mentions that a cloud form covered them and a voice out of the clouds spoke and said:
 - “This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!”
 - Again, notice that the statement before is slightly different than the first statement the Father makes at the Baptism.
- It seems as if this statement is for Peter to hone in on and pay attention to.
 - What really becomes this beautiful picture is as Moses and Elijah are speaking to the God-Man, the One in whom they encountered powerfully on Mount Sinai, He is now in full Glory and they can see Him face to face.
 - What a privilege it was for Peter, James, and John to have had this experience that the Old Testament saints could not see but believed in by faith.
- This is why we see Peter document this eye-witness experience in 2 Peter 1:16-18, because the very message we believe (The Gospel) is rooted in a single person.
 - Check out the text quickly:

2 Peter 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

2 Peter 1:17 For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”—

2 Peter 1:18 and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

- I love how Mark concludes this particular moment, because it gets to the heart of the matter.
 - The text states that after this supernatural transfiguration and the voice of the Father had spoken, the Shekinah glory is concealed, and the figures have left, only Christ remained.
 - What a powerful moment this was, especially when we think through the great symbology of this moment in light of the context of this scene.
 - That the full revelation of God to the world is found solely in the Person of Jesus Christ.
 - So when we look at the significance of both Moses and Elijah on the scene it reflects the very expression of two key scriptures:
 - John 5:46-47 and Hebrews 1:1-3. Check out the text really quickly:

John 5:46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.

John 5:47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

Hebrews 1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

Hebrews 1:2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Hebrews 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

- Friends, the mere fact that Jesus is left alone is to tell the disciples that Jesus is the very expression of the Law and the Prophets.
 - So to hear the very words of Jesus and to obey His very instructions is to obey God Himself!
 - And this is the instructions in which the disciples are to hone into.
 - Once Jesus departs, they are to hold onto the words in which He has spoken and to teach others of His truth.
 - So rather than the disciples feeling the need to interject their own understandings or interpretations of a matter, they must be willing to proclaim Jesus' words alone.
 - Secondly, what we see is a summation of what Jesus has stated before and that is the disciples' service to the King right now is a deposit into the life that is to come.
 - So as we live in this world we must recognize that we are not of it, but as the Feast of Tabernacle is understood, we are simply passing through.
 - And as we hold onto the words of Jesus (the Bible) and abide by it, and do, that we will gain much joy and have great hope for the things to come.
 - And lastly, there is this message of great hope! That death is not the end and that in Christ there is life abundant!
 - Friends, may I encourage you that Christ alone should be your joy.
 - Christ alone should be your dwelling place.
 - Christ alone should be your treasure.
 - For it is in Him that eternal life, true life, is found. For anything other than Christ is not true life at all.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 9B

Chapter 9:9-13

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- At this critical point in our study, I believe it best to review this continual unveiling of Christ's identity and mission in a more explicit manner.
 - This begins in Mark 8:27 where we witnessed in Caesarea Philippi, near the Cave of Pan, where Peter made this great confession.
 - It was through the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit that Peter states that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God."
 - And this spoke directly to the Identity of Jesus' Person.
 - It was after that confession that Jesus strictly charged the disciples to not say a word regarding this Revelation.
 - From there, after Jesus' identity was revealed, He began to explain in detail, to His disciples, what He came to do.
 - He told them that the Son of Man had to suffer and die, yet on the third day be raised up.
 - It wasn't too much later after hearing this difficult news that Peter spoke prematurely by rebuking Jesus.
 - He tells Jesus, (in my words): "This will not happen on my watch Jesus. This plan will not go down this way."
 - So, what may have seemed to be very honorable and courageous, was actually Peter stepping on the Father's plan and Christ's missional work.
 - So in an effort to refocus Peter and the disciples on the work of the Kingdom Program, they would need to get on the bandwagon and have a better understanding of the plan.
 - This is where we witnessed Jesus move into the conversation regarding Discipleship and the cost of following Him.
 - This pursuit of following Jesus fully was not one that would necessarily render immediate reward right now that was tangible, but rather it was a pursuit for eternal things.
 - In other words, don't hold onto the temporary things that life offers here and now – these things are merely temporal.
 - Rather, pursue living well for Messiah now and have your eyes fixated on eternal things for that is where the true reward is.
 - Jesus is desiring for His disciples and anyone that follows after Him, to gain an eternal perspective despite the short and temporal pleasures this life provides.
 - Remember, what the people were anticipating with Messiah's arrival was a glorious Kingdom to come right then and there.
 - They were anticipating Jesus to take over and restore all things militantly and with full divine power.
 - But because of the religious leader's rejection of Messiah, the Kingdom would come at a later time.
 - Therefore, those who would follow Christ needed to live in this current world with an eternal perspective in anticipation for the Kingdom to come.
 - So what do you do when you need to get this selected group of men on the same page with the eternal redemptive plan in mind?

- Well, you give them a glimpse of what is to come!
- And lo and behold this glimpse would be given to only 3 men on a high mountain where they would witness Messiah transform before their eyes.
- Jesus unveils Himself in a way that Peter, James, and John witnessed His Shekinah Glory as to witness “a preview of coming attractions”.
 - In other words, Jesus wanted them to see, for a moment, now what they would have fully in a future day as they come to embrace the difficult mission ahead.
- It’s like when your parents told you as a child, do your chores well now while I am away and upon my return, if it has been done well, a reward will come.
 - So Jesus shows these men His Glory so that they could see that death and suffering now is not the means to an end, but rather through it comes the Glory that awaits.
 - And what a healthy reminder for us as believers in Christ, right now in the here and now, that our present suffering doesn’t compare to the Glory that is to come.
- Therefore, we must put on the mind of Christ and trust in His planning and timing rather than our own means and plans.
 - For it is Christ alone that we should listen to and obey which means that as we abide in and obey the scriptures themselves, we are abiding in Christ.
 - Friends, this is all the more reason why we should take seriously the study of the word and abiding in its truth.
- So where we find ourselves at this point tonight is after this glorious transfiguration moment of Jesus on the High mountain where He is standing between Moses and Elijah.
 - As a quick note, it was at this moment where we discovered that Moses and Elijah were discussing with Jesus what He would accomplish missionally.
 - And it was in that conversation where Jesus once again mentions the leading towards His death in being the Passover lamb.
 - Jesus was going to be approaching death soon.
- And this reality is what Peter and the other disciples are struggling with understanding. They are trying to piece together:
 - “What is the purpose of Messiah dying and how does this all connect?”
- Tonight, we will discover the following things:
 - 1. How one figure in particular speaks to the comings of Messiah.
 - 2. How each coming speaks to God’s redemptive plan.
 - 3. How the believer is to respond as we await the coming of the Kingdom.
- If I were to put a tag on tonight’s text it would simply be: “In the Meantime”
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 9:9-13.

Mark 9:9 As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders

not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead.

Mark 9:10 They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.

Mark 9:11 They asked Him, saying, “Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

Mark 9:12 And He said to them, “Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

Mark 9:13 But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.”

- Let’s Pray.
- I was helping my son with his math homework yesterday and I could tell he was getting frustrated.
 - He started off on a good note, but as he continued, you could tell that energy began to wane.
 - As I see his demeanor from across the kitchen, I tell him that the goal for doing well grade-wise all year long is a trip to Orlando, Florida.
 - We took them there before as they had experienced for themselves the fun and excitement of Universal Studios.
 - However the glorious excitement that once was, now seemed to fade off in the background because what was before him seemed a bit daunting.
 - As he hears me mention the Orlando trip experience, he burst out in tears because he remembered the trip and wants it, but is trying to figure out if he had it in him to finish well.
 - I let him cry and give him a moment to compose himself and afterwards, I come back and say – “Alright son: Do we push through or do we give up?”
 - He looked at me with tears in his eyes and said “We push through!”
 - Friends, this will be what the disciples will have to find themselves doing in the meantime from the moment that Christ would leave them till the moment they see Him again.
 - And as believers today, we too find ourselves in the same boat!
 - Tonight, we will witness what must be done in the meantime between the now and the not yet future.
 - Pick me up at verses 9-10.

Mark 9:9 As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders **not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead.**

Mark 9:10 They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.

- It is after the witnessing of such a marvelous and glorious moment of Christ having been transfigured before Peter, James, and John, that they now descend the high mountain.
 - With such amazing sights and revelation revealed, one would assume that this information would be shared with the group.
 - However, Jesus informs the 3 disciples that they are not to tell what they witnessed until after a particular event occurs.
 - And that event is Christ rising from the dead.
 - There are two questions that arise from this descending moment from the mountain that some may have considered prior.
 - And those questions are the following:
 - 1. Why those 3 disciples? (What about them was so special or unique?)
 - 2. Why keep what was witnessed in silence until this appointed moment in time?
 - To the first question there needed to be some witnesses to this dynamic moment in which Jesus would show off His full Glory as “a preview of coming attractions”.
 - It happened to be that the ones selected are the ones who were key players in leading and helping establish the New Testament Church.
 - Understand, nothing was unique about these three men and on top of that Peter spoke haphazardly and oftentimes at the wrong moments.
 - So what was the methodology behind Jesus’ choice?
 - Friends, this points us to the reality that Jesus was in fact making these men into what He said He would – “fishers of men”.
 - They brought no accolades or pristine qualities to the table. They were simply being equipped by the Lord Jesus moment by moment.
 - And isn’t that true of every believer today: That the more we follow Jesus and willingly submit unto His ways, He provides opportunities of growth and development in Christlikeness and responsibility.
 - You may have heard this statement before that: God qualifies the called, He doesn’t call the qualified.
 - And in this same way, He takes these three men and entrusts them with the Kingdom Program necessities.
 - And what we find from this revelation shared with these men is that they did not disclose what they saw until after Jesus’ resurrection.
 - Because it would be at that moment for those men that it would all begin to make sense.
 - And now they would have the Christ-like confidence to share with the others what they had seen for themselves.
 - It’s then in verse 10 that we see, unlike the other times in which Jesus told men and women not to disclose what was shown but they did anyway, that the disciples obeyed His instructions.
 - We know this based upon the Greek word used for “seized” in verse 10.

- The word “seized” in Greek is *krateo* (Kra-teo) which means to retain possession. In other words, hold dear with what has been shared.
- What becomes quite intriguing at this point is that with all this revelation that has been made known, these men are still struggling with the reality of Messiah’s need to suffer.
 - How could such glorious splendor and power be led to die and suffer?
 - What was a very straightforward reality for Jesus was a confusing calculus equation for the disciples.
- Verse 10 tells us that the 3 disciples were discussing amongst themselves “what rising from the dead meant.”
 - “We know that you are Messiah without a doubt, but how does death equate to victory?”
 - It seems as if what the disciples have been taught about Messiah and what they are hearing from the very mouth of Messiah are two completely different things.
 - So they seek to hear and listen to what Jesus has to say regarding this eschatological matter.
 - Check out what they ask Him. Look at verse 11.

Mark 9:11 They asked Him, saying, “Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

- The disciples are seeking to reconcile in their minds why Messiah must die after having witnessed Elijah on the high mountain alongside Jesus.
 - This confusion has come about over a period of time because of the teachings of that day from the scribes.
 - As a matter of fact, if you were to read this verse in a Jewish translation it reads “Why do the Torah-teachers say that Elijah must come first?”
 - So it seems as if the disciples are confused as to the timing of Messiah’s glorious arrival in the Kingdom according to what they have been taught.
 - The scribes taught, according to Malachi 4:5-6 that there would be an appearing of Elijah and what His role would be.
 - To better understand Elijah’s appearing and role, turn with me to Malachi 4:1-6.

Malachi 4:1 “For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,” says the Lord of hosts, “so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.”

Malachi 4:2 “But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.

Malachi 4:3 You will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the

soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing,” says the Lord of hosts.

Malachi 4:4 “Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel.

Malachi 4:5 “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

Malachi 4:6 He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”

- So these were the last words written in the Hebrew Scriptures where Malachi prepares Israel for God’s next plan.
 - The text tells us that there is a day of coming judgement in which will be released upon the earth and all who do evil.
 - However, for those who have trusted in the Lord (the sun of righteousness) they will experience the entrance of a new age.
 - It becomes clear that this references that of the coming Kingdom, a place of perfect joy, health, justice, mercy and the like.
 - But in order for Israel to attain this coming Kingdom, they must “Remember the Law of Moses”
 - They must hold fast to the teachings in which God had established through His servant at that time (Moses).
 - And along with holding fast to the teachings of the Law of Moses, they were to wait in anticipation for Elijah in these “last days”.
 - Again, with the disciples just having witnessed the sight of Elijah in this vision, this teaching from the scribes, as one can imagine, is resonating in their minds.
 - Which prompts why they asked the question regarding Elijah in the first place.
 - In other words, we affirm and see that you are Messiah, but where is Elijah? We have always been taught that He precedes you.
 - It seems as if there is a greater question of timing that is happening here.
 - So Jesus responds to their question of this timetable, if you will, in verses 12 and 13, but in a very coded way. Check out the text.

Mark 9:12 And He said to them, “Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

Mark 9:13 But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.”

- Jesus begins His explanation of this matter by addressing what their eschatological anticipation is.
 - That indeed Elijah does come first and restores all things – the teachers of the Law got this part correct.
 - However, we must keep in mind that up to this point, Jesus is having to

consistently remind the people of the written word of God and not oral tradition.

- We also witnessed in last week's teaching that the Father spoke to Peter, James, and John that they are to "Listen to Jesus".
- For what Jesus says is what must be tightly held to.
- The question arises: "What was the importance of the audible voice of God being made known on the high mountain?"
 - It would be to clarify for these men that to gain a full understanding of God's redemptive plan, they must listen to the teaching of Christ and not the teaching of men, or even their own presuppositions.
 - We have been seeing how Jesus' identity as Messiah was being overlooked by most because they were anticipating a militant conqueror and not a lowly humble man.
- So, Jesus uses this moment to explain to the 3 that what they have been taught regarding these end times matters are indeed correct.
 - However, Jesus now pushes the envelope a bit further by adding this rhetorical question to bring about clarity of the timeline.
 - "Your statement about Elijah coming first is true, but also the scriptures speak to the Son of Man suffering many things and being treated with contempt"
- In other words, you can't have one without the other. If we are to hold to scripture as truth, we must take with it all that is there.
 - We can't just pick and choose what we want to acknowledge about scripture and do away with the rest.
 - How do we reconcile Psalm 16:10, Psalm 22, Psalm 34:20, Isaiah 52, and Isaiah 53 – to name a few.
- So, where this end time picture seems to be a bit foggy for these men, Jesus uses this moment to tighten up their understanding of this timeline.
 - Because, for these men, death and resurrection were nowhere in their equation of the Kingdom and its full Glory.
 - However, God's redemptive plan required that before there could be this coming Glory for those who believe to receive it, there first must be suffering.
- The disciples were struggling with how present suffering and dying for Messiah would bring about restoration for Israel.
 - This was the conundrum, and might I suggest this is potentially why Jesus told them not to speak of what they saw on the high mountain.
 - For if the disciples were to share what they saw in their lack of understanding about death and resurrection, the message of the Gospel would have been garbled.
 - And therefore the theology of believers would have been skewed because a cross-less Christ is a voided Gospel.
- Friends, the reality is, in order for man to be made right with God and in right fellowship with Him, there would need to be one who would stand in our place.

- We must recognize that God’s requirement for fellowship is perfect Holiness.
- And the reality is no one, apart from Christ, could meet that standard nor could keep the Law perfectly.
- It now begins to become clear all the more why Moses and Elijah are conversing with Christ regarding the Passover.
- So this is why when Jesus sees the condition of the house of Israel and how far they were from keeping the Law, He addresses the false shepherd (teachers of that day).
 - So as Israel continued being led incorrectly by the teachers of that day, the entire house of Israel would continue to be led astray.
 - And this would be why the Lord would send Himself, through the Person of His Son to represent not just Israel, but humanity in General by coming to die for our sins.
- So Jesus, in verse 13 explains to the 3 that “...Elijah, has indeed come and that they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him”
 - Herein lies the cryptic messaging, if you will.
- So Jesus tells them that Elijah has come in accomplishing his mission however they have not seen a literal, physical Elijah.
 - So how is Jesus able to justify this means of prophetic ministry here?
- Simply put, Jesus refers to a similar ministry that would be accomplished in Malachi as well, in which we covered in the beginning of our Mark study.
 - Turn with me really quickly to Malachi 3:1-3.

Malachi 3:1 “Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the Lord of hosts.

Malachi 3:2 “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap.

Malachi 3:3 He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness.

- This non-named figure in Malachi is simply indicated as “My Messenger” whereas in Malachi 4, the Lord provides a name – Elijah.
 - Now remember in the beginning of our study, we mentioned that after 400 years of silence there was one in whom spoke regarding the coming of Messiah.
 - And this pronouncement was one that garnered the attention of many (Like Elijah would in his coming) and this person was none other than John the Baptist.
 - And as we read in Matthew 17:13 it becomes confirmed that Jesus’ explanation of Elijah having come speaks again to a prophetic role that John the Baptist fulfilled for Jesus’ first coming.
 - John even mentioned that his work was in direct connection with that of Isaiah’s

prophecy found in Isaiah 40:3. (John 1:23). Check out the text.

**Isaiah 40:3 A voice is calling,
“Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness;
Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.**

- Therefore, John the Baptist couldn’t be the literal Elijah nor Elijah reincarnated as some liberal scholars have suggested.
 - As a matter of fact, John the Baptist himself denies that he is Elijah appeared again.
 - What Jesus was explaining to the disciples was that John was a type of Elijah or example of Elijah who has come serving in and with a similar purpose.
 - To show you this in scripture for yourself, turn to Luke 1:17 to understand this timetable in which Jesus is explaining to the 3 disciples.
 - We will pick up where the angel Gabriel is speaking to John the Baptist’s father, Zacharias.

Luke 1:13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.

Luke 1:14 You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

Luke 1:15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb.

Luke 1:16 And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.

Luke 1:17 It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

- And indeed John’s arrival on the scene sparked many crowds and followers, but most importantly many responded positively to his message of Repentance regarding the Kingdom and preparing to receive their Messiah.
 - And the moment in which Jesus arrived, John announced Him to those who were ready and willing to receive Jesus.
 - Now the question becomes: “How does John’s mission differ from Elijah’s mission?”
 - In one sense, Elijah’s ministry will be one of National response! John’s ministry did not impact the entire nation (religious leaders were the majority)
 - Elijah’s pronouncement will cause the leaders of that day to turn their hearts back to the teaching of the scripture as that of a child (child-like faith).
 - This will be a moment where Israel (nationally) will respond positively to the truth of the Law versus their own interpretation.

- And as a result, Israel as a nation will return in large number to true worship in a temple in Jerusalem.
- Therefore, preparing the people for the end of this age and the dawning of the Kingdom.
- So where John the Baptist and His suffering in preparing the people came at a cost, so would Messiah's first coming come with a cost for the people to be made right with God. (1 Kings 19)
 - (Where Jezebel failed to kill Elijah in 1 Kings 19, John the Baptist is killed by another "Jezebel" – Herodias) "and they did to him whatever they wished"
- And in the same way, it would hold true for Elijah in his literal coming as the forerunner for Christ' second coming.
 - Only this time Judgement follows and the opportunity for Israel to see their King rightly is presented, once and for all.
- So what we see here regarding this timeline is that before Judgement, first must come grace and salvation.
 - In other words, there can be no glory and Kingdom unless, first, the King makes a way for the people to enter in.
 - And the moment that we try to assume that we have a better plan is the moment that we, like Peter, find ourselves with our foot in our mouths.
- The disciples would need to understand the plan before they could attain the glorious prize in the end (The Kingdom of God)
 - What difficulty this must have been for these men to grasp?
 - They have seen the goodness of the Glory of God in His fulness only to come to the realization that this reality will come at a later time.
- So, in the meantime, until this moment arrives, as the Father spoke from the cloud on the high mountain, these men are to "Listen to Jesus".
 - Here's the question tonight: "As you are waiting for Messiah to return, what will He find you doing?"
 - Will you be serving as you await in great anticipation?
 - How will you be loving your neighbors in the passing of time or will you simply be sitting on your blessed assurance for Christ to return.
- Jesus in the end will be looking to see how faithful His bride has been.
 - Will she have been faithful to the proclamation of the Gospel, or will she have compromised on some things?
 - The reality is if we get so caught up on what is coming, we will never be focused on the work that is right in front of us.
- As you serve well now and suffer well in this world now, in the end, you will be rewarded well in the Kingdom.
 - I leave you with the very words of the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 5:1-4, 6-11:

1 Peter 5:1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be

revealed:

1 Peter 5:2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;

1 Peter 5:3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

1 Peter 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

1 Peter 5:7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

1 Peter 5:10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

1 Peter 5:11 To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

- ○ Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 9C

Chapter 9:14-29

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- Last week we went into detail concerning the “after glow moment”, if you will, of the transfiguration moment.
 - It was at the start of the descent from the high mountain that Jesus dropped some heavy information on Peter, James, and John.
 - Some of those details Jesus discussed during the descent, we discovered, were the following:
 - 1. Jesus’ eschatological explanation of Elijah and the timing of Jesus’ first advent.
 - 2. Jesus’ explanation of God’s redemptive plan by means of Messiah’s death.
 - 3. How the believer should live with eyes for eternity in the here and now as we await the glorious return of Christ.
 - Tonight, we find Jesus and His 3 disciples having just arrived to the lower side of the mountain.
 - It will be as if they have moved from this glorious mountain top experience back to the reality of life.
 - And that reality will be a bountiful mess waiting to be addressed by Christ, Himself.
 - As we walk through the text tonight, I want to outline for us some thoughts as to the flow of the text.
 - Tonight, we are going to see the following:
 - 1. A Disappointing Welcome (v.14-18)
 - 2. A Detailed and Disturbing Scene (v.19-22)
 - 3. A Desperate Plea
 - 4. A Demonstrative Picture
 - 5. A Constant Dependence
 - If I were to place a tag on tonight’s text it would simply be: “After the Glow Has Faded”
 - I invite you now to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 9:14-29.

Mark 9:14 And when they came back to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them.

Mark 9:15 Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him.

Mark 9:16 And He asked them, “What are you disputing with them?”

Mark 9:17 And one person from the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, because he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak;

Mark 9:18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes stiff. And I told Your disciples so that they would cast it out, but they could not do it.”

Mark 9:19 And He answered them and *said, “O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!”

Mark 9:20 And they brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, the spirit immediately threw him into convulsions, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth.

Mark 9:21 And He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood.

Mark 9:22 It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to kill him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!”

Mark 9:23 But Jesus said to him, “‘If You can?’ All things are possible for the one who believes.”

Mark 9:24 Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief!”

Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again!”

Mark 9:26 And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, “He is dead!”

Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him, and he got up.

Mark 9:28 When He came into the house, His disciples began asking Him privately, “Why is it that we could not cast it out?”

Mark 9:29 And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything except prayer.”

- Let’s Pray.
- If I were to take a poll of what your top 5 highlights in life might be, I am sure in that top five would be your wedding day – it’s a day one would never forget.
 - Memories were made, photos taken, tears were shed, and joy was in the air.
 - However, after the wedding day has faded and the anniversary has past, life begins to settle in.
 - You encounter your first disagreement, your first let down, your first tragedy.
 - It is in those moments that you don’t rush to the photo on the fireplace saying, “Oh how I wish we could go back to this moment!”
 - It’s in those difficult moments that you are recalling the very words that you uttered before your spouse, the pastor, the people, and God Himself.
 - It becomes those vows and commitment to God’s definition of marriage that you realize your unwavering commitment to one another even when life gets hard.
 - Why? Because this commitment was a commitment till death do you part and God has established this means for your good and His glory.
 - It’s after this glorious moment on the high mountain that Jesus and His three disciples will arrive to the base of the mountain for reality to settle in.
 - And what we will see tonight is that the disciples, in a way, will need to be reminded of this cost commitment of listening and trusting Messiah above all things.

- Pick me up at verses 14-18.

Mark 9:14 And when they came back to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them.

Mark 9:15 Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him.

Mark 9:16 And He asked them, “What are you disputing with them?”

Mark 9:17 And one person from the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, because he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak;

Mark 9:18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes stiff. And I told Your disciples so that they would cast it out, but they could not do it.”

- It is here that we find Jesus, Peter, James, and John having arrived back to the 9 disciples, only to be faced with a disappointing welcome.
 - The text tells us in verse 14 that there was a large crowd around them, and in the midst of this crowd were some familiar faces.
 - Mark tells us that within this crowd of people were some scribes who seem to be arguing with the disciples.
 - Now one question that begins to surface at this point is: “What were the scribes debating about with the disciples?”
 - In fact, this is the exact question that Jesus asks the people.
 - We will find out this answer later on tonight. In the means time let's keep moving.
 - Verse 15 tells us that upon the crowd seeing Jesus, that they were amazed and began running towards Him to greet Him.
 - In other words, this crowd was excited to see Jesus – and what perfect timing it was.
 - It would be upon Jesus and the three arriving on the scene that Jesus questions the crowd as to the reasoning of the dispute with the scribes.
 - We can assume that Jesus and the 3 were either close enough to see a confrontation of sorts or Jesus had divinely perceived what was going on with the scribes there.
 - Whatever the case, it becomes apparent that Jesus’ line of questioning becomes hijacked by a concerned inquirer in the crowd.
 - Verse 17 mentions that a man amongst the crowd speaks up not to answer the question Jesus has just posed, but rather to file a grievance of sorts.
 - Check out what the man tells Jesus in verses 17-18.

Mark 9:17 And one person from the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, because he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak;

Mark 9:18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes stiff. And I told Your

disciples so that they would cast it out, but they could not do it.”

- What I don't want us to miss from this grievance filed is the subject by which the father of this demonic child is referring to.
 - Notice that he begins by saying, “Teacher, I brought You my son...” yet he ends by saying (in my own words) “I told your disciples, but they couldn't do it.”
 - What's the problem here?
 - The problem is that Jesus was not on the scene to have received the man's son in the first place, so why did the man address the question this way first?
 - What this father was getting at was the fact that these men have been with Jesus for some time.
 - And with that, because Jesus was not physically present to respond to this immediate need, he assumed the next best in line were the disciples themselves.
 - I can only imagine in this moment, Jesus giving these men the side eye as if to say “Oy Vey, come on guys. Are we still struggling to understand the big picture?”
 - I mention this phrase of frustration because, if you recall, there was a point where Jesus sent out His 12, missionally, by themselves.
 - We saw this instance in Mark 6:7-13 where Jesus sent them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits.
 - However, what we must remember from that instance is the purpose of that moment: It was for the Apostles to depend upon the provision of the Father.
 - They could not accomplish the task at hand without relying upon God's power.
 - However, it seems as if the disciples were lacking in something because the father of the child mentioned that the disciples couldn't heal the child.
 - Can you imagine the tension in this moment between that of Jesus and His disciples?
 - Maybe as Jesus was locking eyes with them, they are locking eyes with the ground beneath them.
 - And we can estimate that there was some tension there because verses 19-22 provides us with Jesus' response. Check out the text:

Mark 9:19 And He answered them and *said, “O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!”

Mark 9:20 And they brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, the spirit immediately threw him into convulsions, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth.

Mark 9:21 And He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood.

Mark 9:22 It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to kill him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!”

- Mark now moves us to a detailed and disturbing scene which involves a firm rebuke of the crowd, the father, and the disciples.
 - I mention this because these next four verses reveal 2 insightful points related to Jesus addressing the people. Those 2 points are the following:
 - 1) The lack of faith and unbelief that generation had despite the evidence that Messiah had shown previously.
 - 2) And the painful reality of demonic activity.
 - Let's address the first point:
 - Jesus' answer to the man's response seems to be directly targeted towards the crowd as a whole, including the disciples.
 - On one end, the people have witnessed the mighty miracles of Christ throughout the Galilee region.
 - However, the leadership complex of that day did not attribute these mighty works to God, but rather to Satan.
 - On top of that, if you look at Matthew and Luke's gospel, you'll notice that they both include a rather interesting word describing the crowd.
 - He mentions the word perverted; "You unbelieving and perverted generation".
 - This word "perverted" in Greek literally means mislead, distorted, or made crooked.
 - Well, this could potentially explain, on one end, the unbelief that was presented amongst the people.
 - On top of that we mentioned earlier that the scribes were in the midst of this crowd stirring up confusion and sowing seeds of division.
 - And to make matters worse, the fact that the disciples were not able to exorcise this demon out of this child would further cause into question Jesus' Messiahship by the people.
 - Friends, this was the situation in which Jesus was walking into.
 - And it becomes clear that the people's hearts and their ability to believe in the Person and work of Messiah was once again maligned by the scribes, but now the disciples themselves have, in a way, dirtied their witness.
 - So, Jesus rebukes the crowd because of their unbelief while also addressing the father and His Disciples.
 - The reality was that this man came seeking healing for His child from Jesus, which means that this man was familiar with who Jesus was and what He could do.
 - This type of demon possession was not something new for Jesus, the only difference now was that Jesus wasn't present at the initial moment.
 - However, the man trusted Jesus enough to trust the men who were following Him.
 - So at this point you could feel Jesus' frustration with His disciples as well as the father's frustration with Jesus' disciples as well.
 - This is where we see Jesus make His "How Long" statement.

- “How long shall I be with you?” It’s almost as if the disciples are still not realizing that there was a day soon coming in which Jesus would not physically be there with them.
- The disciples were missing something key that they have had all along, however this reoccurring theme of failing to get the lesson continues to ring forth.
 - So after the failure of the disciples, the lack of faith from the father because of the disciples, and the gathered crowd of spectators, Jesus takes this matter into His own hands.
 - Even with the unbelief in the crowd, Jesus moves towards this man’s need with much compassion.
- So Jesus tells the disciples to bring the child to Me.
 - In other words, “you jacked this all the way up, now I have to clean up this mess.”
- Mark tells us towards the end of verse 19, that as they bring the child to Jesus, the demon creates quite a disturbing scene.
- Notice the actions of this demon inhabiting this child:
 - 1. Convulsions
 - 2. Falling to the ground
 - 3. Rolling around and foaming at the mouth
 - 4. And as verse 22 notes trying to cause the boy to die.
- It’s at this point that I would like to address our second insightful point regarding this scene.
 - And that is the reality of the demonic realm and the enemies’ tactics.
- If you remember from our teaching of the demoniac in the Decapolis in Mark 5A, we mentioned several things regarding their goal/aim.
 - And if I were to sum up their goals in three simple words, their assignment is to kill, steal, and destroy.
 - And this pattern of behavior comes only from their leader, Satan himself.
- With demon possession, one of the objectives is to occupy the bodies of human beings in an effort to corrupt and destroy the very image of God.
 - If they can corrupt the body and cause fear and torment within the lives of humanity, they consider that a success.
- And as we witnessed in these encounters between Jesus and the demonic realm, the demons are operating in direct opposition of God and His ways.
 - They will attempt to do whatever they can to make much of their opportunity, however when faced with the mighty power of God they stand no chance.
- Lastly, we covered the fact that the only way in which a demon can escape its host is if it kills the host or if it is expelled.
 - And clearly, the disciples weren’t able to do that even with them having expelled unclean spirits before.
 - Well, this begs the question: “Why couldn’t they have expelled this demon?”

- Remember, there were three miracles that were solely reserved for the Messiah to accomplish.
 - And one of those miracles happened to be expelling a mute demon.
- The ritual of demon expulsion during that day was that in order for the leaders to expel the demon they had to know its name.
 - Well, how can you know the name of the demon if the means to communicate is hindered.
 - Therefore, we can see a few things: 1) Why the scribes were causing such a fuss, and 2) why the disciples looked like failures to the crowd.
- They should have known that they themselves could not expel the demon, only Messiah Himself could.
 - But there was also something else at play here internally for those 9 disciples.
 - The disciples assumed they could do what Jesus did in His absence merely because they were associated with Him.
- It's that sense of pride that because we have done it before, we have the ability to do it again.
 - The sense of accomplishing such great things as they did before with Jesus' authority having been given to them started to rise at this moment.
 - Can you see it now? The disciples seeing this child in the predicament he was in only to say, "Well Jesus isn't here now but we can handle it."
- Friends, this is a danger too often found in ministry if not resting and trusting in the one who gave you the ability to do the ministry work in the first place.
 - There are moments that God will use you mightily to accomplish a particular need, and there will be moments in which you are not used.
- This pride is one that tends to plague the pulpit ministry. The moment you become consistent in preaching week after week, there can be a developed sense of, "I preached that today"
 - And the habit becomes that you think you preached so well or taught so well, yet failing to realize that it was and is the Spirit of God using you to communicate God's truth.
- We must be humble in knowing that God can use such broken, unqualified people while recognizing it is only because of God's power that we are being used.
 - I believe this circles back to Jesus' warning from previous passages regarding the "leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herod".
 - Don't let doing ministry or being in positions of power or associations of power get to your head.
 - Because apart from Christ, we can do nothing and will accomplish nothing. (John 15:5)
- So, with the disciples' misappropriation of their ability and having made a fool of themselves, as one could imagine the doubt has sunk in a bit for this father.
 - So in seeing the boy's predicament and the father's disposition, Jesus asked the question, in verse 21, "How long has this been happening?"
 - Here is where we see some of Jesus' compassion regarding the situation at

hand and what we find is quite saddening.

- Verse 22 tells us that this boy has been in this predicament since childhood – unable to speak and bound by constant torment and death.
 - As one could imagine, this father had nothing left and has not been able to communicate with his son in years.
 - And at times this father has to be on a constant watch over his child because at any moment, his child could attempt suicide because of the possession.
 - This once again emphasizing the reality of demonic possession and the goal of the enemy.
- So with the current disappointment from the disciples' lack of healing his child and hearing the debate between the scribes and the disciples the father says:
 - “But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”
 - It was this statement that caused Jesus' ears to perk up and it was this statement which confirms that Jesus included the father in verse 19.
 - The lack of faith from this generation was ever increasing even with all that Jesus had done in that region.
- One would assume from the stories of Jesus having healed so many and expelling demons that the faith of the people should have increased their trust in Jesus – sadly this was not the case.
 - So Jesus has to personally check the man and get him to see why He sought Jesus out in the first place.
- As a quick note, isn't it interesting how difficult circumstances can serve as a gauge as to where your faith lies.
 - Check out verses 23-24.

Mark 9:23 But Jesus said to him, “If You can?” All things are possible for the one who believes.”

Mark 9:24 Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief!”

- It is here that Jesus confronts the father's desperate plea regarding the healing of the child being possible by stating the phrase, “If you can?”
 - It's almost as if Jesus has to redirect the father's understanding as to who Jesus is.
 - In other words, the issue at hand is not Jesus' ability nor His availability, the issue is the man's ability to exercise faith in the One who can heal the boy despite what he may see.
 - Jesus lets him know that all things are possible to him that believes.
 - Meaning, because you know I am Messiah, you know that I can do all things and am not limited by anything.
 - So with that being said, you must have full confidence and assurance not in what you see. But rather in who you know.
 - This is why I have mentioned time and time again, our Faith has an object, and

that object is a Person and that Person is Jesus who is God.

- Therefore, we must trust that God is trustworthy and He is a truth-teller and therefore what He wills and what He says will be accomplished.
- I would also like to acknowledge what faith is not.
 - Faith is not me just saying I want this thing or need this thing and I slap on at the end “In Jesus name”.
 - Jesus is not a genie in a bottle that you rub the lamp for what you want and if you recite His name three times, He’ll grant you what you want. No!
- Faith is trusting in who Jesus is and leaning on His will and purposes on the matter.
 - Faith misapplied and misaligned to our will rather than God’s will is not the faith of scripture.
- So after Jesus lets the man know that all things are possible to him who believes, it is as if the man burst forth with a new profound confidence that was hidden under the disappointment from the disciples.
 - He cries aloud in verse 24, “I do believe, but help my unbelief!”
- Have you been there? You trust and know that God can do all things and you trust Him as you are praying about a particular situation for a certain end?
 - Yet in the end you find that what you have been praying about doesn’t come about as you expected?
 - This was the original sentiments of the father. He came to the disciples looking for them to be able to heal his son.
 - In their failure to do so, the scribes seed of mocking, laughter, and debate regarding the disciples begins to raise doubt in his mind.
 - By the time Jesus arrives on the scene, the very hope of life is beginning to dwindle from his body because he expected something from a group of men who couldn’t do what only Jesus could!
- And I believe this is the climactic point for this story here and that is, there are only things in which God alone can do and we must trust in Him alone for that.
 - Too many times we see skeptics and non-believers criticizing the church because the people in the church have failed them miserably.
 - Yet at the same time, we must realize that our faith is not in the people who do ministry in the church, our faith is in Christ who holds the church.
- For some people, looking at the church as a place of hope is difficult because they have been let down by the people in the church, yet when we fix our eyes on Jesus, there is this sense of peace in knowing, “He is holding us together – not the other way around!”
 - Jesus is getting this father who sees a desperate and dismal situation and is fixing his gaze upon the One who is able to do what seems impossible.
 - As Jesus stated in Mark 10:27 regarding how hard it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom:

Mark 10:27 Looking at them, Jesus *said, “With people it is impossible, but not

with God; for all things are possible with God.”

- Therefore this man needed to be reassured of what he believed despite what he saw and was experiencing.
 - Check out what Jesus does in response to the man’s demonstration and outcry of faith. Check out verses 25-27.

Mark 9:25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again!”

Mark 9:26 And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, “He is dead!”

Mark 9:27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him, and he got up.

- I don’t want us to miss what is happening here in these three verses as these three verses will set us up to see a demonstrative picture of Christ and the cross.
 - It’s apparent from the text in verse 25 that Jesus, the father, and the demoniac have pulled away from the crowd for privacy.
 - This occurred because, again, Jesus was not performing miracles where there was no demonstration of faith.
 - This private retreat becomes confirmed because verse 25 also notes that before the crowd could fully form and surround this scene, Jesus calls out the Spirit.
 - And notice what type of spirit this is, “a mute and deaf” spirit.
 - This further confirming that the disciples were not able to get rid of this kind of demon therefore confirming this as a Messianic Miracle.
 - Notice however, that no name is mentioned here, simply the fact that the result of the host’s physical condition was that he was deaf and mute.
 - This once again speaking to the authoritative nature of Jesus as well as His identity as Messiah.
 - And not only did Jesus exercise the demon, but the text says that the demon was commanded to never enter the child again.
 - From this point, one would expect an immediate withdrawal from the child therefore allowing the child to be set free from the hold of the demon.
 - However, Mark mentions that the withdrawal was not immediate.
 - Instead, the demonic spirit refuses to leave without putting on a show of sorts.
 - The text states that the demon threw the child to the ground into “terrible convulsions”.
 - In other words, not only was the strength of this demon great but the force in which it was trying to kill the child was of equal strength or greater.
 - So as its final hurrah, the demon drops the child to the ground as if to leave him lifeless.

- Mark tells us in verse 26b that the body looked as if the child had died – this was not only what Peter had witnessed, but what the crowd had seen as well.
- What a scene! Can you imagine the father and the crowd looking at this situation?
 - The father is probably helpless and in disbelief.
 - The crowd is in shock because, it seems as if there is no coming back from this – the boy is dead.
- To the onlooker, it would seem as if Jesus had failed to save the boy and salvage his life.
 - The moment that seemed as if all hope was lost, while everyone saw a dead body lying on the ground, Jesus reached down to the child.
 - And notice verse 27b states that the moment Jesus' hand touched the body of that dead child, life entered back into his body.
- I can imagine at this point, the father is embracing his son as if he had laid eyes on him for the first time in a long time.
 - The life that the father once knew about his son has now forever been changed because Jesus has intervened.
- Friends, this response from Christ was begotten by the faith of this man despite the doubt that he was wrestling with!
 - I can imagine at this point, on one end, the disciples are overjoyed for the father, yet perplexed as to why they couldn't do what was just done.
 - I say this because verse 28 tells us that after the miracle was over and the crowd has disappeared, the disciples, in private ask Jesus a question.
 - Check out the last two verses, verses 28 and 29.

Mark 9:28 When He came into the house, His disciples began asking Him privately, “Why is it that we could not cast it out?”

Mark 9:29 And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything except prayer.”

- Well Jesus and His disciples arrive to a home in the region near Caesarea Philippi – who's home, the text does not tell us.
 - However, we do know that it is a home in which allows privacy for Jesus and the disciples.
 - And it is in the privacy of this home that the disciples asked Jesus a question that had been messing with them since the scribes had arrived earlier that day.
 - And that question was: “Why could we not cast out the demon?”
 - Here is where we get to the heart of the matter regarding the disciples.
 - Jesus answers their question in verse 29 and tells them that “This kind cannot come out by anything except prayer.”
 - Notice that Jesus describes this demon by saying “this kind”. Why?
 - The word for “kind” here is *genos* which simply means this type of demon or

this particular level of demon.

- This is to suggest that the demonic realm has different strength levels, if you will, within the spiritual world.
- And Jesus makes the notion, in a way, that this demon requires an even greater opponent.
 - At this point some may ask the question: “Well didn’t the disciples expel demons before while Jesus was not physically with them?”
 - And the answer to that question is, Yes! However, we must recognize that the disciples were only able to accomplish what they did because of who gave them the authority to do so.
- In other words, it was the father’s will at that point in time for the disciples to exercise that muscle of dependence, independently, if you will, knowing who gave them the ability to accomplish the purpose.
 - However, this situation was not the case. It seems as if these men took it upon themselves to expel this demon in their own power and ability.
 - This is what has caused them to be in this mess in the first place.
- The disciples assumed that because they were associated with Jesus and had been following Him for some time that they had “permission” to take that task on themselves.
 - Now, I can hear some of you now saying, “But Jesus wasn’t around at that time, what were they to do?”
 - And the answer to that is simple: These men should have trusted in God and His ability to take care of the need rather than relying on their previous mission trip.
 - In other words, their faith was more dependent upon their attempts of healing rather than their dependence upon God.
- And once again the disciples fail to see the point of what Jesus is trying to show them – they were getting in their own way!
 - And how humbling this moment shined light on the fact they too were operating with such little faith, as Matthew’s gospel states. (We are prone to respond in this same manner – guard your heart)
- There is a significant takeaway we see from this section of scripture that we mustn’t rush over.
 - And that is matters of faith.
- When we think about faith we must always remember that faith must be in an object and for believers, that object is a person: Jesus the Son of God.
 - Demonstrating this faith means that we are aware of His identity as Messiah, and we recognize that our very source for all things is in Him.
- Where the disciples failed here was that although they believed that Jesus was Messiah, they placed faith in themselves to accomplish the work.
 - And as a result, the disciples were not only humiliated publicly, but their witness for Christ was diminished.
 - The father, the disciples, and the crowd all struggled placing faith in the

proper object which led to their individual failures.

- Where the father of the demon-possessed boy failed was he had placed his faith in the disciples' ability to heal his son, since they were disciples of Jesus.
 - So, the moment that the disciples couldn't heal his son, his faith in Jesus began to wane more as to Jesus' ability to heal his child.
- The crowd demonstrated no faith as they were led astray by the deception and wickedness of the scribes.
 - I believe that there is a key takeaway for those who are seeking to grow in their maturity in Christ.
 - And that is: Your trust in Christ must solely be based upon His words and His person: Not your church, not your Pastor, not your small group leader.
- I see too many times within the global church that people build their entire hope and faith based upon the place in which they worship rather than the God they should be worshipping!
 - I have heard too many stories about Pastors who have become so prideful that they think they are doing something special for God.
 - However, the reality is God has done something special and unique for you that He allows us to participate in His work.
 - We must be ever so careful not to contribute what we do to how good, or the lack thereof, we think we are.
 - Psalm 115:1 tells us this:

**Psalm 115:1 Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory,
for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!**

- And as Paul tells us in Philippians 2:13 "...for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."
 - This was Jesus' point in Matthew's ending of this story in Matthew 17:20.
 - Jesus told his disciples that their failure to drive out the demon was based upon their "littleness of faith".
 - To put it plainly, their faith accomplished nothing because they themselves were their own "object".
 - There is no power or authority in what you do or say no matter how much oil you use in prayer or how many times you say Jesus.
 - The power and authority of God is found in His Person and that is exclusively found in Jesus Christ. There must be a constant dependence upon Jesus.
 - (Listen to Him)
 - You want to see your range of faith increase, trust even more in your Messiah even when things around you look bleak.
 - The reality is all things are possible only when your faith is in the right object and your will is aligned with the Father's plan and desired outcome.
 - The question on the table tonight is who is your faith in?

- Is it rested upon how many years you've followed Jesus?
- Is it rested upon your title and position in the church?
- Is it based upon your level of bible knowledge?
- Or is your faith placed in Christ therefore allowing your maturity and faith to increase even more.
- Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 9D

Chapter 9:30-37

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- We are moving toward the pinnacle moment of Mark's gospel and that is none other than the Passion moment. Here's a quick recap of where we have been up to this point.
 - Midway in Mark 8, Peter, having been illumined by the Holy Spirit, made this great confession regarding Christ's identity.
 - He stated emphatically in the region of Caesarea Philippi that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
 - This established for the twelve the identity of who Jesus was: That He indeed was the Messiah, the Anointed One, promised from the Father.
 - It would be directly after this moment that Jesus would reveal His mission to these men.
 - And that mission consisted of Jesus having to suffer many things, being rejected by the religious leaders, being killed, yet being raised in 3 days.
 - Upon hearing this startling truth, Peter rebukes Jesus, rejecting the idea that their Messiah was to die – for how could a Kingdom come without its King.
 - This was then followed by Jesus correcting Peter by having Peter to set his mind on God's doing and not Satan's doing.
 - In other words, eternal matters are established by an eternal sovereign therefore we must submit to that and not our own understanding.
 - For anything that stands against God's plans are satanic and have an alternative agenda – so Peter needed to get in line with God's plan.
 - It was after this time that Jesus immediately moves into a discussion concerning the cost of discipleship.
 - He explained that to follow Him was a mission and call to come and die with Christ.
 - It required that one consider this great cost of following Christ, yet in pursuing Him would come great reward!
 - However, the reward to come would not be tangible right now, for Jesus was speaking about the eternal rewards that will come when we are with Him.
 - It was then that Jesus explained to His disciples that although His coming death seemed like the end of a good thing, that death was not the end.
 - The Kingdom of God was going to come, but in the Father's timing that has already been determined.
 - So, in an effort to provide encouragement and incentive to understand the Kingdom Program efforts and their mission, Jesus takes with Him, Peter, James and John to a high mountain.
 - There, Jesus reveals His Shekinah Glory while providing some eschatological indicators for the three disciples with Him.
 - After this moment of transfiguration, as they descended from the high mountain, Jesus warns the three not to speak a word until He rose from the dead.
 - We will see later in Mark's Gospel that this indicator becomes a receipt of sorts by which the disciples will now have as proof of what Jesus said.
 - Once the 3 disciples and Jesus arrive at the base of the mountain, they were met

by a disappointing welcome as we saw last week (Mark 9C).

- In summary, we witnessed a rather humiliating moment for the disciples.
- And what stark contrast this moment would have been. They go from such a glorious moment on the high mountain to a ghastly gloom in the plains.
- Jesus finds that the 9 disciples have tried expelling a “mute and deaf” demon from a child.
 - However, because this is a Messianic Miracle and because of the disciples’ pride, they are unable to expel the demon.
 - What should have been an opportunity to trust in God to take care of this need, became a moment to flex and attempt this in their own strength.
- Well not only did this create further skepticism in the crowd but it also caused doubt and confusion for the child’s father anticipating a miracle from Messiah.
 - And what we witnessed there was the needed reminder, as believers, to remain ever dependent on the Father’s provision and the very words of Jesus.
 - We concluded from last week’s teaching that faith in any object apart from Christ not only leads to epic disappointment, but it leads to lack of ability to overcome anything.
- Tonight, we will witness an amazing moment of teaching from Jesus as He unfolds the hearts of the disciples.
 - And as He does this, His teaching will show the disciples and us today (The Church) how to prepare for the work of serving Jesus well now, in anticipation for the Kingdom to come.
 - But to do that one must have a correct disposition and understanding towards Christ’s mission.
- Our outline for our teaching tonight is the following:
 - 1. A Struggle to Understand (v.30-32)
 - 2. A Sense of Perspective (v.33-35)
 - 3. A Picture of Service (v.36-37)
- If I were to put a tag on tonight’s text, it would simply be: “The Lesson in being Last”
 - I invite you to open a copy of the text and meet me in Mark 9:30-37.

Mark 9:30 From there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know about it.

Mark 9:31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.”

Mark 9:32 But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.

Mark 9:33 They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, “What were you discussing on the way?”

Mark 9:34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one

another which of them was the greatest.

Mark 9:35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and *said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”

Mark 9:36 Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them,

Mark 9:37 “Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.”

- Let’s Pray.
- Getting straight in tonight, let’s reread the start of the passage again.

Mark 9:30 From there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know about it.

Mark 9:31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.”

Mark 9:32 But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.

- Mark tells us that from the departure near the region of Caesarea Philippi, that Jesus and His disciples are now headed toward the lower region of the Galilee.
 - However, this time their journey south is not one of public pronouncement or demonstrating miracles.
 - The text tells us that Jesus was not looking to be noticed regarding His whereabouts.
 - And the reason behind this movement of secrecy becomes known plainly in verse 31.
 - In verse 31 we are told that Jesus’ focus has shifted from public ministry to mostly private teaching with His disciples.
 - Reason being is that as Jesus’ time of death quickly approaches, there are some things that the disciples will need to understand regarding the Kingdom Program.
 - So far, up to this point, the disciples have failed to understand Messiah’s mission regarding His first coming – especially with Elijah having not yet appeared.
 - What has been made clear is Jesus’ identity but their understanding of His death has not yet clicked.
 - So, Jesus will once again reiterate His mission and purpose pertaining to His coming death.
 - Only this time, there is a slight change in the foretelling of His death. He mentions a causation/why into His coming crushing.
 - Check out what Jesus states again in verse 31.

Mark 9:31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is

to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.”

- The question that the disciples are wrestling with is “Why does Messiah have to die and how can His death be a part of God’s plan to bring about the Kingdom?”
 - These are very valid questions and thankfully for us, we now have the full council of God through the scriptures to understand what the disciples didn’t at that time. (We have the full picture)
 - For us to grasp a better understanding of the mission, we must first understand – who is the one sending Messiah on this mission to die?
 - The way in which we gain clarity in this matter of mission is found in understanding the term “to be delivered”.
 - “Delivered” in Greek is *paradidomi* which means to be or become subject to detention by an authority figure.
 - It can also mean betrayal and we see this term used of Judas handing Jesus over to the religious leaders.
 - So, within this context, it can be said that Jesus becomes subject to this punishment of death by an authoritative figure.
 - Now from the world’s perspective they will see this betrayal or “handing over” as having been caused by Judas.
 - However, the authority by which is subjecting Jesus to this treatment is not of the hands of men, but rather by the Sovereign Hand of God.
 - This realization of authoritative subjugation brings about a greater clarity as to the role of service as well as Jesus’ full submission to the Father.
 - It seems as if the teachers of that day failed to mention scripture such as Isaiah 53:4. Check out the text.

**Isaiah 53:4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted**

- This idea of Messiah willingly submitting Himself to suffering, betrayal, and death was not the desired outcome for a Jewish hearer.
 - However, it would be this very reality in which the twelve would need to embrace.
 - They needed to abandon their own wants and desired outcomes and needed to embrace the words of Jesus despite what they wanted or how they felt.
 - This plan of a coming and glorious Kingdom would require the Son to die so that victory and glory might be fully known to those who place faith in Jesus.
 - But as verse 32 mentions, there remained a lack of understanding and they wouldn’t understand until after He rose from the dead.
 - Notice in verse 32b and 34 that instead of the disciples seeking to understand the why of suffering, they all kept their mouths closed.

- Mark writes that the twelve were afraid to ask Jesus.
- One question comes to mind at this point and that is: “Why would they be afraid to ask their teacher/Rabbi about His purpose/mission?”
 - Well, in one way, they could probably recall the last time Peter spoke up and was rebuked and called Satan out loud.
 - Therefore, they probably sought not to embarrass themselves with asking anything at that point.
- Or perhaps, Jesus’ telling them a second time about His death served as a hinderance to their hopes of status in the Kingdom.
 - I mention the latter because up to this point, the twelve’s priority has been more centered towards their own ability and opportunity rather than that of Jesus’ proximity and purpose.
- Friends, I believe, and we will see together in Jesus’ teaching that their lack of understanding is directly tied to their unwillingness to accept Jesus’ passion (death).
 - So, in light of that, Jesus plans to get their hearts centered on the right things and that will be to set their minds on God’s plan and purpose.
 - Check out verses 33-35.

Mark 9:33 They came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, “What were you discussing on the way?”

Mark 9:34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest.

Mark 9:35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and *said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”

- Mark tells us that Jesus and the disciples have reached their destination which is where Jesus’ ministry was headquartered – the town of Capernaum.
 - And upon arrival to Capernaum, they enter into a house.
 - Now who’s house the text does not disclose, but it could be safe to assume that this house is the home of Peter and Andrew.
 - Whatever the case, as they enter Jesus pivots from what was a private conversation amongst the twelve to a private conversation with the disciples and Jesus.
 - And before we move past this point, I believe there is something for us to see here and that is: Even when we attempt to hide things from God, He still knows exactly where the issue is located.
 - So, Jesus asks the disciples about what they had been discussing on the journey back home.
 - What we should note at this point is that as Rabbis and their students traveled, they traveled in close proximity.
 - So, one could assume that the conversation amongst the twelve were in soft whispers in their attempt to conceal the conversation.

- And I can only imagine that Jesus is aware of the conversation but carries on as if nothing is wrong.
- What becomes clear is that the content of the conversation is one that they feel is too trivial to bring to the Lord, to the point they remain quiet about it.
 - As we move into verse 34b it becomes apparent that their conversation was indeed trivial – and it reads quite comically.
 - Mark reveals in verse 34b that they were discussing who among them was considered the greatest.
- Their quietness explains a lot. It was a result of, yet again, more embarrassment and shame which would reveal the issue of their hearts concerning their mission.
 - Friends, this question of who is greater, if we were to consider its origins, is rooted in a paganistic worldview and exists to this day.
 - It's the question of who is the most talented or who can achieve the best position or gain more status.
- If we were to examine social media as a whole and how the algorithms are set up we find that the focus is on who and what is most trendy or likable.
 - You may even notice this natural bent of comparison or competition within you from time to time.
 - We naturally do it in conversation with new people we meet. We begin with the question, "So what do you do for a living?"
- So seeking or desiring who is or will be great is how we in our fallen nature ascribe value to ourselves and others versus submitting all things unto God's authority and say.
 - And what the text is showing us is that the disciples, although they have done great things for the Kingdom Program, they too had their shortcomings.
- One question you might be pondering on is: "What caused this line of questioning to come about in the first place?"
 - Well, it wasn't too long ago that Jesus selected Peter, James, and John for a special revelatory moment.
 - This could have very well caused jealousy and envy, but most especially competition amongst the group.
- Can you imagine how that conversation started?
 - "So Peter, what did you guys do up there with Jesus?"
 - And Peter might reply something to this effect, "We can't tell you brothers, private matters you know, inside "inside" matters".
- So Jesus perceiving this issue of status and position, all rooted in pride, sits down with these men to discuss the issue.
 - It's going to be in this next moment (v.35) that Jesus is going to sit and instruct the disciples on what true greatness in the Kingdom looks like.
- He states that to become first, one must become last of all and servant of all.
 - In other words, the way in which one becomes great begins with the journey of humility and service.

- The reality is, to the disciples, and to the average person, the concept of greatness according to Jesus made no sense to them.
 - Leadership in this world values the idea of greatness as something to pursue but not as a means to serve.
 - If I were to speak plainly, Jesus is saying: “Where there is no humility there can be no greatness.”
- Notice that as Jesus is speaking here, the context is centered upon the Kingdom and one’s position and opportunities in the Kingdom.
 - There are a few things in which we should consider and that is the fact that how we live here in this world now and how we serve now as believers, determines the responsibility we will receive in the coming Kingdom.
 - And in the case of the disciples, their status in the Kingdom first begins with their ability to serve those around them in humility.
 - And what better way to provide this picture to understand how one becomes great in the Kingdom than with a true picture of service.
 - Check out verses 36-37.

Mark 9:36 Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them,

Mark 9:37 “Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.”

- So Jesus now moves to illustrate for His disciples what He means regarding one becoming great in the Kingdom through the use of a child.
 - What would have been the reasoning for Jesus using a child in this illustration as a picture of service?
 - Within antiquity, a child was deemed the “least significant person in both the Jewish and Greco-Roman world”.
 - So we can gather a greater appreciation of Jesus’ illustration by looking at the Aramaic word *pais*.
 - “*Pais*” means a child (boy or girl) but it also means a servant or slave.
 - So what Jesus is saying is whoever receives (welcomes) the least of these, those considered the lowly in society, the vulnerable, they receive Christ.
 - They accept Christ, not in the sense of doing these things equating to salvation, but rather doing these things in acts of serving as Christ has. (This is shaping our Christian character)
 - And it will be from this act of serving the least of these in which one begins to embrace the sense of what Christ has come to do and that is to serve according to the Father’s plan. (Through incarnation comes salvation)
 - Jesus makes this same appeal in Mark 10:45 as He is speaking with James and John. Check out what He says regarding greatness:

Mark 10:45 “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,

and to give His life a ransom for many.”

- Jesus’ example of serving in Mark 10:45 points to one truth we should embrace and that is that Christ is not asking us to do something that He Himself didn’t do.
 - In other words, if you want to understand what the true meaning of service is regarding what you do for God, it is found in following Jesus.
 - But we must not miss what Jesus says in the latter half of this verse regarding what it means to be the last.
 - He mentions that as we embrace this sense of humility and embracing Jesus’ method and means of serving those in need (like a child), that we embrace the Father.
 - This revelation of truth is so huge because it relates to this idea of true leadership as defined by scripture!
 - This not only further establishes the unity within the Godhead by the submission of the Son.
 - Remember that it was the Father’s predetermined plan to send the Son as a means to seek and save the lost. (Luke 19:10)
 - Friends, this means that there is a “Why” behind our need to not only submit to the teachings of Jesus but also to serve like Jesus served.
 - And that answer is found in the fact that this service has been given to us by an authoritative mandate from God-Himself.
 - Consider for a moment the imagery here: Christ, by the will of the Father, submits Himself fully to the Father’s redemptive plan by means of becoming a man.
 - Christ condescends in the form of a human to live a perfect, sinless life so that men and women who could not attain right fellowship with God could be saved.
 - Therefore, with Christ becoming our vicarious substitute, those who place faith in Christ can be saved.
 - So, what we see in this picture is that as Christ humbled Himself, even to the point of death, this was accomplished that we might live fully in Him.
 - Friends, if this isn’t an act of servant leadership to the fullest, I don’t know what is!
 - This is why Paul states the following in Philippians 2:1-11. Check out the text.

Philippians 2:1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,

Philippians 2:2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

Philippians 2:4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Philippians 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
Philippians 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
Philippians 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.
Philippians 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
Philippians 2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
Philippians 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
Philippians 2:11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- Jesus' priority in this moment in Peter's home was to set these men's hearts and minds upon one thing – the mission that is ahead.
 - This would require the disciples to completely abandon this pursuit of being great for the sake of attaining position and status and embrace God's plan.
 - For it would be in embracing the Father's plan which was found in the fulfillment of Christ's mission to serve the least of these that the disciples would find their mission as well.
 - Lastly, as Paul pointed out in Philippians 2 and Jesus prioritized in His teaching, is this focus on unity amongst the group.
 - What benefit would the disciples have been to the Kingdom Program if they were more focused on their position in the Kingdom rather than their service to the King after His departure.
 - One thing that we must see as a clear point in the text is the unity necessary to accomplish the mission that laid ahead for these men.
 - Friends, when pride sets root within the hearts of men and women, it breeds competition.
 - We naturally want to be the center of attention as if you or I are the apple of God's eye.
 - We must get rid of this notion that God's plan revolves around your happiness or how talented you are.
 - God's plan is centered upon His Son and the means by which Christ would perfectly face humiliation so that we would be lifted out from the clutches of sin and death and have placed upon us His perfect righteousness.
 - In other words, the way to become great begins with the descent to become small.

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- This way and means of achieving greatness will not be found in your New York number

one best seller's list.

- This means of achieving status will not be discussed around the conference room table.
- This concept of greatness doesn't seem to provide immediate satisfaction and that's because the things of Christ are foolishness to man.
- One South African Pastor described humility this way:

“Humility is nothing but the disappearance of self in the vision that God is all.”

- ◦ You want to become great, prioritize God's instructions over your entitlement.
 - You want to become great, exhaust Christ over your convenience.
 - You want to become great, bend the knee to the will of your heavenly Father.
- Friends, the only way up is down!
 - The greatest example that we can find of the greatest servant of all who made Himself least of all is Jesus Christ Himself.
- He did not come with pomp and circumstances; He came wrapped in flesh.
 - He did not come upon the back of a valiant steed but rather He rode on the back of a donkey.
 - And before He would usher in the Kingdom to come, He would first taste death in nails in His hands.
 - He would not first take on a crown of beauty before He took on a crown of thorns.
- This King, My King, humbled Himself so that you and I would be made right before God.
 - I'd rather be dependent upon the Father and last in the eyes of the world than stand independently against a Holy God and be damned for all eternity.
 - Let's Pray.

Citation

- Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "pais," by Albrecht Oepke, 5(1967):636-54



Mark - Lesson 9E

Chapter 9:38-41

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- Last week, we encountered a humbling moment for the disciples as Jesus confronted their concern of greatness in the Kingdom.
 - If you recall, as the disciples and Jesus were making their way to Capernaum, the disciples were secretly discussing who would be the greatest.
 - This conversation, might I add, was being discussed not too long after their failure of healing (exorcising) a demon-possessed child.
 - It was upon the return to Jesus' headquarters in Capernaum, potentially in Peter's home, where Jesus lovingly confronts their quiet conversation.
 - In other words, Jesus takes this time to confront their heart issues through a means of a teaching moment.
 - And this teaching consisted of these men needing to set their hearts upon the mission at hand and that is the mission of service to the King in light of the coming Kingdom.
 - For having a proper disposition on service rather than status would set them on a proper course for the Kingdom Program ahead.
 - So it was with Jesus sitting with the twelve that He provides a true picture of service as to how one becomes great in the Kingdom.
 - Jesus mentions that the way to become great and gaining greater responsibility in the Kingdom is to serve the least of these in the here and now.
 - To put it differently, our ability to be great in the Kingdom first requires one to serve well here and now.
 - Therefore, our approach to achieving this is by continual dependence and constant humility.
 - I want to remind us of the South African Pastor, Andrew Murray's quote on humility, where he stated:

“Humility is nothing but the disappearance of self in the vision that God is all.”

- ◦ Therefore, we must prioritize God's instructions, His perspectives, and His authority.
 - For when God's plans become greater than our pursuits, we begin to gain a proper eternal perspective.
- Tonight, what we will discover, is an extension of the lesson Jesus was teaching the twelve.
 - That where humility and status was a problem, the issues that derive from that must be completely abolished for the sake of God's plan being accomplished.
- For the Kingdom Program would require a network of believers, united in one Spirit, to accomplish the spreading of the Gospel.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would simply be: “Kingdom Partnership: When Unity and Humility Meet”.
 - With that being said, I invite you to open up your copy of scripture and meet

me in Mark 9:38-41.

Mark 9:38 John said to Him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us.”

Mark 9:39 But Jesus said, “Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me.

Mark 9:40 For he who is not against us is for us.

Mark 9:41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.

- Let's Pray.

Mark 9:38 John said to Him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to prevent him because he was not following us.”

- As we pick back up in verse 38, you may have noticed that the conversation from our previous teaching is an ongoing discussion.
 - We find that after Jesus’ profound illustration by the use of a child and their need to depend upon the father, that John pivots to another angle of the discussion.
 - And it just so happens that John’s question is one that addresses the disciples’ recent public engagement with exorcisms.
 - You might also notice that John’s interjection of dialogue at this point is quite rare and looks to address yet another derivative of Jesus’ previous point – issues of status and exclusivity (rooted in pride).
 - John tells Jesus that there was “another person”, not within the group of the twelve, who was casting out a demon using Jesus’ name.
 - And John’s issue with this scene was that this man was not from “them”.
 - So, because this man was not a part of the twelve, the disciples sought to “prevent” the man from doing this work.
 - And what an accurate description of James’ nature in this situation, known as being one of the “Sons of Thunder”.
 - We will explore this word “prevent” momentarily.
 - Now from the outside looking in the text seems to read as if the man, not affiliated with the twelve, has been rather successful in this work.
 - Whereas, not too long ago, the 9 disciples were struggling with an attempt to exorcise a demon in Jesus’ absence.
 - What was John’s cause of bringing this matter up, right now, after Jesus had just discussed the importance of humility?
 - Remember, our context in this chapter has been dependence and humility regarding service, responsibility, and reward in the Kingdom.
 - And here we find a situation where someone, outside of the “inner circle”, if you will, has been successful in expelling demons, by using Jesus’ name.

- If you don't see it by now, we should note the stark contrast between the success of the "unknown someone" versus the failure and embarrassment of the disciples.
 - It almost seems as if this is a "licking of the wounds" moment.
- In John's mind, how can it be that this random follower is able to do mighty works for the Lord, yet Jesus' own disciples are struggling to fully accomplish these works apart from Christ.
 - And friends may I suggest that is the point to be had.
- It's clear that this outsider, who is a follower of Jesus, has placed faith in the Lord Jesus and has demonstrated complete dependency upon the Father for all things.
 - This is what Jesus has been trying to relay to His own disciples, yet they are more focused on their status versus God's provision.
- There becomes an issue that arises from John's disposition that we should look into and that is this sense of exclusivity.
 - The twelve had this idea that somehow no one else should be entitled to do these mighty works of God if they haven't been a part of this core group.
 - You can almost hear this sense of entitlement and animosity flowing from John's lips as if to say to this non-apostle, "Jesus didn't call you, He called us."
 - Notice in verse 38b that John states that they tried to "prevent" this man from this work.
- The word "prevent" in Greek is *kolyo* (kol-io) which simply means to stop or refrain someone from doing something.
 - Now what becomes most interesting is that this word *kolyo* (kol-io) has a similar connection with the Septuagint transliteration of that word, *K'la* (Kaw-la).
 - And we see the use of this word in the Hebrew scriptures in a similar context found in Numbers 11:23-30.
 - Turn with me there.

Numbers 11:23 The Lord said to Moses, "Is the Lord's power limited? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not."

Numbers 11:24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord. Also, he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and stationed them around the tent.

Numbers 11:25 Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again.

Numbers 11:26 But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (now they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp.

Numbers 11:27 So a young man ran and told Moses and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

Numbers 11:28 Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, “Moses, my lord, restrain them.”

Numbers 11:29 But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!”

Numbers 11:30 Then Moses returned to the camp, both he and the elders of Israel.

- So we see, in this context, a very similar situation at play.
 - Where Moses serves as the mediator – by which the Lord God speaks through, and the Holy Spirit rests upon – Jesus Christ is the one in whom the Holy Spirit rests within.
 - And where Joshua sought for Moses to restrain Eldad and Medad, who were not selected as the 70 elders in whom the Holy Spirit rested upon, we see John seeking to prevent the “outsider” from doing the mighty works of God.
 - What I would like to point our attention to that the text is screaming for us to see is the similar response of both Moses and Jesus.
 - Let’s first begin with Moses’ response as it will set precedence as to why Jesus responds the way He will in Mark 9:39.
 - In verse 27 of Numbers 11, we are told that a young man goes to report that Eldad and Medad, who were not within the group of the 70 elders, was prophesying in the camp.
 - So when word got back to Moses, Joshua was flustered and requested that Moses restrain (prevent) these men from prophesying. (*Kol-io*)
 - Yet Moses’ answer is quite revealing. He says: “Are you jealous for my sake?”
 - He then speaks plainly to Joshua and says that he wished that all God’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them.
 - What was the point of Moses’ statement there?
 - We must realize that Moses’ leadership responsibilities were so great for just one man that the Lord provided 70 men to help disseminate the responsibility of doing the Lord’s work.
 - There was no power complex or pursuit of status in Moses’ mind.
 - There was only work to be done and the help of more would have been beneficial for him to complete the Lord’s work.
 - So when Moses is told that Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp, Moses sees this as more hands on deck to do the work of ministry.
 - The point being that those in whom the Lord has given the ability to do His work, that that work is accomplished through God’s provision.
 - Ministry is not centered on one person or an elite group of people doing something, but it is accomplished through a collective body accomplishing the work of the Father.
 - Now that we have Moses’ response, check out how Jesus responds to John’s issue in verses 39-40.

Mark 9:39 But Jesus said, “Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me.

Mark 9:40 For he who is not against us is for us.

- Jesus’ response is not far removed from that of Moses’ response.
 - He begins by saying do not “*Kolyo*” (Kol-io) – do not prevent him or restrain the man from the work.
 - And Jesus tells John and the disciples they are to leave that man and any who serves in that way, alone. Why?
 - For no one performing miracles in Jesus’ name can speak evil of Him later.
 - In other words, the power to accomplish the works of God only comes by the Power of God through submission unto the will of God.
 - So we see that Jesus not only affirms this man’s service, but confirms that this man is operating under God’s will.
 - We can confirm this because the very next statement Jesus makes is “He who is not against us is for us.”
 - And what a contrasting statement from what we see in Matthew 12:30 where Jesus says, “He who is not with me is against me.”
 - So it’s clear that whoever this man is, not only has He placed faith in Messiah, but His dependency is upon the Father’s provision for all things.
 - And friends, there is a key theological component to this that we must not overlook.
 - Notice that in Numbers 11: Who is the person of the God-head responsible for the power to proclaim God’s truth? It is none other than the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.
 - What is even more compelling is how the Spirit operated then versus now.
 - That where the Spirit rested upon men for a period to accomplish God’s work then, it would be after Jesus’ ascension that the Holy Spirit would indwell believers.
 - Why do I mention this? Because what we are witnessing here is a sense of foretelling as to how the Kingdom Program would collectively go forth!
 - It would be the working of the indwelling Holy Spirit which brings about unity in the body for the purpose of making much of Christ.
 - What we see here theologically is the significance of humility, submission, and obedience.
 - This unity is not just something we talk about regarding how believers should operate, but these attributes are found within the God-head, itself.
 - Therefore, how much more should humility, submission, and obedience be found in the bride of Christ – His Church.
 - Friends, this provides us an early picture of how the Holy Spirit would function to sustain and keep the Church.

- So where Moses mentioned that he wished that all God's people have the Spirit upon them to prophesy, there would one day be a permanent indwelling of God's Spirit.
- The prophets of old, by the leading of the Spirit, spoke of a day that would come regarding the Spirit of God indwelling the people of God.
 - We see a bit of that in Ezekiel 36:27. Check out the text:

Ezekiel 36:27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

- So this sense of unity, humility, and dependency was the pill that the disciples would need to swallow and the way in which to embrace the path ahead.
 - But with that these men would need to recognize that although they would be spear heading the Kingdom Program forward, it wouldn't just rest with them.
 - Therefore this sense of exclusivity and competition and being better than others needed to be replaced with "Kingdom Partnership".
 - The unfortunate reality is, within the Global Church today, we have established competition between ministries and churches.
 - We have established a precedence of promoting platforms above the person of Jesus Christ.
 - We now see churches competing for the flock rather than feeding the flock.
 - We are seeking status and influence rather than growing men and women in the knowledge of Christ.
 - It's almost as if the church has become a clique instead of a conduit by which disciples are made and sent out to share the Gospel with others.
 - Church and ministry is not and should not be a competition, it should be a partnership!
 - Jesus is trying to get the disciples to see beyond themselves and to embrace the Kingdom Program.
 - The reality is, the work of ministry is bigger than one church or one ministry, or one pastor.
 - And with this in mind the idea of "me-centered ministry" should be completely blown out of the water. All things should point to Christ!
 - I love what Jesus said in John 16:12-15 regarding the Spirit's role. Check out the text.

John 16:12 "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

John 16:14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.

John 16:15 All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes

of Mine and will disclose it to you.

- Notice that the Spirit doesn't promote Himself. He points to the Son, and the Son points to the Father.
 - What perfect unity and submission!
 - The God-head seeks to serve the Father's will and plan and so should the body seek to serve the Son unto the Glory of God.
 - In other words, service is key to the Kingdom Program, but most especially knowing why you are serving is critical.
 - Serving Christ requires full submission unto the very words of Jesus by which the Spirit will illumine our hearts and minds to.
 - For how we serve well now determines the rewards we will receive in the coming Kingdom.
 - We find in verse 41 that Jesus lands the plane with the following statement. Check it out.

Mark 9:41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.

- There seems to be a conclusory point regarding the service of others beyond the group of the twelve.
 - Jesus states that whoever serves you in the most menial of ways (cup of water), because of who you are, in connection to Christ, that individual won't lose their reward.
 - We need to examine this statement a bit closer to realize its full impact.
 - As Jesus is speaking here, He is speaking about those who are outside of this "inner circle" of disciples, who have placed faith in Messiah.
 - Notice that those whom are serving the disciples are those who adhere to Messiah as their King as well.
 - Therefore, both groups are positionally in Christ, regardless of their physical proximity to Jesus.
 - In other words, this person's ability to serve and the disciples' service are both valuable and will be rewarded in the Kingdom.
 - However, the disciples who walked closer with the Lord must not devalue the contribution of the other followers of Christ.
 - Friends, if we find ourselves insisting that somehow our service to God trumps the next person's service, we must check our hearts and kill our pride.
 - We must not treat the church or even our knowledge of knowing Jesus as a "flexing" tool as to say how much greater you are than the next.
 - There is no room in the Kingdom for a sense of competition or privilege because we all have been saved by the same grace of God.
 - Understand that your contribution in ministry matters, however you are serving, wherever you are serving.

- You don't have to have the fancy seminary degree or impressive title to serve others the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- I recall when I came under Pastor Steve's leadership as an Associate Pastor at the fellowship, I was intimidated when it came down to preaching my first sermon there because everyone was familiar with Steve's teaching.
 - I wouldn't dare want to follow up after his teaching.
- So when I was prepping to teach my first sermon at the fellowship, Steve asked me how things were going, I told him, "Steve, I'm nervous because people are used to your style-not mine."
 - And as I was about to continue, he stopped me and said: "Wesley, The Lord called you here not to become another Steve Armstrong, he called you here to be Wesley Livingston".
- Those words freed me up because it dawned on me – the same Holy Spirit that indwelled Steve is the same Holy Spirit that indwells me.
 - My style of teaching may be different from Steve, but we both proclaim a message we have been transformed by – the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - We both have been saved by this miraculous grace that God has shown us.
 - And friends, you too have the same indwelling Holy Spirit to do the work God has called you to do as well regardless of how grand you think your service is or isn't.
- We must be careful not to discount believers who may not be as knowledgeable as you, as if they have no value to serve because they don't "know enough".
 - Jesus tells them that because these individuals serve for the sake of Messiah, their reward will not be lost.
- We serve not for status or recognition, but simply out of the grace that God has shown us and that we have received.
 - And when we serve and obey from this position, it completely rids one from this sense of entitlement or exclusiveness.
- There may very well be believers who may not know all that you or I know, theologically, but their eternal rewards just might outweigh yours.
 - Simply because they serve with their lives in obedience to God and not simple lip service.
- May we be a people not ruled by our prideful desires for power and prestige, but may we serve even the least of these considering the grace we have received.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 9F

Chapter 9:42-50

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- Well up to this point, we have found the disciples struggling with the sense of status and prominence.
 - Their concern for the glory and greatness to come seems to be clouding their ability to love and serve well now.
 - So Jesus, in the meantime, has taken the much needed time to address these matters of the heart (sin) which is lurking underneath.
 - As you might recall, the service in which these disciples would take on required constant and continual dependence upon the Lord in surrendered humility for the Kingdom Program. (God's purpose and plan)
 - What we witnessed last week with John's interjecting point with Jesus regarding service of others "outside the group of the twelve", was a matter of the disciples' pride.
 - It was this "bruised ego" that led the disciples to try and prevent the man from doing this mighty act of the Lord.
 - What this showed us was that God's work is not simply limited to a "select group of elites", but rather is accomplished through submitted and dependent men and women.
 - So Jesus, seeing this issue, confronts the twelve in their sin so that there may be effective work done for the glory of God, collectively.
 - The reality was the disciples would need to check their hearts and their motives regarding God's Kingdom Program and prioritize THE priority.
 - For the object of focus (priority) and worship is none other than Christ, Himself!
 - Tonight, Jesus confronts this situation regarding the impact of sin in ones' life and how sin, if not checked and surrendered to the Lord, can negatively impact a believer.
 - We will see, more specifically, the responsibility that mature and "seasoned" believers have as a witness to the young and more spiritually immature believer.
 - And as we will discover, Jesus gives a heavy verdict to believers of sin that is unchecked and how it impacts others.
 - If I were to structure an outline or flow of thought for tonight's teaching this is what we will see:
 - 1. A Warning of Leading others Astray (v.42)
 - 2. A Warning of Leading ourselves Astray (v.43-48)
 - 3. A Warm Warning of Correction (v.49-50)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be: "The Cost of Discipleship: Salted by Fire".
 - With that being said, I invite you to open up your bibles and meet me in Mark 9:42-50.

Mark 9:42 "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck,

he had been cast into the sea.

Mark 9:43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire,

Mark 9:44 [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.]

Mark 9:45 If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell,

Mark 9:46 [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.]

Mark 9:47 If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell,

Mark 9:48 where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

Mark 9:49 “For everyone will be salted with fire.

Mark 9:50 Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

- Let’s Pray.
- “Oh, be careful little eyes what you see, Oh be careful little eyes what you see, for the Father up above is looking down in love, oh be careful little eyes what you see”.
 - This was a song I used to sing as a child in Sunday school and this song spoke about how God’s children must be careful and cautious of the things we see, places we go, and things we do.
 - For if we are not cautious about these matters, we find ourselves in situations that can be quite costly.
 - But most importantly it causes us to be aware that our Heavenly Father sees all things and knows our hearts.
 - Tonight, we find the disciples in a familiar place to these lyrics and the warning of how sin can destroy us if we do not guard our hearts.
 - Jesus is going to provide us with the means by which followers of Christ must govern themselves in this life.
 - As well as how our lives should serve as a witness to others, the love and grace of God through His death on the cross.
 - Pick me up in verse 42 to see how Jesus will address these matters of sin.

Mark 9:42 “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea.

- It is in verse 42 that there seems to be a continuation of teaching from Jesus regarding the matters brought up from John’s interjection from verses 38-41.
 - And the matters in which Jesus is going to address, as you will see throughout the next few verses, are heavy subject matters that are to be accounted for.
 - If you recall from last week’s teaching, Jesus addressed John’s concern

regarding an unknown man who was performing mighty works of God without having been a member of the twelve.

- To John, this was a problem that needed to be handled quickly because, to the disciples, these opportunities were “only” for them.
- However, we witnessed that Jesus pushed back on this idea of exclusivity and cliquishness.
 - The reality was that the man was able to accomplish what He did because of His dependency upon the Father by way of His trust in the Son, Jesus Christ.
 - It was in view of the success of this man’s ministry that the disciples became jealous and sought to prevent this man from this work.
 - Instead of seeing their failure as a means of their lack of dependence upon Jesus’ instruction and the Father’s means of provision.
 - In other words, the disciples’ ability to do the work of ministry was not based upon their proximity to Jesus but rather God’s divine power.
- The disciples should have been humbled by the man’s service to God rather than haughty.
 - Plainly put, it should have been seen as Kingdom Partnership rather than egotistical competition.
 - For if the disciples would have prevented the unknown man from doing the work, it would have caused hinderance (stumbling) to God’s work.
- Therefore, Jesus brings to the disciples’ attention a warning, and that warning consisted of the danger of being a hinderance to others both personally and collectively.
 - So, while on the topic of sin and its hinderance to others, Jesus continues that thought in verse 42.
 - It’s almost as if you could insert the word “however” or “but” at the top of verse 42, because the statements are inner connected.
- Where Jesus mentions the reward of the least of the disciples of Christ not being lost, He contrasts that to the consequence of the disciples who cause one to stumble.
 - He says, “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him to be cast into the sea with a heavy millstone around his neck.”
- Notice that Jesus begins with the word “Whoever”. The question becomes: Who is defined here as a “Whoever”?
 - Well within this context, He is speaking to the disciples specifically (believers).
 - However, the context also seems to lend itself to a positive/negative aspect.
 - Meaning that the cause of someone stumbling or being hindered from service to God can also be instigated by that of a non-believer.
- Within the text, we see Jesus uses the term “little ones” once again to connect to a previous illustration.
 - In this case the term “little ones” is directly connected to last week’s teaching where it refers to believers who may be either new to the faith or immature in

the faith.

- In other words, where these individuals would need to be encouraged and developed in their trust in Christ, the actions of more mature believers should aid the young believer's dependence in Christ and not detract from it.
- Jesus further emphasizes this point by the use of the word "stumble".
 - The word stumble in Greek is the word *skandalizo*, where we get our English word scandal or scandalized.
 - It means to cause someone to fall into sin, to place as a stumbling block, or to put as a snare (trap) in the way for someone.
- So for anyone who trips up or causes hinderance for the growth or maturity for a young (child-like) disciple in the faith, Jesus says there is an anticipated fate in which will come to them.
 - And as we will see later tonight that judgement will look different depending upon "whoever" causes the stumbling.
 - This suggests that both the believer and unbeliever have a judgement or consequence, if you will, that must be faced.
 - Check out how Jesus describes the severity of the consequence in verse 42b.
- He states that it would be better for this person to experience a quick death in light of the judgement they will face than to cause someone to stumble.
 - He states that this plummeting death to the depths of the sea would be accompanied with a "heavy millstone".
- Now a millstone was two circular stones that were used for grinding grain.
 - There were some millstones that were used domestically by women in the home and there were also larger millstones for larger projects.
- Mark's usage of language here speaks to the weightiness, if you will, or the severity of this kind of consequence – causing one to sin.
 - The Greek word used by Mark here for heavy millstone is *onikos mylos* which means millstone of a donkey.
 - Here is a picture of what a millstone of a donkey looked like during antiquity.



- This tool would be placed around the neck of a donkey for the purpose of crushing the grain in the lower stone.
 - The size of these types of stones could be as great as 3,000 lbs ($\cong$ 1360kgs).
 - So gather what Jesus is speaking about here, hypothetically: For someone to cause a younger follower of Christ to fall into sin, because of hinderance of service to the Lord, it would be better to tie a 3,000lbs stone to your neck and you fall to the depths of the sea.
 - In other words, this type of reckless endangerment towards a disciple because of sin in our own lives being unchecked is something God takes seriously.
 - Friends, this is such a serious matter of offense to God that Jesus uses language to suggest immediate consequences of capital offense.
 - It's clear that Jesus' seriousness about sin and its corrosive hold in the hearts and lives of believers doesn't just impact us personally, it can "leaven the whole lump".
 - Wasn't this in fact the warning Jesus had given the twelve not too long ago in Mark 8:15 (Leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herod).
 - That if pride and ego unchecked and not submitted by trusting in the Lord's provision and power, it could cause one to become self-centered versus Christ-centered.
 - Friends, when sin goes unchecked in our lives to the point that it causes collective hinderance to others, we must check ourselves, for if not, God's judgement is around the corner.
 - The disciples were to recognize that their sin of exclusivism served as a hinderance to the advancement of the Kingdom Program and as a stumbling block to babes in Christ.
 - Really quickly, I believe what we see from this text, in hindsight, is the beauty of maturity and grace found in Christ – it should bring about humility!

- The reality is none who would be considered “mature” in the faith today started where they are.
- Somewhere down the line you didn’t know all that you know or weren’t serving the way that you serve now nor obeying Jesus the way you are or should be today.
- And it will be in the next few verses that Jesus provides a warning of leading ourselves astray.
- He sets out a means of urgent discipline to address sin in their lives.
- Check out verses 43-48.

Mark 9:43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire,

Mark 9:44 [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.]

Mark 9:45 If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell,

Mark 9:46 [where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.]

Mark 9:47 If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell,

Mark 9:48 where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

- It is after Jesus teaches the disciples the importance of not being a hinderance to other young disciples in the faith in service unto God, that He turns the page warning them of the dangers of sin and how to deal with it on a personal level.
 - We see that within Jesus’ description of sin and its unhinged and uncontrollable nature, He provides a solution to these spiritual problems.
 - Notice that the way in which He addresses these spiritual matters is through physical illustration.
 - He establishes within verses 43,45, and 47, three “If/then” statements regarding the disciples and the means to resolve the toil that pride is playing at this point.
 - Notice the three body parts in which Jesus uses: the hands, feet, and the eyes.
 - What we can see from the use of these physical body parts is, as Dr. Grassmick states in his commentary on Mark, these are “the instruments of inward inclinations”.
 - If you recall in Mark 7:20-23, Jesus mentioned that it was not the exterior things that defiled a man, but rather what’s inside.
 - And Jesus provides a very timely yet hyperbolic correction and warning on the matter.
 - However, before I move too quickly past this, notice the word proceeding each “If/then” statement – the word “if”.
 - Meaning there is a strong possibility that, like the disciples, the inclination of sin will rise up, and whenever it tries to rise its ugly head here is how you deal

with it.

- Notice the phrases, “cut off, and throw out” are in the active imperative, meaning this is a constant ongoing process to implement in one’s life.
- I say this to say, as followers of Jesus Christ, we must always be on guard and alert as to our sin and sin nature.
 - Every believer in Christ should know what you are prone to and therefore there should be safeguards in place to keep you from stumbling into this sense of pride, competition, arrogance, etc which can hinder others from ministry service and loving God well.
 - And it’s clear that Jesus wasn’t playing with the disciples on this issue, and He isn’t playing with you and I.
- Notice what Jesus says regarding how to resolve this issue of sin occurring in the disciples’ lives.
 - He said if your hand causes you to stumble – cut it off.
 - If your foot causes you to stumble – cut it off.
 - If your eyes cause you to stumble – throw it out.
- This is some intense language regarding how to do away with sin for the sake of holiness and purity, but also as the context shows us, how to maintain unity in humility and unity with God as well as others.
 - There seems to be this immediacy within the text that Jesus brings before the disciples.
 - That you don’t just let sin have its way to continue to spread and corrupt the whole body, but you are to cut it off right where it is!
- In other words, our physical condition in this life requires spiritual awareness and therefore spiritual surgery when needed to live well in the life to come.
 - Simply put, Jesus would rather us suffer great loss here in order to attain greater gain in the Kingdom.
 - Whatever temptations seem to have a hold on you and try to tether you to this world, Jesus says it must be eliminated to the point that you cut it off.
- Now, again, just to be clear Jesus is talking hyperbolically here! He is not saying to literally mutilate your body for the sake of removing sin.
 - Remember, sin is not generated exteriorly, it comes from the inside-out therefore it must be dealt with spiritually! (Mark 7:20-23)
 - And the way to cut sin off is to constantly submit yourself and your desires under the authority and control of God’s word.
- Your ability to overcome sin is not going to be found in your ability to think you can control it!
 - That bad boy has to be overcome by a Supreme authority and that Authority is Jesus Christ Himself!
- Friends, when pride is puffed up in our lives and we lack submission under God’s authority, our sin will make us believe that “we got this ourselves”.
 - This is in fact the issue in which the disciples are coming across with this man who they were trying to prevent from doing God’s work in Kingdom

Partnership.

- This man wasn't in their group and the disciples didn't like it, so their collective attempt to prevent him becomes their downfall yet again.
- So Jesus tells them in these verses, cut the sin out of your life or face the judgement to come. He uses the phrase "it would be better to enter in to (*zoe*) eternal life with missing limbs, than to enter into hell (*Gehenna*)."
- Now what Jesus is saying here regarding believers is not that they will go to hell for being a stumbling block – salvation for believers is secure in Christ.
- So this begs the question: "Who and what is Jesus talking about here?"
- Not only can believers be stumbling blocks, but non-believers can too and the answer to this question is found in the phrase "to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire."
- The word "Hell" here is the Greek word *Gehenna*. This word is transliterated from two Hebrew words meaning "Valley of Hinnom"
- It refers to "the place of future punishment".
- The Valley of Hinnom was a place south of Jerusalem where children were once sacrificed to the pagan god known as Molech.
- We see evidence of this most clearly in 2 Chronicles 28:3. Check out that text really quickly:

2 Chronicles 28:3 Moreover, he burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom and burned his sons in fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel.

- It would be later in the reforms of King Josiah in 2 Kings 23:10 that some historians speculate that King Josiah turned this site to a dumping ground for garbage where fire burned continually to consume the worm-infested garbage there.
- Therefore, this picture of the "Valley of Hinnom" which people were familiar with, would be a constant reminder of what awaits those who were not saved.
- So this picture of what the eternal state of quarantine for rejectors of Messiah would be was a reminder of the intense judgement of those causing God's children to stumble.
- Now you might notice three times, the text within brackets mentions this phrase "Where worm does not die and the fire is not quenched"
- This served as a reminder of the seriousness of the judgement of God in rejection of His gift of salvation.
- The worm representing the constant internal conflict of affliction for the non-believer and the fire representing the external affliction of judgement.
- Friends, this is the reality of what non-believers will face in their failure to trust in Messiah.
- So what's at stake for the believer? – What is our punishment or loss in the process of looking more like the world rather than the bride of Christ.
- Well, scripture tells us that God uses discipline for those in whom He loves,

and that discipline will be executed in this life.

- But not only that but we will also experience a loss of rewards as well.
- Think of it as a deposit system: What I put in is what I will get out.
 - Therefore, if you constantly make earthly deposits expecting or anticipating eternal things, you are highly mistaken.
 - If you expect to receive greater things in the kingdom, but yet everything you do is worldly Jesus says don't expect much.
 - There is too much at stake for you and I to live like the world knowing what is at stake and Who's witness we ruin in the meantime.
- In other words, Jesus is saying, either you deal with the sin in your life by cutting it off immediately or I will deal with you myself, in Holy Discipline.
 - This is why Jesus stressed to the men earlier, if they are not against us, they are for us.
 - Therefore, get from beside yourselves and aid their encouragement and growth however you can, but do not hinder them!
 - The reality is this hinderance of another can look like several things:
- 1. My unwillingness to serve someone by using my gifts in an effort to help them grow in theirs because I'm threatened that they will take my spot in ministry. (Jealousy)
 - I remember, serving as the youth pastor at the fellowship and one of the first lessons in leadership Steve taught me was to work myself out of a job.
 - In other words, I need to be building up others under me who can one day do what I do and do it better.
 - Ministry is not a competition it's a collaboration of like-minded people together under the Spirit's guidance.
- 2. Churches diminishing other churches or ministries because they don't want to lose their flock to another church. (Competition)
 - I see this so many times where gossip cliques start because this pastor doesn't preach the way that this pastor does.
 - Is the Pastor preaching Christ and Him crucified?!
- 3. Pastors/Teachers preaching one thing yet living and doing another and the result of that being a new believer sees and their faith becomes shattered. (Witness)
 - You ever heard the people say, sometimes the only bible or Jesus that people will see is you?
 - Your life is a testament to the power of the Gospel and the power of God!
 - How damaging is it when your sin becomes louder than your Savior to the point that you cause babes in the faith to think that is permissible or okay?
- Check out what Paul says regarding your Christian witness with other believers. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 8:10-13.
 - This is Paul speaking about our need to be cautious of our liberty as believers and that what we do matters.

1 Corinthians 8:10 For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?

1 Corinthians 8:11 For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.

1 Corinthians 8:12 And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

- Our lives should be to the service of others because of what Christ has done in us and for us – not a hinderance or stumbling block to others.
 - As John 3:30 says, “He must increase, but I must decrease.”
 - This radical sense of discipleship, walking out our faith well, requires full submission to God in this sanctifying process.
 - The problem becomes when our sin becomes so loud that we fail to realize we need God to deal with our ugliness.
 - This is what we must guard against friends.
 - But thank God that we have the Spirit dwelling within us that he makes us sensitive to these things as we are in community with others.
 - The goal is to glorify Christ in our service and not to glory in service to and for ourselves. For the moment that happens a red flag should be raised.
 - We now arrive to verses 49 and 50.

Mark 9:49 “For everyone will be salted with fire.

Mark 9:50 Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

- As we move to the close of Chapter 9, more especially the last two verses here, we must keep in mind the context of Jesus teaching here – He is talking to the disciples.
 - I lead with context being key because not fully grasping the context can cause a bit of confusion regarding the meaning of “salted with fire”.
 - The two words to keep in mind here are salt and fire.
 - The question becomes: “How do these two words fit together?”
 - Within scripture, we are aware that salt's physical purposes coincide with the believers' spiritual characteristics within the world – that of preservation.
 - Food during antiquity, because there was no refrigeration, was preserved with salt.
 - We see both these items used together most significantly in the Hebrew Scriptures, more specifically, in Leviticus 2:13 regarding “grain offering”.
 - Check out Leviticus 2:13 really quickly:

Leviticus 2:13 Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

- ○ The big question here is: “What was the significance in the use of salt for grain offerings and what was the purpose of a grain offering?”
- Let’s begin with the purpose of the grain offering.
 - The grain offering was considered “a thing most holy”. We see that from Leviticus 2:3,10.
 - The grain offering was the only offering of them all in which did not require an animal.
- As a matter of fact, the most common of grain offering used were barley or wheat.
 - The grain offering would follow the burnt offering which dealt with atonement for the sins of Israel.
 - So where the burnt offering served as atonement for sin, the grain offering served as worship and acknowledgement of God’s provision.
 - Interestingly enough, one item that was forbidden from the grain offering was leaven.
- Now for the next question: Why salt?
 - Salt was offered with the grain offering as a symbol of purification and preservation – completely opposite of leaven and how it corrupts.
- Salt being used in the grain offering was identified as “a covenant of salt forever”.
 - A salt covenant or contract, if you will, during antiquity was a legally binding agreement to preserve what has been established.
- So, if we are to put this together to understand what Jesus is saying regarding all His disciples, He is saying: All who are mine will be preserved and refined for His good pleasure and Glory.
 - In other words, those who are the Lord’s, to refine them and make them Holy, they will experience persecution and trial so that they may be made perfect and complete, lacking in nothing as James tells us.
 - I also love what the Lord says in Isaiah 48:8-11. Check out the text

Isaiah 48:8 “You have not heard, you have not known.

Even from long ago your ear has not been open,
Because I knew that you would deal very treacherously;
And you have been called a rebel from birth.

Isaiah 48:9 “For the sake of My name I delay My wrath,
And for My praise I restrain it for you,
In order not to cut you off.

Isaiah 48:10 “Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

Isaiah 48:11 “For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act;
For how can My name be profaned?

And My glory I will not give to another.

- It is this furnace of affliction for the believers in Jesus Christ, that results in us being “salted by fire”.
 - The purpose of the trials and pressure is to produce Christlikeness while removing the hold of the world in our actions, thoughts, and deeds.
 - Lastly check out what Jesus says regarding verse 50.
 - He confirms that the salt is indeed a good thing – meaning being a preservative for things with an expired shelf life (dead things), is good.
 - He then moves on to say that, if the salt becomes unsalty, how will it be able to gain its saltiness again?
 - This could sound a bit confusing, but if we understand the historical and geographical implications of salt in context, we gain a greater picture.
 - Salt is a stable compound of sodium chloride which means it cannot lose its quality, or saltiness.
 - However in the Palestine region, with salt being mixed with other deposits from the Dead Sea, it would cause infirmities to get into the natural salt.
 - Therefore, the salt would lose its “purity” in a sense and could not go back to its “original state” because it has been contaminated.
 - So Jesus is saying as believers, because we are to be the “Salt of the earth” if we become worldly and begin to look like the world, we lose our preservative qualities as disciples of Jesus Christ.
 - The believer in Christ is to not look like the world but should be the source of seasoning, if you will, by which the world thirsts to know about Christ.
 - But how can the world know about Christ if when they see the church our lives look just like those of spiritually dead people?
 - This is a radical call to be in this world but not of it!
 - And Jesus tells the disciples, if you don’t address the sin in your life by submitting under God’s power in humility, you can become unsalty.
 - Not only to the world but even amongst each other.
 - It’s in verse 50b that Jesus says that as believers, we should have salt within ourselves and be at peace, not with the world, but with one another.
 - Our actions within the church should reflect the love of and service of Christ towards one another.
 - The world should be able to look at the church and say, these people are different.
 - Their lives are nothing like what we see in the culture today, but most importantly, they should see Jesus based upon how we love and care for one another.
 - What is beautiful to witness is that somewhere down the line, John got it right, because he includes in John 13 this moment with Jesus before He is betrayed.
 - Jesus tells them this. Check out John 13:33-35.

John 13:33 Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- Jesus, knowing the issues of pride and competition rising its ugly head in the apostles hearts, moves to immediately correct their course.
 - Because it will be these men who will be the holders of this message of the Gospel to the world.
 - It would be these men through which the Church would be started, with the exception of Judas Iscariot.
 - These men had to understand that for the Kingdom Program and this radical movement that was coming to work, unity had to be key.
 - There must be peace amongst these men for the sake of a Glorified King and a Glorious Gospel to be made known to the world.
 - Love seems to be best defined by the actions of God’s demonstration of sacrifice on the cross through His Son’s death!
 - This demonstration of Love was a great act of service in which Christ humbles Himself for the sake of the many.
 - And with you and I being in Christ, we too should be willing to give up our own sense of “kingdom” for the benefit of others around us and among us for the purpose of the only Kingdom that will remain – The Kingdom of God.
 - May our lives as disciples of Christ reflect the great grace that has been shown to us. For the way in which this will look for the church is:
 - 1. Abandonment of “us” and embracing God’s plan and purposes.
 - 2. Dying to sin so that Christ may live richly in our lives.
 - 3. Embracing Unity in Christ amongst the body of Christ.
 - 4. Steering others to a love of service for and towards others.
 - Let’s Pray.

Citation:

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Mark - Lesson 10A

Chapter 10:1-12

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- As we transition into Chapter 10 of Mark, we arrive to a very touchy and difficult topic to discuss – Jesus’ teaching on divorce.
 - As we approach this teaching, as a minister of the Gospel, I will not and cannot sugar coat the realities of this matter.
 - And in the same breath, I recognize that this discussion can be very traumatic for some, so I want to approach this as best I can – **in grace and truth**.
 - I acknowledge that some of you may have gone through a divorce or may be going through a divorce.
 - And with that know that the body of Christ, whether locally in your context or globally through VBVM, we are here for you and are praying with you.
 - As we work through the scriptures, we will encounter God’s truth on a matter and it will have the ability to offend and at times cause frustration.
 - **But if you hold to a high view of scripture as being God’s very spoken word, then it behooves us to submit to it in all its authority.**
 - And where there is confusion and need for clarity, we submit to the Lord and seek the Spirit’s counsel for understanding – not the way we want to hear it, but by the way in which God has revealed this source of truth – through the scriptures.
 - I also know that there are many interpretations on this matter and I want to give room for the Holy Spirit to teach us and correct us where needed.
 - So with this introduction in mind, as we make our way through tonight’s teaching, I would like to offer a flow of thought through the text:
 - We are going to see the following things:
 - **1. A Raised Inquiry (v.1-3)**
 - **2. A Rebut (v.4-5)**
 - **3. A Reasoned and Original Response (v.6-9)**
 - **4. A Necessary Restatement (v.10-12)**
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight’s text it would be: **“Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage: What does God have to say on the Matter?”**
 - With that being said, I invite you to open up your copy of the scriptures and pick me up in Mark 10:1-12.

Mark 10:1 Setting out from there, Jesus *went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan; crowds *gathered to Him again, and, as He was accustomed, He once more began to teach them.

Mark 10:2 And some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and began questioning Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife.

Mark 10:3 And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?”

Mark 10:4 They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send his wife away.”

Mark 10:5 But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote

you this commandment.

Mark 10:6 But from the beginning of creation, God created them male and female.

Mark 10:7 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother,

Mark 10:8 and the two shall become one flesh; so they are no longer two, but one flesh.

Mark 10:9 Therefore, what God has joined together, no person is to separate.”

Mark 10:10 And in the house the disciples again began questioning Him about this.

Mark 10:11 And He *said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her;

Mark 10:12 and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.”

- Let’s Pray.
- “Do you take this person to be your lawfully wedded husband/wife”
 - “To have and to hold, for rich or for poor, in sickness and in health, till death do you part.”
 - It’s at this next line where it becomes both sentimental and terrifyingly sobering – “I Do.”
 - Marriage is this unwavering commitment to forever in divine partnership with one another under God.
 - It requires that each individual yields themselves to God’s authority and submits themselves to His will and each other to accomplish God’s purposes.
 - However, in a society and culture that now defines for themselves what marriage means to them, it completely undermines the Divine institution in which God created and set for His good purposes and pleasure.
 - Tonight, we will see Jesus teach on matters of marriage and in doing so we will find, that as Jesus did in the wilderness in being tempted, He will defer back to the only thing that matters – “It is written” (What does God say?)
 - Pick me up at the first three verses of Mark Chapter 10.

Mark 10:1 Setting out from there, Jesus *went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan; crowds *gathered to Him again, and, as He was accustomed, He once more began to teach them.

Mark 10:2 And some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and began questioning Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife.

Mark 10:3 And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?”

- Mark writes that Jesus and the disciples left their previous setting, which we know from previous context is Capernaum, and they head to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan.

- If we were to look up a potential path of travel, here is a map that speaks to their walking distance from Capernaum to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.
 - And as we can see from this map, the exact region in which they traveled to was known as Perea.
 - Perea is near the region of Judea and not too far a distance from Jerusalem where Jesus is headed to prepare to die.
 - And what is so interesting to note is that as Jesus is incrementally headed towards His death, He continues to teach the people.
- It is while Jesus is teaching the people in Perea that the Pharisees came up to Jesus in an effort to test and question Him on a particular matter.
 - Now, before we move to what they came to question Him about, let's note **where** the Pharisees are traveling from in effort to confront Jesus with their **“raised inquiry”**.
 - The religious leaders who came to see about Jesus had traveled down from Jerusalem to Perea to interrogate Jesus on matters of divorce.
- Verse 2 tells us that this line of questioning was in effort to “test” Him.
 - The Greek word here for “testing” is *peirazo* (pe-razo).
- This sort of testing was to **discredit Jesus within the public eye** knowing that His ministry was still gathering more influence and a larger following.
 - We should also note that Jesus had previously addressed this matter of divorce on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:31-32.
- So, in the eyes of the religious leaders, what better way to know Jesus’ stance on this issue in a public forum than this moment here in Perea.
 - Now, one may ask the question: **Why would the Pharisees bring up this question to Jesus?**
 - Weren’t there other matters that could be discussed?
- 1. On one hand, keep in mind that the Pharisees are looking for any and every opportunity to discredit Jesus to terminate His ministry and lead to quicker death.
 - But on the other side of this questioning, one should consider the particular region in which Jesus was in.
- 2. Not only was Perea on the other side of the Jordan, but the Tetrarch in charge of that area was none other than Herod Antipas.
 - This is key because if you remember, Herod Antipas had a run-in with the John the Baptist.
 - And it was with John the Baptist confronting Herod on his affairs with his brother’s wife, Herodias, that cost John his life.
 - Truth came with a price, and it was a price in which John the Baptist was willing to die for.
- **So, what we see in this moment is there was a power move at play here: How can we trip Him up? If not theologically then most certainly, politically.**
 - In other words, we can get Rome involved if need be.
 - The way in which they attempted to trip Jesus up was with the highly debated

rabbinical school of thought regarding the issue of divorce.

- There were two interpretative stances on divorce throughout rabbinic discussion and debate.
 - One was a conservative view, and one was a liberal view.
 - The conservative view followed the thought that “the only grounds for divorce” was adultery (sexual immorality).
 - Whereas the liberal view emphasized the phrase “any indecency” from Deuteronomy 24:1 regarding laws concerning divorce.
- What should cause much alarm here is how humanity attempts to take the very words of scripture and completely distort its meaning in an effort to defend one’s own selfish ambition. (Satan tempting Jesus in wilderness)
 - I say this because from the liberal view “any indecency” was any and every reason that a man could think of that he didn’t like about his wife that day.
 - For example, if the wife burned the soup that day, that was his out.
 - This view could be seen as giving man permission to sin for the sake of **“being right in his own eyes”**.
 - And that was exactly how the liberal view of divorce was seen.
- **And what we see from Jesus in verse 3 is a beautiful picture of combating eisegesis verses exegesis.**
 - Jesus is going to answer their question, on whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife, with a question.
 - And as we have learned, this method of teaching becomes introspective for the hearer.
 - Check out Jesus’ response to their misguided yet raised inquiry regarding the scriptures.
- He answered them by saying, “What did Moses command you?”
 - If I were to put this another way, Jesus was moving to counteract their own interpretive suggestions on the matter and to seek what the Mosaic Law said.
 - Again, Rabbinical thought was not the epistemic authority in the Lord’s eyes, **it is God’s word alone that holds up**.
 - And a proper understanding of the Mosaic Law leads one to recognize that God spoke verbally to Moses to establish God’s law for His people – therefore, what does God say on this matter.
 - Check out how they respond to Jesus’ question. Look at verses 4-5.

Mark 10:4 They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send his wife away.”

Mark 10:5 But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

- Notice what the Pharisees say in response to Jesus’ questioning regarding the Mosaic Law: They said that Moses **“permitted”** a man to write a certificate of divorce.

- However, in order for us to know what Moses wrote according to scripture and not hearsay, let us go to where the law concerning divorce is mentioned.
 - Turn with me to Deuteronomy 24:1-4. We want to pay close attention to verse 1 for context.

Deuteronomy 24:1 “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens, if she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, that he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her away from his house,

Deuteronomy 24:2 and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man’s wife,

Deuteronomy 24:3 and the latter husband turns against her, writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand, and sends her away from his house, or if the latter husband who took her to be his wife dies,

Deuteronomy 24:4 then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

- It seems like we have an issue of terms to address here. Jesus is asking for the “command” that Moses gave (*entello*).
 - However, the Pharisees are expressing the fact that Moses “permitted” divorce (*epitrepo*)
 - However, what we just read in verses 1-4 are not matters of “Thus saith the Lord”, but rather Moses outlines particular regulations and conditions “if indecency transpired”.
 - We must pay attention to the language here, because where the Pharisees are seeking an interpretation that favors their civil and legal relevance, it falls short of God’s say on the matter.
 - In other words, there is this understanding from Jesus that the means of divorce was never a matter to be resolved legally because it is a divine institution by God.
 - To put it plainly, man has no say or rights to dictate or change God’s standards and purpose of marriage.
 - In effect, this condition that Moses places is solely “allowed” because of the fallen condition of humanity.
 - So in order to restrict the further damaging effects of separation and its impact on the family and most certainly the woman, conditions were established to aid these issues.
 - **Friends, it becomes clear that divorce was an accommodation because of sin and not a license to sin.**
 - And Jesus confronts their manipulation and misguided interpretations of divorce in verse 5.
 - Jesus tells them Moses “allowed” this because of your “hardened hearts”.
 - **In other words, Moses permitted divorce, he did not command it.**

- And being that Moses was the representative mediator between God and man, we must not garble the language.
- Again, the permission of this act was simply because of man's "hardened hearts"
- The Greek word for "Hardness of Heart" is *sklerokardia*. (Sklero-kardia)
 - It is a combination of two Greek words "*skleros*" which means hard and "*kardia*" which means heart.
 - **It's a stubborn attitude toward one's behavior or an unyielding frame of mind.**
 - This word is used in the Septuagint twice. Once in Deuteronomy and once in Jeremiah.
- In both instances of the word, it refers to the need of the heart to be circumcised.
 - So, within this context, the issue is not the certificate of divorce, but rather the condition of the hearts of men and women, respectively regarding its use "for any reason they found".
- The conditions and institution of marriage is not something to be taken lightly and must be entered into not through the lens of personal enjoyment and satisfaction, but rather through the lens of the scriptures.
 - When we enter a marriage with our own view of what it is or false expectations, we miss God's plan and design for it.
 - And Jesus points the Pharisees to this very point. To understand proper terms and conditions of marriage, **one must look to the originator and Creator of it.**
 - Check out what Jesus says in verses 6-9.

Mark 10:6 But from the beginning of creation, God created them male and female.

Mark 10:7 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother,

Mark 10:8 and the two shall become one flesh; so they are no longer two, but one flesh.

Mark 10:9 Therefore, what God has joined together, no person is to separate."

- Jesus doesn't quote the top commentator of the day or even pull sources of the most influential rabbis of that day, He goes to the only source that matters – God's word!
 - Jesus provides **a reasoned and original response** to the Pharisees' misguidance and rulings, and He goes to the Creation account to speak to this divine institution.
 - Notice, Jesus quotes Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24.
 - In other words, Jesus **contrasts** the varying views of marriage and divorce of that day with God's view of marriage from the beginning of time.
 - And we see several significant points which Jesus shows us through the use of the creation narrative.
 - However, before we expound any further, we must begin by recognizing that **God sets the terms, definitions, and pronouns in every case.**

- The first point that we must recognize, beyond the fact that God created marriage and established marriage, **is the confines of the marriage. (Exclusivity)**
 - God’s establishment of marriage exclusively belongs to one man and one woman. (Monogamy)
 - **Meaning that God’s definition of marriage is between one biological male and one biological female.**
 - And anything outside of this definition does not meet a biblical standard of marriage.
 - God designed man and woman’s body to be joined together physically in a very clear and obvious way.
- Secondly, we see in Genesis 1:28 that God commands man and woman to “procreate and fill the earth”. **(Consummation)**
 - Each individual leaves the confines of their individual families to come together and establish a family unit of their own for the flourishing and multiplication of image bearers.
- It’s in verse 8, that Jesus mentions that God’s intent for marriage between a man and a woman was meant to be inseparable. **(Inseparability)**
 - The Creation account states that the two shall become one flesh.
 - Or to put it another way, with woman being taken from the side of man, there was a reuniting of man’s very flesh.
 - If you were to picture the image here, it is as if there is no pulling apart what was and is **“one flesh”**.
- Lastly, we see in verse 9, Jesus mentions that what God has joined together, “let no man separate”
 - In other words, marriage is for life and the one-flesh relationship is not a man-made connection but rather a God-established connection.
 - Paul himself makes this emphatic point, not of himself, but rather from the Lord, in 1 Corinthians 7:10:

1 Corinthians 7:10 But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife is not to leave her husband.

- The New Testament canon speaks to this expectation of unyielding commitment and inseparability between a husband and a wife.
 - So what does this understanding of marriage from the parameters of scripture show us?
 - Well, it gives us two distinct components of biblical marriage that we must recognize regarding His teaching on marriage and divorce.
 - We must first recognize that marriage is a covenant relationship (exchange of vows) established between one man and one woman.
 - After that covenant relationship (vow exchange) is done, the one-flesh relationship can be established.
 - However, it is important that we make clear that these 2 aspects of biblical

marriage are distinct and one is not dependent upon the other.

- In other words, it is possible to have a marriage covenant yet not consummate the marriage.
- And it is possible to establish a one-flesh relationship without a marriage covenant.
- Therefore, marriage is not established because someone engaged in pre-marital sex. This is deemed as fornication in scripture and is such because no covenant is formed.
 - However, sex outside of the context of marriage is deemed a one-flesh relationship.
 - Paul makes this statement in 1 Corinthians 6:15-16:

1 Corinthians 6:15 Do you not know that your bodies are parts of Christ? Shall I then take away the parts of Christ and make them parts of a prostitute? Far from it!

1 Corinthians 6:16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, “The two shall become one flesh.”

- Paul makes clear here that any joining of the flesh with one, whether it be a one-night stand or a constant fling, it constitutes as a one-flesh relationship.
 - And because the two engaged in this activity are not married, by God, it is deemed a sin.
 - The flip-side of this coin also holds true: One can be married yet for whatever reason, whether death or “fill in the blank”, are not able to establish a one-flesh relationship.
 - The marriage covenant is intact however the one-flesh relationship was not.
 - During the 1st century, the betrothal period could take up to a year.
 - **So what we see is two things; a marriage covenant is formed by an exchange of vows and a one-flesh relationship is formed through a physical union.**
 - **I pray we recognize the weightiness of marriage and its implications when not done God’s way.**
 - Marriage is something beyond seeking to be happy. The purpose of marriage points to the exaltation of God!
 - This inseparable union speaks to God’s commitment to the believer. That despite the trials of life, God is faithfully committed to Himself and His work in you and me.
 - I want to make mention here that there may be some who have experienced divorce or may be going through a divorce.
 - I want to pause here for a moment and say that when we have a true picture of Christ, we can rest in His grace knowing that there is forgiveness in Him and restoration through Him.
 - If there are some considering marriage, seek wise counsel and discipleship as you

choose to enter courtship.

- Because the ramification of a lack of understanding the purpose of marriage and the meaning of marriage can cause harm to the family, community, and societal dynamic.
- Within our culture today, we see the rise of divorce rates and the devastation in which sin has wreaked havoc within families and communities.
 - My prayer through this teaching is that we recognize the seriousness of marriage and the casualties of divorce.
- So Mark's Gospel is making the point here that the certificate of divorce is not to be used as a means of excuse to get out of marriage because of a liberal view of marriage, but rather it was allowed for the sake of prevention and protection because of our sin.
 - **Friends, God allowing the certificate of divorce was an extension of God's grace despite us.**
- It is after Jesus completes this conversation with the Pharisees that we see a switch in setting and audience.
 - Mark doesn't provide us the details here as he is providing big picture action points for the reader.
 - And it is in verse 10-12 that Jesus **restates** His teaching with the disciples in private.

Mark 10:10 And in the house the disciples again began questioning Him about this.

Mark 10:11 And He *said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her;

Mark 10:12 and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery."

- Mark states in verse 10 that Jesus and the disciples were in "the house" when the disciples began questioning Jesus on divorce and marriage, based upon Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees.
 - The text does not give any suggestion as to whose house it is and whose house is not of importance here.
 - **What is of importance is that the setting changes from a public forum to a private dialogue.**
 - It seems as if the disciples were inquiring more about this profound statement regarding marriage and divorce based upon God's authority.
 - What we must keep in mind here is that up to this point the disciples were inundated with the teachings of the religious leaders of that day.
 - And with that it was safe to assume that they were accustomed to the discussions of divorce, remarriage, and the various views depending upon the rabbinical school of thought.
 - However, as we peek behind the curtains, if you will, through the pages of Matthew's gospel, we see that this is a moment in which the disciples

understood the weightiness of this matter.

- So, to better understand Mark's brevity here, I would like to turn our attention to Matthew 19:10-11.

Matthew 19:10 The disciples ***said to Him, “If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.”**

Matthew 19:11 But He said to them, **“Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given.**

- It's clear that the disciples' eyes were open, and their minds understood what Jesus was saying.
 - **Divorce violates God's divine institution of marriage.**
 - And the disciples' response to the severity of the matter was, it would be better for one not to marry.
 - In other words, because of the one-flesh relationship the implication of becoming “one” with another, unless by the death of one's spouse, one is not to be remarried. (It constitutes as adultery)
 - Jesus makes it clear in verses 11-12 that divorce and remarriage are deemed adultery before the Lord's eyes.
 - And although Matthew's gospel provides an exception clause, the **goal** would be to do everything you possibly can, **within means**, to avoid divorce.
 - As I think through God's commitment to His own people, Hosea the prophet comes to mind.
 - God makes Hosea marry a prostitute to demonstrate His faithfulness to sinful Israel.
 - **If that is not a picture of *He'sed* (covenant faithfulness), I don't know what is?**
 - Lastly, you may notice that Mark's ending here is unique from Matthew's, in that Mark's gospel speaks to the wielding of divorce from either the husband or the wife.
 - And this is found in Mark's gospel due to the audience he is writing to.
 - For within Roman society, the women had a right to divorce their husbands as well.
 - So, Mark is making it clear, through Jesus' words, that for one to divorce their spouse and remarry, with the exception of indecency, it is deemed as adultery.
 - So, what do we see from Jesus' teaching on divorce:
 - 1. If divorce occurs before a one-flesh relationship has been established, then marriage is permissible.
 - 2. If divorce happens after a one-flesh relationship has been established, remarriage is not possible.
 - 3. And should we choose to remarry after a one-flesh relationship has been established, we commit adultery.

- As we close tonight, I want to again recognize the weightiness of this teaching on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.
 - I pray that on one hand we recognize the holiness of God's divine institution.
 - As well as being able to witness God's grace for us all.
- As our founding Pastor Stephen Armstrong mentioned through his teaching on this matter in Matthew 19A, I too tread lightly and desire to provide grace in this space.
 - The reality is we have all fallen short of the glory of God and are in need of His grace and provision.
 - Yet we must remain uncompromised in the truth of His word.
- We all are in need of God's grace and as long as we are in this world we will need to seek constant forgiveness.
 - We must keep in the forefront of our minds and hearts the reality that God must hold the reigns of our marriages.
 - If you are considering marriage, this may be an opportunity to pray and seek counsel to walk you through the process of what marriage is, practically.
 - For those who are engaged, this is an opportunity for you to walk through your pre-marital counseling, seriously.
 - For those on the brink of divorce, I encourage you to remember God's commitment to you even in your shortcomings, failures, and faults.
- And for those who are hearing this, and like the disciples said in Matthew's gospel, "It would be better that those who are not married to stay single", I would encourage you to pray.
 - Has the Lord indeed called you to singleness permanently or not?
 - Singleness for a season is different than singleness for a lifetime.
 - For singleness is a gift of the Spirit as we see in context in 1 Corinthians 7:1-7.
- I pray that we all recognize the weightiness of marriage and as we pursue it that we pursue it as Christ pursued us.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 10B

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- Tonight, our text moves us from Jesus' teaching on divorce to a lighter note, in a way.
 - We find ourselves back to a familiar discussion dealing with familiar language on matters regarding the Kingdom of God.
 - We will find Mark using the term “children” again to connect with Jesus' previous point of:
 - 1. How Jesus views the children?
 - 2. How the disciples should see the children?
 - Although we have 4 verses to cover tonight the impact of the text will move us to see how our hearts can be detached from eternal matters because of our current human-perspective.
 - Within tonight's text, we will see the following things
 - 1. Jesus address the disciples' rebuke (v. 13)
 - 2. Jesus address who can enter the Kingdom (v. 14-15)
 - 3. Jesus sets the example (v. 16)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be: “Suffer not the little ones”
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of scripture and meet me in Mark 10: 13-16.

Mark 10:13 People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them.

Mark 10:14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Mark 10:15 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Mark 10:16 And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

- Let's Pray.
- As a father, one thing I love to observe in my children, is their total trust in Mom and Dad.
 - There is this knowing that in all things Mom and Dad have our best interest at heart and they will provide for our every need.
 - As we get older and grow in our relationship with Jesus, we have this tendency to move from dependence to independence.
 - It's almost as if we have lost that child-like reliance as when we were younger.
 - This sense of life is often blurred when worldly matters become greater than the consistent, faithful voice of our heavenly Father.
- We will find in tonight's text, the word of God drawing us to a constant need to approach God, our Heavenly Father, as we would as a child to their earthly father –
 - Knowing that all things are possible and available through God alone, in Christ alone.

Mark 10:13 People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them.

- It's after Jesus' difficult teaching on matters surrounding divorce that Mark mentions "people" began bringing their children to Jesus.
 - Now, although the text does not specify who the "people" are specifically, we can assume based upon social and cultural norms during that time that the "people" bringing the children were women.
 - In one way, one could look at this and think, "This is a good thing!" or "How sweet is that, an opportunity for the children to be blessed by Jesus"
 - However, Mark mentions that the disciples took issue with the women bringing their children to Jesus.
 - And in the disciples' displeasure of this scene, the text tells us that the disciples rebuked them.
 - It's important to note that the disciples are not rebuking the children, per se, but rather the women who have brought their children to Jesus.
 - And to make matters worse, the women are bringing the children into the middle of this crowded circle right after the conversation of divorce and marriage.
 - Why do I mention this in light of where we are in tonight's passage?
 - Well to understand this moment we have to consider 2 things:
 - 1. Who is bringing the Children? (We've done that)
 - 2. The status of a child during that time
 - Women during antiquity did not have the extent of rights that women today have in the free world.
 - Women were not owners of property or possessions, therefore their stance in society, although above a child, was not ideal.
 - And in the same way, a child during antiquity was considered unimportant and lowly in society.
 - Therefore, in the minds of the disciples, the question became: "Who are these women and children to waste Jesus' time?"
 - In other words, this interaction was beneath Jesus and therefore it was beneath them.
 - So, out of frustration, the disciples rebuked the women for sending the children to be blessed by Jesus.
 - Well, this begs a question and a thought to be recalled, and that is: Why would the disciples withhold the children from going to Jesus?
 - It almost seems as if the disciples forgot how Jesus addressed the importance of children not too long ago.
 - You might remember in Mark 9:36-37. Check out what Jesus stated about the little children.

Mark 9:36 Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them,

Mark 9:37 “Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.”

- So, it becomes clear that the disciples have not learned from the lesson from prior regarding this issue of exclusivity and elitism.
 - That where there seems to be an opportunity for the children to be blessed by Jesus and draw near to Him, the disciples see it as a hinderance or nuisance.
 - The word for “rebuke” here in the Greek is a very strong word. It is a forceful warning that expresses great disapproval.
 - And because of this attitude towards the children, Jesus’ response towards the disciples will be both a public correction and teaching moment.
 - Check out verses 14 and 15.

Mark 10:14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Mark 10:15 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

- Mark really sets the scene for us here. Jesus is seeing the disciples in real time shooing away and aggressively criticizing the women for bringing their children to Jesus.
 - And this rebuke becomes both visibly and verbally apparent because Mark mentions that Jesus became “indignant”.
 - The word “indignant” in Greek is *aganakteo* (ag-anak-teo) which means to arouse to anger over something unjust and wrong.
 - And in this case Jesus’ compassion for the children becomes visible based upon His infuriating anger towards the disciples’ actions.
 - So, Jesus in His anger tells the disciples, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them.” In other words, “permit them to come, do not hinder them.”
 - From there Jesus then mentions why the little children should not be hindered to come to Him.
 - He states, “for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”
 - What a profound statement!
 - Remember that Jesus has used this illustration of children before regarding greatness in the Kingdom. (Mark 9:36-37)
 - And He spoke about how receiving a child, as He demonstrated, not only confirmed their embracing of the Son, but also that of the Father.
 - In other words, taking in and serving those who would otherwise be deemed insignificant in society is close to the heart of God.
 - So where the disciples are seeking to neglect and reject the children in this

setting, Jesus is saying, “You are missing the point!”

- Do not prevent the children from coming but rather lead them to me.
- Jesus was using this moment to convey the reality that the Kingdom Program is about reaching people like these children, both figuratively and literally.
 - Jesus needs the disciples to see that the point of their ministry is to serve those in whom the world deems to be the unreachable, the least and the lowly.
 - So it becomes clear that Jesus uses children as a metaphor representing people in society that are deemed un-valuable.
- If we were to think about that in today’s terms it’s the orphans, the homeless, the downtrodden, the abandoned, etc.
 - To put it plainly, even the least of these needs the “Lord of All”.
 - Psalm 34:18 says this regarding the Lord’s care for the brokenhearted:

Psalm 34:18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

- This effort of service for the Kingdom of God is not and should not be a sub-ministry in the local body of Christ, but it should be the core of the Kingdom Program.
 - What the disciples' reaction showed at this moment is that their understanding of their mission has not yet been fully grasped.
 - That where they are looking to make an impact in the world for Jesus, they tended to overlook the very ones in whom Christ came for.
 - This reminds me of what James spoke about in James Chapter 2 regarding the sin of partiality. (Rich closer to the front, poor in the back)
 - So where the disciples see the poor, in status, as insignificant, Jesus sees them as the perfect candidates to receive the Kingdom.
 - And as we will see next week, Jesus extends this teaching point into matters regarding the rich young ruler.
 - James 1:27 also speaks to the priority of seeking to serve those who have no sense of power or privilege.
 - Check out what the text says:

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

- James lays out the fact that the essence of true religion, true relationship with God is found in ones’ ability to serve those who could never offer anything in return.
 - Here is a question to consider: If no one ever donated to a ministry you served in or a church you belonged to, would your effectiveness of ministry change?
 - Would your motivation for ministry change if it meant you would not have a

platform to be known by men?

- Would your motivation for ministry change if you were only preaching to 10 people rather than ten thousand?
- In other words, our true heart's intention should be wrapped up in glorifying God and introducing people to Christ, rather than being concerned about a "bottom line" or an inconvenient factor.
 - I remember there was a church that my wife and I were serving at and they were considering to do a "Church plant" in the inner city.
 - We were pumped about this opportunity because we had taught in inner city schools before.
 - However, they put this particular church plant on hold because the church would not be able to "generate enough money."
 - Needless to say that was a clear sign for us to leave.
- The purpose of the Kingdom Program and sharing the Gospel is that all people are in need of it, regardless of their zip code, educational level, age, etc.
 - So, Jesus' correction of the disciples is that "these are the ones" (such as these), we have been called to serve.
 - The Kingdom of God belongs to those who recognize that they bring nothing to the table but that as we trust in Him, we are complete in the Lord.
- Jesus continues on in verse 15 by mentioning that "anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom 'like one of these' will never enter it."
 - To understand what Jesus is saying here, we need to understand metaphorically what He is saying.
- As He speaks to the entrance of the Kingdom, He connects it in a positional sense and not an associative (familial) sense.
 - In other words, like a child is dependent and trusts their parents for providing daily need, so should a person depend upon God's means and provision for eternal life. (Child-like faith)
 - All that we need to enter the Kingdom is: an abandonment of our own will and to place our trust upon the Lord Jesus – for through Him and in Him alone is our fullness and security – not ourselves.
- If we were to be honest ourselves, for some believers there is this tendency to believe that our proximity or theological knowledge to Jesus saves them.
 - And this dangerous frame of thought can cause a hinderance for non-believers and young believers to miss the power of the Gospel.
- There is a difference between intellectually knowing God and experientially being transformed by God (reborn).
 - There is a danger we run into in Christendom that if someone has been in church all their lives and gives financially, that it's their ticket into Heaven.
 - Or if a person knows a lot about scripture and knows what this word or that word means in the Greek that they are saved – simply by osmosis
 - Friends, salvation is not based upon you or I performing an intellectual exercise (merit), but rather it is based upon what Jesus Christ has done for us

and resting in that.

- There are several implications that come with this reality that I mentioned earlier and one in particular that I would like to further expound upon.
 - And it deals with the literalness of the phrase “like a child”.
 - As we approach the text, it comes without question that God receiving believers in the Kingdom does not exclude children.
 - I mentioned earlier that the thought of the day was that children were not held in high regard, especially with regards to religious matters.
- However, the text seems to suggest that even a child has a place in the Kingdom, solely because of their trust in Christ.
 - Well this begs a significant question for us today as well as a significant warning and we will see that in verse 16.

Mark 10:16 And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

- So, Jesus rejects the disciples’ dismissal of the children coming to Him and sets the example for what true ministry looks like.
 - That where the disciples saw hinderance and an inability for the children to receive or understand the significance of Christ’s ministry, Jesus saw the children as the perfect recipients of His ministry.
 - I mentioned that there was a significant question that comes from Jesus’ acceptance of the children and the disciples’ rebuke of the children.
 - And at the same time there is a dangerous warning to be had.
 - The question that comes about is: How are the children able to come to saving faith in Christ?
 - And that answer is: The same way in which all believers come to faith in Christ and that is through the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit.
 - We can oftentimes make the silly assumption that God couldn’t possibly be at work through young children.
 - Some may assume that because children may not understand deep theological matters that somehow, they couldn’t come to faith at such a young age.
 - Friends, children at even a young age have the same opportunity for the Holy Spirit to open their eyes. Age is not a factor, just as much as mental or physical disabilities are not a factor.
 - If I were to provide for us just one example in the New Testament, we see that John the Baptist, while in his mother’s womb was filled with the Holy Spirit to do the work in which the Father had set for him to accomplish. (Luke 1:13-16).
 - Now, I recognize that John, being filled by the Spirit, was for the purposes of being the forerunner of Christ.
 - Yet it still supports the point being made which is God’s sovereign calling in salvation is not limited to just adults at a “particular” age.

- That whether God called you at 6 or at 96, God by His Spirit opened your eyes and called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light.
 - And notice that this drawing and calling is not initiated or controlled by man's interference, but rather by God's doing within the hearts of men and women.
 - You may now be asking: Well what are the dangers in discouraging or hindering children from coming to Jesus.
- The danger in becoming a hindrance to a child coming to faith by being a "gatekeeper" is equivalent to the warning Jesus gave in Mark 9:42. (Tying the millstone around the neck)
 - We must allow God to do the work that only He can accomplish and our job is to aid, even the children, by teaching them the things of God.
- When we think about faith in general, what is it? It is placing trust in God's provision for salvation, and that act of saving faith can take place within a child.
 - The reality is that faith is not initiated because we confessed with our mouths, but rather faith is something that has happened in our hearts.
 - For some there is a time gap between the expression of faith in the heart and the confession of faith from the mouth.
 - And this looks differently for different people.
 - Again, this is why faith is not an intellectual exercise, but a miraculous work within the heart by God.
- As we see Jesus' compassion towards the children and His teaching on the Kingdom, it becomes a picture of how the church would need to engage even the least of all.
 - The purpose of the church is to meet the needs of the people God sends our way that they may first be spiritually edified and satisfied in Christ.
 - Secondly, through meeting that spiritual need the physical needs can be met in the process.
- So what do we see from the text tonight: We see that all people, young and old, are in need of being met with the Gospel.
 - That we must check our personal prejudices at the door and seek the opportunities that God provides for us to minister to whomever, wherever, and whenever.
- We also saw that our jobs as ministers of the Gospel and sharers of the Good News is to meet the needs of those around us without "strings attached".
 - The reality is, as we minister to those around us, there may never be a thank you.
 - There may never be a donation to the ministry, and the list goes on and on.
- However, if our motives are set upon sharing Jesus with people, the reward in full is found in a future Glory not made with human hands.
 - Lastly, we mustn't wait for children to reach a certain age where "we think" they can understand the Gospel.
 - This means we don't send them to children's church for entertainment or a childcare moment.

- Rather we immerse them in Gospel teaching at home and at church so that as they grow in their understanding of Jesus their hearts will respond to the truth of God.
- Friends, may you and I minister without blinders on our eyes.
 - May we see people just as Jesus does, in the sense that, all are in need to be served even those in whom the world deems undeserved.
 - For at the foot of the cross both the beggar and the banking broker are on the same playing field – in need to be served and saved.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 10C

Chapter 10:17-22

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- Last week, we were able to witness, from the very lips of Jesus, the means by which one enters the Kingdom of God (eternal life).
 - This is where Jesus utilized a previous illustration of “little children”.
 - And it was there that He made a profound statement which was the Kingdom of God belonged to “such as these”, referring to children.
 - We came to understand, not only did God receive and value “little ones”, but that the requirement into the Kingdom of God (eternal life) was “child-like” faith.
 - In other words, one must place complete trust in God who has provided the means of salvation which required a complete abandonment of one’s self and this world.
 - It would be humility that became the position by which one would respond to Christ, God’s person for salvation, and not self-aggrandizement.
 - So, within tonight’s text, we will see a continued train of thought unfold regarding how one enters into the Kingdom to come.
 - As we walk through tonight’s text, I would like to offer a flow of thought regarding what we will see.
 - We will see the following:
 - 1. Jesus asks a clarifying question to a curious man (v.17-18)
 - 2. Jesus redirects the man’s attention (v.19-20)
 - 3. Jesus provides a reality check (v.21-22)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight’s text it would simply be: “The Rich Young Ruler”.
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures and turn with me to Mark 10:17-22.

Mark 10:17 As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

Mark 10:18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

Mark 10:19 You know the commandments, ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’”

Mark 10:20 And he said to Him, “Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.”

Mark 10:21 Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

Mark 10:22 But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

- Let’s Pray.
- Within our cultural economy, we tend to measure people on the following scale: sub-

par, average, good, better, best.

- And within this “economy”, we measure what greatness is based upon skill sets, accolades, business acumen, wealth, influence, and the list goes on and on.
 - For many, this means of measuring is a constantly moving “finish line”.
 - It steadily moves further out, bit by bit, as someone makes the next greatest accomplishment.
- This sense of competition and external achievement becomes this beacon of honor.
 - However, throughout the scriptures, we see that greatness and goodness is never measured by a constantly moving standard, but it is a consistent, non-moving, eternal, and transcendental target in which we know as God’s standard of Holiness for He is Immutable.
 - And tonight, we will see that our measly attempts at being great will always fall short of the great glory of God’s standard of greatness.
 - And in the end will lead us to great disappointment.
- Therefore, there is a choice to be made in the process and that choice is: “Which Master will you serve?”
 - Will it be the idol of accomplishment and status, or will it be the Creator God – the one in whom has fashioned you and I into His very image and likeness.
- As we set the stage tonight, I want to reread our first two verses, verses 17 and 18.
 - This is what the text reads:

Mark 10:17 As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

Mark 10:18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

- Mark tells us that while Jesus and the disciples are making their way towards Jerusalem, that a man makes his way towards Jesus and knelt before Him to ask a question.
 - And the question which the man frantically asked was: “How does one inherit eternal life, or entrance into the coming Kingdom?”
 - At face value, from Mark’s Gospel, this question may not seem “that out of the ordinary”, for Jesus had just discussed this matter early on.
 - However, what should begin to peak the reader’s interest is: “Who is this man?”
 - So here is where having the synoptic gospels aids in our understanding of the full picture in context.
 - Where Mark’s Gospel mentions “the man” who ran up to Jesus in a “generic sense” and Matthew’s gospel mentions “the man” as “someone running up to Jesus”, Luke’s gospel provides insightful details.
 - Luke writes that the man is actually “a ruler”. (Luke 18:1)

- The word for ruler here is that of a very influential man, someone of great wealth and status.
 - Some scholars suggest that this ruler was potentially a synagogue leader or maybe even a leader within the Sanhedrin.
 - So the fact that “this man” is coming to Jesus asking a question should peak the interest of both the reader and the disciples themselves.
- With knowing this man’s religious status in society during this day, it becomes shocking to witness how he approaches Jesus.
 - Notice that he kneels before Jesus while seeking a response regarding a question of great weight.
- For someone to kneel before another was a sign of great reverence and respect, and in some cases submission.
 - It would seem like this introduction is moving in the right direction. Check out the next session of verse 17 where the ruler asks Jesus a question.
 - He asks, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”
- Notice, the man begins by acknowledging Jesus as a “Good Teacher”.
 - We will address his address to Jesus being a “Good Teacher” momentarily, however before we do that we need to take a closer look at the question asked.
 - You may already notice the problem at play here.
- The ruler’s question regarding eternal life seems to stem from a means of a work-based or performance-based inheritance of salvation.
 - He didn’t ask the question, “How can I inherit eternal life?”, but rather what shall “I do”.
 - It seems as if this question was perhaps birthed from a place of exhaustion or frustration.
 - It’s almost as if to say, “I have done all these things, but something doesn’t seem to add up – I’m missing something.” (No sense of humility)
- One could assume that based upon the man’s influence or status that his *modus operandi* was set upon what he could achieve as a “golden ticket” into the Kingdom.
 - However, the reality is that this sense of striving for salvation, to be in right fellowship with God, places the emphasis on us rather than on God.
 - This is where the ruler has found himself. However, he seems to realize that something is missing from his method to receive eternal life.
- Now the text does not specify where the man was running from – whether from the crowd Jesus had just left or from a different direction.
 - Perhaps this man was in the crowd as Jesus addressed the disciples publicly regarding how one receives the Kingdom.
 - For it was there that Jesus said one can receive the kingdom as a child, displaying child-like trust in the Father.
- It could be that the idea of being “like a child” was either a missed understanding or he refused to accept it, and therefore it prompts the man to run and ask the

question of eternal life.

- Whatever the case, the man is desperate for an answer from someone he deems worthy to respond.
- So, with eternal life as the headlining question, check out Jesus' response to him. Check out verse 18.
- Rather than Jesus directly addressing how one inherits eternal life, He begins by asking a preceding question which deals directly with the man addressing Jesus as "Good Teacher".
 - Jesus responds by asking: "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."
- You may recall earlier in verse 17, that the ruler addressed Jesus as "Good Teacher".
 - To call a teacher of that day "good" was quite unusual.
 - I say that because we first must know what the word for "good" means in this context.
- Also, keep in mind that when Jesus answers a question with a question, that He is probing the individual to arrive to a proper conclusion.
 - It's like in grade school when a teacher is giving you a test and you ask the teacher a question, in need of assistance.
 - Although the teacher is unable to provide you with the answer, they will provide "higher order" questions to get you to think.
 - Those question may sometimes be: Do you remember when we discussed "such and such"?
 - Those probing questions are used to bring you to a place to recall previously taught information or to think deeply about something.
 - Therefore, you are able to come to your own conclusions.
- So Jesus here is using that same strategy, if you will.
 - Now the word for "good" in this context is not *kalos* which means "excellence in nature or characteristics".
 - Rather the word for "good" here is *agathos*, which means "intrinsically good" in the sense of moral excellence.
- Now, if we aren't careful here, we can get a wonky understanding of what Jesus is doing.
 - There are some liberal scholars who have looked at this verse and said, "You see, Jesus denied he was perfect, therefore he denied that He was God."
 - Not only is this poor hermeneutics, but it is an excuse to dismantle the incarnation of Christ in its entirety.
- Remember, Jesus answered a question with a question, meaning He is trying to see if this man truly knows who he is standing before.
 - Jesus probes the ruler and says, "No one is "good" (morally), but God alone".
 - In other words, no human being has perfectly executed moral/ethical standards according to God's transcendental standard of Holiness.

- Friends, there is no one perfect, except one, for only God is perfect and Holy.
- Paul says this in Romans 3:23:

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

- Friends, this becomes the hint, if you will, that Jesus has given to bait the man to recognize, on his own, that Jesus is the Messiah.
 - To put it another way, the proper response to Jesus' question should have been, "I call you good because you are God. You are the Messiah!"
 - However, as we will see, not only does the man miss the answer, but he missed it by a long shot because something else was ruling him.
 - So in an effort to check the man's heart, He further defines the term "good" for the ruler based upon God's definition of "good". Check out verses 19-20.

Mark 10:19 You know the commandments, 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'"

Mark 10:20 And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up."

- Jesus, without hesitation, goes to the Mosaic Law in Exodus 20, in an effort to show the man why he must know for himself, who is truly "good".
 - He mentions 6 commands in general in which one of them was not a command but was used potentially as a means to address the attainment of the man's wealth. (Do not defraud)
 - What becomes quite interesting is that in verse 19, the commands in which Jesus is reciting are directly related to man's relationship on a horizontal level.
 - How do I deal with people, how do I honor others created in the image of God? So these are commands in relation to human fellowship.
 - Notice that He does not provide any commands by which examine how man remains in right fellowship with God. (Vertical sense)
 - In other words, Jesus is revealing the reality of how this ruler measures his standard of "perceived goodness" based on how do people see me.
 - His external engagements with others are on par, rather than there being an internal realization that he was not right with God.
 - And I believe this was the hesitation that the man had regarding his initial question to God.
 - He was attempting to see what other "things" he needed to do in an effort to get God's attention.
 - So by now, what we are probably seeing is a "clashing of values", but most importantly how this man's sense of eternal security is wrapped up in what he does for God rather than placing his trust in God. (What God has done for man)
 - Herein lies the danger of a work-based, performance-based gospel – we begin

to set up in our hearts and minds our own standards of what we think God deems “good”.

- Our sense of striving and doing becomes the greatest hinderance of one coming to know Christ, yet at the same time, this makes them the perfect candidate to hear the Gospel proclaimed.
 - And what becomes a sad reality within Christendom is that even as believers in Christ, we have this tendency to operate in this performance-based manner.
 - “If I do this for the church or the ministry, God will be more pleased with me and I will find favor with him.”
 - “If I give this amount of money for a good cause, this will give me right standing with God and my guilty conscience will be wiped away.”
- When we begin to understand that the grace of God shown in the Gospel, found in the person of Christ, has done all that needs to be done regarding being made right with God, it takes the striving off of us.
 - Paul makes this abundantly clear in 2 Corinthians 5:21:

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- ○ Our efforts in trying to “be good” or achieve for the sake of entering the Kingdom is a tiring and meaningless attempt.
 - The only way by which one can receive eternal life is by having our eyes open to place faith in Jesus Christ. (Divine illumination)
- What becomes a sobering reality is that the rich young ruler recognizes that even with all his striving, he still has no sense of peace.
 - And now, his search for this transcendental truth leaves him at Jesus’ feet still trying to “dot his i’s and cross his t’s”.
 - Check out what happens in verse 20: And he said to Him, “Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.”
- The ruler completely misses Jesus for who He is and attempts to lean on his own abilities, influence, and wealth.
 - Notice that there is now a change in the way in which the ruler addresses Jesus.
 - It moves from “Good Teacher” in verse 17 to simply “Teacher” in verse 20.
 - Why the sudden change in address?
 - In few words, the man misses Jesus’ question and His Person because he sees himself and his accomplishments as sufficient to inherit eternal life.
- At best, the man’s understanding of being in right fellowship with God was not relational but rather transactional.
 - His belief was that he has kept the law perfectly since he became a young boy at the age of 12 (bar mitzvah).
 - And the reality is this Pharisaical approach to the Law is why God mentions within the scriptures time and time again that there must be a circumcision of

the heart.

- The ruler's response of "keeping the law" was dripping with pride.
- Friends, the reality is, the way to receive eternal life cannot be accomplished by means of external striving, but rather by internal dying.
 - In other words, we must be brought to the end of ourselves by God's truth only to respond in humility, "like a child with child-like faith".
- There are many religions around the world that find themselves in this same position – trying to ascend to a place of Holiness by doing.
 - We see this within Catholics, Hindus, Muslims, Mormons etc.
 - They all strive to be closer to God by doing for God in the sense of moral actions, when the reality is only God is good.
- What I find most beautiful within our text tonight is how Jesus responds to the rich young ruler. Check out verses 21-22.

Mark 10:21 Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

Mark 10:22 But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

- It is here where we see the heart of our Savior and the amazing grace of God in light of our present reality.
 - Mark mentions that as Jesus was looking at the man that He felt a "love" for him.
 - The "looking" that Jesus was doing here was not a mere glance or a justified rolling of the eyes.
 - No, the text tells us that Jesus was intently observing the man's internal condition – for this was where his love for him grew.
 - The word for love here in Greek is *agapao* which refers to a genuine love based not on action but need.
 - In other words, this was the kind of man that Jesus deemed qualified to receive the message of the Gospel.
 - This was the kind of person in whom He has come to save.
 - There is a saying we used to say in the Baptist Church that said: "I'm so glad that the Lord looked beyond my faults and saw my needs."
 - Indeed, this man needed to know that Jesus was all that he needed.
 - That to truly trust in Messiah was how eternal life would be inherited.
 - So Jesus, in response to what this man was seeking, tells him two commands:
 - 1. He tells the man to sell all of his assets and possessions and give it to the poor.
 - 2. Follow Christ.
 - Let's look at the first command that Jesus gives him because without doing the

first command there can be no moving towards the second command.

- The rich young ruler is told to give all that He owns for the sake of following Jesus.
- However, in verse 22, Mark states that after hearing this command from the Lord – after hearing the cost to follow Christ – the ruler weighed his cost and Christ.
- And here is the dilemma that we find as it pertains to people's response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - The pursuit of things over the pursuit of God is a costly thing – as a matter-of-fact eternity hangs in the balance.
 - When we find our temporal comforts more comforting than the provision of an eternal savior, we have misappropriated true priorities.
- Sometimes our hold onto things and where we place our identity can cause us to miss the very hope that is before us – and this was the case for the rich young ruler.
 - We have folks more concerned about their 401Ks and real estate investments than they are concerned about what comes after death.
 - We have folks more concerned about their influence and following than they care about their rightful standing before a Holy God.
- Misplaced priorities over a period of time, leads to high costs in the end.
 - And in this case the consequence of the ruler was that he left saddened and grieved, but ultimately missed the Kingdom.
 - And check out why? All because he owned much property.
- Again, the Lord told him, "Sell all your possessions and give it to the poor and I tell you, will have treasure in heaven!"
 - If I were to put it a different way, "Relinquish all that you have put your trust in, in this life, and place your trust in me and you will be rewarded."
 - Friends, Jesus wasn't just telling the man that this was the way to eternal life, but He's letting him know, your balance in the kingdom will be beyond what you have here.
 - Matthew 6:19-21 Jesus tells us this:

Matthew 6:19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Matthew 6:20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

Matthew 6:21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Verse 21 of Matthew 6 is where it all comes to a head! Where you place your treasure, your greatest value, your significance, your identity, is where your heart lies.
 - The very answer that he sought to know from Jesus was the very answer that his heart refused to accept and in that he grew deeply saddened.
 - The word for "saddened" here is *stygnao* which means to become dark or

depressed and this happened all because Jesus' response was not what he wanted to hear.

- Apparently, he wanted to have his cake and eat it too.
- And isn't this quite indicative of every generation who attempts to replace God for their own idols?
- "Give me eternal life while I also enjoy the fruits of my own labors" – this is not how God works.
 - When we fail to recognize the Creator/creature distinction, it causes one to misplace what truth is and therefore we miss it, altogether.
 - Matthew 6:24 tells us this:

Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

- The young ruler is grieved because he is unwilling to give up on everything he has worked for only to receive everything he doesn't deserve – eternal life.
 - Friends, eternal life is the cost that is relinquished simply for the sake of an illusion that what we hold on to in this life is somehow worth something.
 - The only thing worth holding on to is the word of God that is unchangeable!
 - I want to lastly hit on something that we can tend to miss in this passage if we move too quickly, and that is Jesus speaking, once again, about eternal rewards.
 - In verse 21b, Jesus tells the ruler if he surrenders all his possessions and gives it to the poor, that he would have treasure in heaven.
 - In other words, much loss for Christ right now renders much gain in the Kingdom.
 - When Christ is your all and all, you will be forever wrapped up in all that He is.
 - Therefore, we serve the Lord because of the grace that He has provided us, and in that service, we serve with all that we have – withholding nothing.
 - Why? Because if Christ is our greatest treasure, we have all that we will ever need in Him.
 - And it is through coming to the end of myself and you to the end of yourself that Christ shines forth in marvelous light.
 - Jesus' encounter with this man, for me as a Pastor, brings such great hope to my heart in being diligent with proclaiming the Gospel to all.
 - Whether poor or orphan, whether rich or isolated, all people need to hear the Gospel.
 - For one to encounter the Gospel message leaves them faced with uncompromising truth that will either steer them to great joy or great sorrow in the end.
 - I leave us with this song that we used to sing in the church I grew up in. The song written by Rhea F. Miller went like this:

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold
I'd rather be His than have riches untold
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands
I'd rather be led by His nail pierced hand

I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause
I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause
I'd rather have Jesus than worldwide fame
I'd rather be true to His Holy name.

- The question that falls before those who are non-believers is: “How much longer do you intend to strive in your own strength?”
 - For there is rest, peace, provision, shelter, hope, joy, but most importantly, eternal life in the Person of Jesus Christ.
 - You can place your faith in Him today. He has revealed His truth to you by His Spirit through the scriptures.
 - You can believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ, today.
 - Let's Pray.

Citations:

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Mark - Lesson 10D

Chapter 10:23-31

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- Last time we were together, Jesus encountered a young ruler, potentially a Sanhedrin official.
 - And it was in that encounter that this ruler sought out how he might inherit eternal life.
 - He assumed that the means in which he would inherit eternal life would be through and by his own sense of merit and wealth.
 - He saw his work, wealth and accomplishments as a means to qualify him for the Kingdom (eternal life).
 - However, Jesus informs him, in a few short words, that the ruler's standard of "moral" goodness or intrinsic good, was not that of the Father's standard.
 - For to understand who is truly good *agathos* in the sense of true holiness, one must look no further than Jesus Himself (The God-man).
 - Unfortunately, because the ruler's affections were more set on his accomplishments rather than the availability of the true offer of salvation, in the Person of Christ, he missed the Kingdom; he missed eternal life.
 - The reality was that the rich young ruler placed his faith in the wrong thing instead of the right Person.
 - He placed his trust in his own ability, wealth, and status, and in doing so, walked away from the only means of salvation, **found in the Person of Christ**.
 - **Our trust can only be placed in God's means and Person, by which Salvation is freely given and made available.**
 - It was at this point that we saw that salvation is not a means of man's attempts at striving to be "morally good" in an effort to gain God's attention.
 - **Rather, it is God's work alone that makes available the great gift of salvation.**
 - Not only is salvation accomplished by God, but it is completely sustained by God, through the finished work of Christ on the cross.
 - Our attempts at work-based, or merit-based salvation is simply man's attempt at striving for the wind.
 - The reality is, we are incapable of attaining this glorious grace gift in and of ourselves.
 - And as we will see tonight, **the task that is impossible for man is completely possible for God because it was God's plan to begin with.**
 - Tonight, we find ourselves in a bit of a transitory moment.
 - We pick up at the point after the rich young ruler walks away sad and depressed because of his unwillingness to transfer trust from self to the Savior.
 - It is here that Jesus will begin a rather sobering teaching moment for the disciples.
 - This ultimately revealing just how much more learning and growth the disciples needed before Jesus' departure.
 - If I were to offer a flow of thought or outline for tonight, we will see the following things:

- 1. A Difficult Truth (v.23-25)
 - 2. A Startling Reality (v.26-27)
 - 3. A Pressing Question (v.28)
 - 4. A Present Cost for an Eternal reward (v.29-31)
- If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would simply be: "Through the Eye of the Needle".
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 10:23-31 for the reading of God's Holy word.

Mark 10:23 And Jesus, looking around, *said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"

Mark 10:24 The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus *answered again and *said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

Mark 10:25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Mark 10:26 They were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?"

Mark 10:27 Looking at them, Jesus *said, "With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

Mark 10:28 Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You."

Mark 10:29 Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake,

Mark 10:30 but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

Mark 10:31 But many who are first will be last, and the last, first."

- Let's Pray.

Mark 10:23 And Jesus, looking around, *said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"

Mark 10:24 The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus *answered again and *said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

Mark 10:25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

- It is after the young ruler turns away from the offer of salvation because of trusting in his wealth, that Jesus turns toward His disciples to address the heart issue at hand.
 - It's almost as if Jesus holds up His hands in the direction of the young ruler as he is walking away to address the point in He will make shortly.
 - And Jesus' point to the disciples is that there is difficulty for those seeking the

Kingdom whose trust are in things rather than the transcendent one – God Himself.

- **In other words, the unwillingness to surrender to the things of this world for the sake of the next, only leads to an eternity apart from God.**
 - Psalm 52:5-7 speaks to this reality of the hold that possessions and riches have on a person and the devastation it can cause.
 - Check out the text regarding David’s contemplative prayer regarding King Saul’s boasting in His wickedness and trusting in earthly riches.

**Psalm 52:5 But God will break you down forever;
He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent,
And uproot you from the land of the living. Selah.**

**Psalm 52:6 The righteous will see and fear,
And will laugh at him, saying,**

**Psalm 52:7 “Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge,
But trusted in the abundance of his riches
And was strong in his evil desire.”**

- Through David’s prayer of contemplation, he mentions that Saul’s downfall was rooted in **placing trust in his own sources of strength** rather than the God who placed him as King.
 - And this reality sets a warning for us all in that there is a natural tendency to misplace our trust in things other than God Himself.
 - And that is due to the fact that we naturally seek refuge in our own ability because of the wickedness of our sin nature.
 - The reality is there is no amount of riches, status, or power that will aid a person into the Kingdom of God (eternal life), but God.
 - And it is this truth that Jesus is pointing to which was quite unorthodox for the people in that day.
 - I mention this because the text tells us in verse 24 that the disciples were amazed by this statement.
 - The question might arise at this point: “What would cause the disciples to be in awe or wonder at Jesus’ statement?”
 - I pose this question because Mark finds it necessary to repeat Jesus’ statement differently, yet with the same message at hand.
 - With the Pharisaical teachings of that day, it was believed that one’s wealth was an indication of God’s favor upon that person.
 - In fact the very opposite of that point would be true as well according to Pharisaical teaching.
 - That if one was poor, it was a sign of God’s displeasure and judgement.
 - As one could imagine, hearing this type of teaching would have caused one to pursue wealth by “any means necessary” all for the sake of being seen as favored by God.

- If you aren't seeing it by now, that very teaching is not far removed from the Prosperity Gospel movement that we see today. (Rooted in a Pharisaic heart)
- That if someone is not wealthy or healthy enough, they didn't have enough faith for what the pastor was praying for over them.
- Within these groups, the name of Jesus is used more as a key word to (mystically) pull on the hands of God to act in their favor, **rather than Christ being the means in which our trust should be placed in no matter the outcome.**
- **Friends, not only is the Prosperity Gospel prostituting the Gospel of Jesus, but it is absolutely unbiblical and contrary to what Jesus taught.**
 - So it is this Pharisaical teaching of wealth, being tied to God's favor, that the disciples have built their theology upon.
 - But now, with what Jesus has just pointed out to them witnessing the rich young ruler, it has shaken the very belief structure they grew up on.
- And what we are able to see is Jesus addressing their spiritual immaturity in verse 24b. Notice, the text mentions, "Jesus answered them again."
 - Within the Greek language, it is structured in a way to suggest that Jesus is responding to an **"unspoken shock"**.
- As Jesus proceeds to tell them the statement again, He addresses them as "Children".
 - This word "children" in Greek is *teknon* and it is the only place, in the Gospels, that Jesus addresses the disciples as such.
- And as you may have surmised, His reasoning for calling them children stems from their lack of maturity and this will have to be flushed out.
 - However, what I love about Jesus is that although He refers to their immaturity, the term *teknon* is used in the sense of endearment.
 - **Simply put, Jesus is committed to moving these men from spiritual immaturity to spiritual maturity.**
 - And we should thank God that by God's Spirit today, He is doing the same for us.
- It is in verse 25b that Jesus provides a hyperbolic illustration describing the difficulty (not impossibility) of the rich entering the Kingdom (eternal life).
 - He states that "It is easier for a camel to enter the into eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God."
 - One intriguing detail to note from Rabbinic teaching in that day is that the rabbis pictured an elephant as "passing through the needle" where Jesus uses a camel.
 - Jesus' use of this Jewish proverb becomes clear in a very literal sense, especially after discovering the background we have just covered.
- **The point is made that: The efforts of the rich to enter the Kingdom in their own efforts and wealth becomes an impossible task.**
 - Indeed, there is no way in which a camel, the largest animal in Palestine in that day, could get through the eye of a needle.

- And to further push the illustration, the word in Greek for “needle” is *raphis*.
 - This type of needle described in Mark’s gospel was that of a sewing needle.
 - Therefore, it graphically emphasizes the point from earlier and that is the reality that man’s efforts in entering the Kingdom on our terms is impossible no matter how much we try.
- **The only way for one to inherit eternal life is solely based upon God’s work and means.**
 - And in this case, **God’s value system** requires that of complete holiness and that is accomplished solely through the Person of Jesus Christ.
 - Therefore, for one to receive salvation there would need to be an abandonment of one’s value system for that of God’s value system.
 - Let’s keep moving. Check out in verse 26-27 the disciples’ shock and surprise and Jesus’ response to them.

Mark 10:26 They were even more astonished and said to Him, “Then who can be saved?”

Mark 10:27 Looking at them, Jesus *said, “With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.”

- It is after Jesus speaks to the impossibility of prosperity and possessions as a means of access to the Kingdom, that the disciples become “even more astonished”.
 - Don’t miss the expression here. “Even more astonished” in Greek means that the twelve were beside themselves.
 - **In other words, everything that the disciples had been taught through rabbinical teaching regarding the Kingdom and salvation was based upon a value system of trust in works and not trust in God.**
 - As we discussed earlier, wealth and prominence during that day was a sign of God’s favor and blessing in the eyes of society.
 - And the defense of this position by the rabbis would often point to the examples of the wealth of men such as Abraham and Job, to name a few.
 - But as we look throughout the Old Testament regarding wealth, these men’s trust and hope rested not in what they had, but in who they had – Yahweh.
 - For even Job mentions in Job 42:2 the following statement recognizing God’s Sovereignty in the midst of his physical ailments and loss.
 - Check out the text:

**Job 42:2 “I know that You can do all things,
And that no plan is impossible for You.**

- ◦ To make it plain: Job recognized that God is in complete control no matter what and that nothing is impossible for Him to do.
- **Friends, Jesus is completely shattering the very value system that the disciples have held onto for years.**

- And perhaps this was a root issue from the disciples' previous in-fighting regarding who would be greatest in the Kingdom.
- So when this transcendental truth was re-stated by Jesus and it sank into their minds, they asked Jesus collectively, **"Then who can be saved?"**
 - Can you hear this sense of desperation in their question?
 - For a moment, it seems as if they feel as though: "What else is there for us to do if the means of works and wealth is not the way?"
- If we were to put the truth of the text up to ourselves, pre-salvation, this is the dilemma in which many faced in coming to faith in Jesus.
 - Everyone attempting to attain salvation by their own way and means only to realize that their attempts would always fall short.
 - **The only way in which one comes to true life (eternally) is by placing full trust in a person and not possessions and prominence.**
- It is to this point that Jesus states in verse 27 that "the way to eternal life is impossible for man, but not with God, for all things are possible with God."
 - With this new perspective now in the minds of the disciples, Peter, on behalf of the 12, **asks an anticipatory question** regarding the many things the disciples have left for the sake of following Christ.
 - Check out verse 28.

Mark 10:28 Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You."

- It's at this point that Peter speaks up to inquire how the many things they have given up would translate to their reward in the Kingdom.
 - This matter of **cost now** to benefit in the Kingdom **to come** is confirmed in Matthew 19:27 where Matthew provides a bit more detail. (We will read this shortly)
 - It is in Matthew's account that Peter asks Jesus, since the twelve had left everything to follow Him, what would there be for them in the Kingdom?
 - It's as if to say: "The rich young ruler had much and wasn't willing to count the cost, yet we have given up much in an effort to follow You, Jesus."
 - **In other words, "Jesus, how will this temporary cost play out for us regarding the eternal rewards to come?"**
 - See, at the core, this question that Peter asked was brutally honest.
 - This question that is being asked is "How does the Kingdom economy work?"
 - The disciples wanted to know how their earthly loss, in the here and now, would fare in the "Kingdom economy", if you will.
 - So, Jesus provides them the answer in which they have been anticipating after having their value system completely checked by Jesus.
 - However, as Jesus prepares to share with them this Profit/loss statement, it comes with the hard reality of what following Jesus and gaining eternal rewards in the Kingdom will cost them now. (Cost of Discipleship)

- For it will be in taking on much loss and persecution now that would lead them to attain such great responsibility and opportunity in the Kingdom.
- Check out the last three verses for tonight, verses 29-31.

Mark 10:29 Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake,

Mark 10:30 but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

Mark 10:31 But many who are first will be last, and the last, first.”

- So Jesus provides the disciples with a statement that they have indeed counted the cost and because of that there will be much blessing to gain both now and in the life to come.
 - **Mark's gospel in particular, provides a list of physical loss (for the sake of Christ) and spiritual gain (being in Christ).**
 - And what this statement conveys is a holistic picture of the cost of following Jesus.
 - We will view this list later in tonight’s teaching.
 - **The reality is, when the disciples accepted the call to follow Christ they left everything.**
 - Some left their families, others lucrative careers, and others land and the like.
 - I would like to note that this was not in the sense of abandonment, but rather a departure for a period of time.
 - All of this loss for the sake of following a carpenter who they would come to fully realize was indeed "Messiah", the Christ.
 - This cost was something to be considered, yet it would not be overlooked by God.
 - We see from this list in Mark 10:30 that with this temporal cost would come great reward.
 - However, to receive these eternal benefits/rewards, we would have to endure well now and serve well now, while following Jesus until our (resurrection) and His Second Coming to the earth.
 - In Matthew's account, Jesus provides the twelve with what they will gain in the Kingdom to come.
 - Turn with me to Matthew 19:28-29.

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Matthew 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times as

much, and will inherit eternal life.

- Jesus mentions that the Apostles' reward would indeed come, but not in this life.
 - This reward system in the Kingdom as Jesus mentions, is two-fold.
 - The first phase of the reward system is "paid out" in the form of privilege or authority in the Kingdom government for them.
 - Remember, within scripture, upon Jesus' return to earth (Second Coming), the bible states that He will establish a **government** to rule all nations in the earth in the Millennium Kingdom.
 - To see what that means, turn with me quickly to Isaiah 9:6-7.

Isaiah 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
 And the government will rest on His shoulders;
 And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,
 On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
 To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
 From then on and forevermore.
 The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

- So scripture tells us that the Lord will rule all nations from Jerusalem in perfect power and rule.
 - And with Jesus ruling in the Messianic Kingdom, Matthew's gospel mentions that the apostles will receive **special positions** in the Kingdom.
 - Again, notice the **"time-stamp"**. In Matthew 19:28, Jesus uses the term "regeneration".
 - That term in greek, *palingenesis* (pal-e-inasia) is directly connected to the term "rebirth" **in the sense of the renewing of the world or the coming of the Messianic Kingdom.**
 - And within the Messianic Kingdom, the Apostles will rule over the 12 tribes of Israel in government positions. (These positions reserved **for the Apostles**)
 - What a privilege this reward will be for them (in hindsight), especially knowing the great cost they considered in following Jesus and after His death!
 - The **second half** of this reward system deals with what earthly sacrifices are made now, in serving Jesus.
 - **In other words, the earthly loss now results in greater eternal gains in the future!**
 - So Jesus' point in verses 29-30 is that loss here, now, is only temporary when you consider God's grand redemptive picture in full.
 - Therefore, in the words of Pastor Stephen Armstrong, **we must have eyes for eternity.**
 - The difficulty that we face as believers in the here and now is that we are citizens

of a Kingdom that is not yet seen while at the same time being bombarded with the worldly treasures that are enticing and persecution that is oppressive.

- **But whatever difficulties come, we are called to serve Him knowing that our service to Him in the midst of persecution, results in a glorious reward in the Kingdom to come.**
- This concept of Kingdom value is completely counter-cultural to the world and yet scripture prioritizes the intent of using what the world deems as foolish to confuse the wise.
- Really quickly, check out how Paul considers this counter-cultural thought of weakness as strength. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 12:10.

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

- So, as Jesus addresses Peter's statement regarding the twelve, having given up everything, He provides a list of losses and gains.
 - And in that list in verses 29 and 30, you may notice that "Father" is missing in verse 30. **The question becomes why?**
 - I want to show us a graphic on what's happening here.
 - What Mark's gospel shows us is, the loss that we experience in earthly possessions is greatly replaced with greater spiritual things (i.e spiritual brothers and sisters in Christ). (Mark 3:34-35, Acts 2:41-47, 1 Timothy 5:1-2)
 - And even if coming to faith in Christ causes earthly alienation from your earthly relatives, God who is rich in mercy has and will replace what was lost, **and in turn, by receiving Him, He becomes your Heavenly Father.**
 - I remember when my wife and I got married, it was a huge ordeal for her side of the family because they were all Jehovah's Witnesses.
 - When my wife came to faith at 19 she was estranged by her parents and at the age of 21 excommunicated from her family.
 - So during her growth in Christ, the church community and church friends became that family for her.
 - **The cost of following Jesus comes with great sacrifice, yet Jesus isn't asking you to do something He was unwilling to do.**
 - He took on our grief, sin, and shame so that we may put on His righteousness!
 - So if it means I lose some things that "seem" valuable according **to the world's standards**, then it's worth letting go to gain all we need in Christ.
 - Lastly in verse 31, Jesus ends by saying, **"But many who are first will be last, and the last, first."**
 - What a way to wrap up the heavy teaching after the disciples' value-system is completely destroyed before their very eyes.
 - Jesus uses this statement as a means to conclude His response to the group.
 - Remember, Peter and the disciples are trying to make sense of Jesus' standard of

entering the Kingdom versus what they have been taught. **(Conflict of Values)**

- Therefore, Jesus sums up the point: **That to gain in this world leads one to miss out on the opportunity to gain in the end.**
- Now please hear what I am not saying. I am not saying that for those who are wealthy or own their own business, that their pursuit of running a successful business is wrong.
 - What I am saying is when we put our trust and hope in these things (businesses, wealth, power, status, influence) it undermines the One in whom we have our refuge and trust in – and that is Jesus Christ.
 - It is God who must be the source of your joy and life – not money, not power, not influence, not status, but God.
 - For anything that is considered your source of joy and contentment outside of Christ, is no joy at all.
 - Check out what Paul says regarding money and wealth in the world. Turn with me to 1 Timothy 6:17:

1 Timothy 6:17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

- If you are one in whom God has blessed with great wealth and you are a believer in Christ, because you know where your help comes from, your outlook on giving and service to those around you look different from those who are closed-handed and whose trust is not in God.
 - When our value-systems become Christ centered rather than self-centered, it brings into focus our understanding of God's value-system.
 - When we abandon trusting in ourselves for trusting in God's means of Salvation, not only is salvation given, but as we serve well according to His purposes, and not our own, He credits our eternal account with rewards.
 - **The first gain is eternal life (priority) and the second is that of eternal rewards to your account (service for the sake of Christ).**
 - So it seems that the true biblical prosperity teaching is this: That if you sacrifice now, you will prosper later.
 - **Friends, counting the cost to follow Jesus and serving Christ and His purposes now will lead to greater reward in the Kingdom to come.**
 - At the university, I sang in a Christian Choir and the bridge of one of the songs we sang had the following lyrics:

**You can have this whole world
But I'll take Jesus for mine.**

- For believers, there is a choice to be made here and the result of your choice renders your rewards in the Kingdom to come.
 - There are many believers today giving up the many things the Lord has in store for

them, all because they are unwilling to let go of this world's value-system in an effort to embrace God's Kingdom values.

- **Friends we must embrace the reality that with following Christ will come temporary cost in this life, and in order to attain eternal life the only way in is through the Son.**
- For some, it may require examining the motives for your pursuit of wealth and opportunities.
 - For others it may render being exiled from family members because they refuse to associate with someone following Jesus Christ.
 - **Persecution for following Christ is not something we can escape, but the promise in the end is that it is worth it.**
 - As Paul stated in 2 Timothy 3:12:

2 Timothy 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

- Friends, may I encourage us all tonight by saying, only what you do for Christ will last.
 - As we serve the purposes of Christ in this life, know that this life is simply preparation for the next.
 - Let's Pray.

Citations:

- James A. Brooks, [*Mark*](#), vol. 23, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 163.
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- Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, [*"Needle," Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1535.
- S. C. Barton, *Discipleship*, 103–7, finds in this pericope the view that early Christianity was 'a social world in the making', and suggests that it brings to a culmination the perspective implied throughout 10:1–27, that Jesus 'gives instruction in three areas crucial for constructing and maintaining an alternative social world: marriage rules, the place of children and the control of property'. He adds, however, the important qualification that 'What is proposed is not an alternative social pattern to replace the household ..., but alternative households to compensate (and more so) for those left behind' (107).



Mark - Lesson 10E

Chapter 10:32-45

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- Last week, we discovered the difficulty that the disciples faced in understanding the Kingdom value system regarding how one enters the Kingdom (eternal life).
 - It was the teaching of that day that the means of attaining eternal life was based upon one's wealth and status.
 - However, we saw that Jesus blew that notion out of the water.
 - It was not man's means or accomplishments that gave them access to eternal life, but rather salvation was a means of God's doing, alone.
 - You might remember, it was in Mark 10:27, that Jesus stated, the way to eternal life was impossible for man, but not impossible for God.
 - That it would require the complete abandonment of self and striving in one's own strength and to transfer that trust from self to the savior.
 - It would be after realizing the path to salvation, that Jesus addresses the benefits of doing things God's way.
 - That as we surrender our will and seek to do the will of the Father that there are eternal rewards to be earned.
 - However, before we can come to that point, we must recognize that the way to receive the glory of reward in the Kingdom to come requires the believer to count the cost of following Jesus faithfully, now.
 - **In other words, to attain what God has in store in the Kingdom to come, you must rid your hold on the pursuit of things here.**
 - For if we settle for what we can gain and sustain in the here and now, we miss the benefit of eternal rewards in the coming Kingdom.
 - Therefore, we must keep in mind that because we have been saved that our service is to the King and His purpose.
 - **Because as we discovered last week, only what you do for Christ will last.**
 - Tonight, we press into a building moment in Jesus' journey to Jerusalem one last time.
 - It will be in this building moment of anticipation in which Jesus will, once again, foretell His coming death.
 - And, without fail, the response of His disciples will remain fixed upon personal agenda rather than Christ's purpose, for they still don't get it.
 - However, through Jesus' teaching of His disciples, He will reinforce the Kingdom value system.
 - For it will be them understanding the Kingdom Program and Jesus' Purpose that will pave the way for fruitful and impactful gospel ministry once He departs from them.
 - If I were to provide a flow of thought tonight, might I suggest that we will see 4 things:
 - 1. Jesus foretells His death a third time. (v. 32-34)
 - 2. An Ambitious Request (v. 35-37)
 - 3. A Frank Response (v. 38-40)
 - 4. A Revealing Explanation. (v. 41-45)

- If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would be: "Service unto the King".
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles or device, and meet me at Mark 10:32-45.

Mark 10:32 They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him,

Mark 10:33 saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles.

Mark 10:34 They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again."

Mark 10:35 James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, *came up to Jesus, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You."

Mark 10:36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Mark 10:37 They said to Him, "Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory."

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"

Mark 10:39 They said to Him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.

Mark 10:40 But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

Mark 10:41 Hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John.

Mark 10:42 Calling them to Himself, Jesus *said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them.

Mark 10:43 But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;

Mark 10:44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

- Let's Pray.

Mark 10:32 They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him,

Mark 10:33 saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn

Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles.

Mark 10:34 They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.”

- As Mark continues building upon the anticipation of Jesus' missional purpose, he emphasizes it by grounding us geographically.
 - If you recall, this journey began in Capernaum and from Capernaum east of the Jordan River to an area called Perea.
 - This was the jurisdiction in which Herod Antipas was tetrarch.
 - And it is from Perea, that Jesus and His disciples now journey up towards Jerusalem.
 - It is on this journey upward that Mark notes that while Jesus is walking ahead of the group, which was custom for that day, that there was something different with Jesus' sense of purpose/mission.
 - The text mentions that the disciples were amazed in conjunction with a fearful crowd that had made their way behind them to follow.
 - The question that should come to mind from seeing the disciples' amazement and the crowd's fear is: "What is the cause of their response?"
 - One could assume that maybe something has been said.
 - But that wouldn't make sense because Jesus has already had a personal teaching moment with His disciples, prior.
 - His prior statement definitely drew amazement, but it would not garner the need of fear per se.
 - At this point, He has been teaching them how the value system of the Kingdom varies from the worlds'.
 - **And prior to that**, Jesus was discussing the importance of serving the little children and how the Kingdom belonged to such as these.
 - In that we are to approach entering the Kingdom such as a child's dependence upon the Father and not themselves.
 - **And before that**, Jesus taught a difficult yet straight forward teaching on divorce and how the Father has established His purposes and intent for marriage.
 - And in all of these instances, Jesus has faithfully informed His disciples, that He is headed to die.
 - Yet, the disciples seemed to be more fixated on their earthly opportunities of greatness than God's definition and system of measure by which greatness is weighed.
 - So, as they are getting closer to Jerusalem, the pressure of Jesus' purpose is mounting up.
 - **It's pressing so much so that the movement and pace of Jesus is as if there is an appointment up ahead.**
 - We can surmise that this is the amazement the disciples have and the fear the people are exhibiting.
 - As a matter of fact, the original language in verse 32 regarding the Greek

words, amazed (*thanbeo*) and fearful (*phobeo*), expresses an interesting situation.

- It's like seeing a person who is walking in a determined manner towards a particular direction.
- And at the same time, the question comes to mind: "What's going on and where are they going with such haste?" – You don't want to get in the way.
- **If I were to put it plainly, there is a growing sense of pressure or impending doom in which the disciples and the crowd seem unaware of yet.**
 - Notice, this is the first time that Jesus discloses that Jerusalem is His destination and that He will be turned over to the Gentiles to die.
- This would have been the perfect time to ask Jesus what was going on and to inquire the haste in His steps.
 - Yet without fail, it would seem as if the disciples are still lacking in understanding Jesus' mission.
 - Check out what Luke writes regarding the disciples' lack of understanding regarding Jesus' coming death in Luke 18:34:

Luke 18:34 But the disciples understood none of these things, and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

- It becomes clear why the disciples did not understand what was coming for Jesus – **the Father was withholding this understanding for they were not ready.**
 - For this salvific setup would only make sense for them **after** Jesus was raised from the dead.
 - Therefore, it would be based on the Father's timetable as to **when** the disciples' eyes would be opened.
 - Let's check out verses 35-37.

Mark 10:35 James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, *came up to Jesus, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You."

Mark 10:36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

Mark 10:37 They said to Him, "Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory."

- Mark tells us that as Jesus, the disciples, and the crowd are journeying towards Jerusalem, that **an ambitious request** is asked of James and John.
 - The request from James and John was that they wanted to be granted to sit on the left and right of Jesus in the Kingdom.
 - What makes this request even more untimely is the fact that Jesus had just finished talking about His coming death.
 - It is as if to say, "You've mentioned this several times Jesus, but really quickly, let's talk opportunities."

- This neglectful and self-centered pivot truly revealed the selfish ambition at play.
 - But most importantly, it confirms the fact that they had yet to understand what Jesus was teaching them regarding His coming death.
- Here's an example of the three previous times Jesus foretold His death:
 - You might recall the first time Jesus mentioned His coming death, Peter rebuked Him. (Mark 8:31-33)
 - After that, the disciples were having a discussion around who would be the greatest in the kingdoms. (Mark 9:30-32)
 - And now Jesus tells of His death a third time and James and John are requesting VIP seating in the coming glory. (Mark 10:32-34)
 - Hopefully you are seeing the pattern.
- One question that might be going through your mind is: "What even prompted them to make such a bold and ambitious request?"
 - Perhaps, their inquiry into "being on His left and right" came from Jesus' words regarding the twelve ruling and judging over the tribes of Israel in the Kingdom. (Matthew 19:28)
- If this is in fact the case, then we can assume that the appeal/desire for this position (heart issue) outweighed the significance of Jesus' coming death.
 - **Friends herein lies the problem: When our ambitions outweigh our prioritization of Christ we miss the picture – and the disciples are missing it in a big way.**
 - And there is a lesson in this for us as well, because it shows us that our ambitions for significance and status, even in the church, can outweigh God's purpose and mission for us to pursue for His Glory.
- Understand that James and John's request was not to simply reign with Jesus, but they wanted to "sit at His right and left" (significant position of authority)
 - **To be placed at the right or left hand was a figure of speech which represented power and authority.**
 - As a matter of fact, scripture tells us that Jesus sits at the right hand of the father.
 - So, in the case of this request, James and John were insisting that their proximity with Jesus (prior), and intimate association to Him, should be considered.
- If you thought that was bad enough, Matthew's account tells us that the one who makes this request is the mother of James and John, Salome.
 - And it just so happens that she is the sister of Miriam who is the sister of Mary, Jesus' mother, which made Jesus and the sons of Zebedee, first cousins.
- So, rather than the disciples seeking to ask Jesus about His need to die, James and John seek to find a way to capitalize on their positions and proximity to Jesus as He moves towards the Passion moment. (Coming death)
 - Check out how Jesus responds to this ambitious request.
 - Not only does He hear them out, but He provides them with **"A frank response"**.

- Check out verses 38-40.

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”

Mark 10:39 They said to Him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.

Mark 10:40 But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

- Jesus tells James and John that they do not understand what they are asking.
 - Their request is hinged on glory, status, and authority, yet they do not realize the cost that comes with position in the Kingdom.
 - It’s as if they are seeking the glorious prize without carrying the cross necessary to attain it.
 - So, as Jesus speaks to their immature response for sharing in His glory, He mentions the cost necessary to attain this Kingdom honor.
 - He asks them, “If they are able to drink of the cup He will drink and be baptized in the baptism He will experience.”
 - The cup that Jesus is speaking to is the “cup of suffering” that will be poured out upon Him. (The Wrath of God)
 - And in the same way, the baptism that Jesus will experience will be the Baptism of fire.
 - **Meaning that Jesus will take on the suffering and punishment of sin upon Himself as our vicarious substitute.**
 - This is what the disciples failed to understand regarding Jesus' coming death at that time.
 - **That this means of suffering and dying would be the process by which men and women would be saved – all according to the Father’s plan.**
 - Were the disciples ready to truly take on that weight at that time – the short answer is no, not yet.
 - However, when Jesus asked the rhetorical question of “Are you able to drink from this cup...?” The brothers responded to it with a sense of confidence – Yes!
 - In other words, they said they would be more than willing to take of both the cup and baptism **without fully knowing what was required.**
 - It's in verse 39 that Jesus agrees with them that they will in fact partake in the cup and baptism, yet not in the way Jesus would or in the way they would anticipate.
 - For the disciples’ mission, upon the death and resurrection of Christ, would entail much sacrifice, service, and suffering for the sake of Christ.
 - Therefore, the disciples (apostles) as a whole, would be sharers in the coming sufferings.
 - And in the same way, we too share in His suffering, being in Christ Jesus.

- Put differently, the means of serving Christ does not come with immediate convenience, but that we should anticipate trial, tribulation, and the like.
 - As a side note, may I caution us to not be fooled by the casual westernized Christianity that is often viewed on television today.
 - **True Christianity is marked by a road of suffering, pain, and affliction.**
- The cost of discipleship is one to be considered, counted, and not entered into haphazardly.
 - There will come a cost to your earthly privilege, yet there is an enormous gain in the life to come. (Eternal rewards)
 - Here is a question for you to consider in your quiet time: Are there things/priorities in your life that are causing you to miss Jesus?
- Notice in verse 40, after Jesus addresses their request, that He further presses into their true concern – position and authority.
 - In verse 40, Jesus says, “you will share with me in suffering, but where you will be seated in authority, that is not something I can give.”
 - It’s the Father’s doing (Matthew 20:23).
- Here is a question to ask the text: How is it that Jesus can tell the disciples they will share in His suffering, yet He cannot guarantee them the reward requested?
 - **Simply put, the requirement on receiving honor in the Kingdom is rooted in a heart of faithfulness that accepts and embraces the suffering to come regardless of the benefit in the end.**
- Friends, it becomes apparent that these men's hearts were not at a place to understand this point or receive it at that time.
 - However, the good news is, they would eventually move towards fully understanding it at the appointed time.
- What we begin to see outworking from Jesus’ teaching here is that the means for earning rewards must be rooted in right motives.
 - We do not seek to serve as an effort to gain what I desire in the end as an outcome of our service.
 - But rather, we serve so that the purposes of God, accomplished through and in us, will bring glory to God!
- In other words, our reward in the Kingdom is determined by what we do for Christ (how we serve, sacrifice, etc).
 - And in conjunction to that, our position of Authority in the Kingdom is determined by **who we become in Christ.** (Spiritual Maturity)
 - **This is tied to understanding the why behind what we do for Christ.**
 - That as we faithfully serve, we serve as Christ has sacrificially served – not in a sense to be served, but to serve His mission accordingly to the Glory of God – even if it requires great loss for us.
- It is from here that in verse 41 Mark tells us that the remaining disciples, over hearing what James and John asked in secret, respond in anger towards them.
 - And what a perfect opportunity to address the issues of these men's hearts and to redirect their heart's intent and purpose as that of Jesus’ purpose.

- Check out the last few verses; verses 41-45.

Mark 10:41 Hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John.

Mark 10:42 Calling them to Himself, Jesus *said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them.

Mark 10:43 But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;

Mark 10:44 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

- As Jesus addressed the ugly elephant of selfishness among the twelve, He provides an illustration that speaks to yet another value system contrast.
 - Jesus begins with the negative contrasting example of how one leads in the world versus how one leads regarding Kingdom honor.
 - Jesus explains that Gentile rulers lord their positions of authority over others as a mean to flex their power.
 - This same mentality exists for every person of power within our society and culture today.
 - The more that they have or the larger platforms they gain the greater their influence, the greater their control.
 - Even within Jesus’ time the religious leaders lorded their “externalized” righteousness and relationship to God as something to be honored.
 - So what Jesus is describing to the disciples in this example is that the world’s value system regarding honor is rooted in selfish gain.
 - **This example of leadership is completely opposite of the type of leaders Jesus is building up in His Apostles.**
 - Consider the fact that with months to spare before Jesus dies, He has to equip and train these men for a role they were never expecting.
 - Their value systems and modus operandi must be restructured in a way that is all God-focused and reduced of selfish gain. (**Sanctifying work**)
 - As the future leaders of the Church, the Apostles would need to set the course for the main thing being the main thing – Jesus and Him crucified.
 - There can be no other message that the church proclaims but this message.
 - **For the moment that the church digresses from the gospel and moves onto another message, it loses its focus.**
 - This is why the apostles, especially Paul, was so committed to visiting the churches that he planted, because he wanted to make sure that they remained steadfast in the faith – in the proclamation of the Gospel.
 - It’s in verse 43 that Jesus says the way of honor in the Kingdom, the way of greatness in the kingdom, is rooted in an upside-down understanding of leadership.

- That where the world says greed, the church says give.
- Where the world says selfish, the church says selfless.
- Where the world sees poverty as a need to neglect, the church finds the need and meets it.
- **Jesus is establishing the reality that great honor in the coming Kingdom is found in faithfully serving, now.**
 - Service to others is rooted in a heart of submission to God as a slave of Christ for the edification of others.
- A slave does not serve the Master so that they may choose what reward they so desire, but a slave serves to please his master no matter the hour.
 - When we consider the weight of this term, slave, we recognize that a slave's life is no longer their own because they have been bought with a price.
- Friends, our lives were purchased with a price and that price was paid in full on a cross and it was Christ who footed the bill!
 - So, if there be anything that is to be lorded over us, it would be the work that Christ has fulfilled and the service that He has called us to in ministry.
- **I say this all the time: When you got saved, you didn't get saved to sit, you got saved to serve!**
 - People may not applaud you as a greeter at church.
 - People may not see you as you serve the meek and the lowly.
 - People may not see you go on missions trips to third world countries in need of hearing the Gospel.
 - Friends, the point of your service is not to be seen for the sake of proving to yourself your need for position and attention.
- **All focus in service should be directed towards Jesus Christ.**
 - Did you notice that Christ was not fixated on being seated in Glory by the Father, but solely that He could accomplish His Father's will!
 - And in that same way, we as imitators of Christ should seek to serve the Father, because of what has been graciously done for us! (This is the Why!)
- If anyone had the right to flaunt their position and status, it would have been Jesus, yet He responds not in grand announcement but in humble beginnings.
 - He does not seek to blow the horn of attention, but rather the drum of obedience – a consistent and faithful beat, to the point of death on a cross.
- Finally, Jesus puts the nail in the coffin, with a scripture most of us have memorized.
 - He states, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many."
- It is in verse 45 that we see this important word which only shows up twice in the gospels and that is the word "ransom".
 - This term appears here in Mark 10:45 and in Matthew 20:28. It is the Greek word, *lytron*.
- This term refers to "the price of release" where a payment is made to relieve a

person from the bondage that they are under and frees them from that captivity.

- “It also includes the concept of substitution” (cf. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament) *tdnt*, s.v “*lyō*,” 4:328–35
- So when we look at what Jesus is pointing to, He is showing that the ultimate example of service is found in Him!
- **That what He is headed to accomplish is the epitome of service demonstrated as an example of the most ultimate form of love.**
- If I were to put it differently, there is and can never be a way to “out serve” Jesus. However, He has set a beautiful example of what faithful service looks like.
 - That serving with a God-focused, God-centered heart may cost you everything, but its reach and benefit to others is what counts.
- Friends, this is the core of discipleship. This is the core of faithful service.
 - That we serve to the purpose of the Father, to the exalting of the Son, and for the benefit of others to know Him.
 - Here is **why** service to others removes the focus off what you seek out of it: **We have already fully received all that we will ever need in the Person of Jesus Christ.**
- Christ’s death transferred us from death to life, therefore our lives are no longer our own, but our lives belong to the Lord.
 - And because of that, whatever the King needs from me, His command is my pursuit.
- **The way to being lifted in honor begins with the descent to the bend of the knee.**
 - Friend, are you humbly submitted in obedience to the Father, or are you more fixated on status and position?
- We become more Christ-like in all that we do, in how we serve, in how we love, and in how we meet needs for others.
 - For it is through the process of service, that we become best qualified to rule in whatever capacity the Father sees fit for us in the Kingdom.
 - And the understanding of service to the King only comes through becoming more mature in Christ. (Spiritual Maturity)
- Lastly, there is a caution we must adhere to and that is that we are not to seek rewards for the sake of desiring position, because that only reveals the heart’s intent.
 - Rather, as we serve because Christ has served and has demonstrated this service as an example for all believers, that we are to pattern that humility and obedience all the same.
 - This is what Paul wrote to the church at Philippi in Philippians 2:8-13

Philippians 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

Philippians 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Philippians 2:11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

- May we not lose sight that Christ is and always will be the focal point of it all.
 - Let's Pray.

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Mark - Lesson 10F

Chapter 10:46-52

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- As we approach tonight's text, you will see this continued momentum towards Jesus' final ascent to Jerusalem, before He heads to die.
 - It has been, at this point, a continual redirection for the disciples in understanding Jesus' mission to the cross.
 - The disciples have been struggling with understanding Jesus' teaching about His coming death.
 - For this was the third mention of Jesus foretelling of His death, and in that, He provides more details regarding His sentence to the cross.
 - It was last week where we witnessed James and John, the sons of Zebedee, seeking to be elevated to higher positions of honor and authority.
 - They were seeking to be seated one to His left and one to His right.
 - This heart issue ultimately revealed that the disciples were more fixated on position in the Kingdom than service unto the king for His purposes.
 - So as Jesus is confronting these misplaced value-systems, He confronts His disciples in a loving way and shows them that honor is given by the Father based upon one's service to others.
 - Ultimately, Jesus points to Himself and mission as to the perfect example of greatness and that is through accomplishing the Father's will.
 - The Father's will for Jesus was to become a ransom, a substitute for the many.
 - This mission/purpose of Christ is what the disciples are failing to understand.
 - For the only way in which anyone can enter into the glorious Kingdom would be through the death of its Glorious King.
 - Therefore, this spiritual clarity (maturity) for the disciples would be something Jesus would have to move them towards, moment by moment.
 - This gradual clarity might ring a bell as we consider earlier in our Mark teaching (Mark 8:22-25) where Jesus had healed the blind man at Bethsaida.
 - It was in Jesus healing this man in 2 stages that revealed an interesting spiritual reality for the disciples.
 - The disciples began unaware of Jesus' person, therefore the Father would open their eyes to that truth. (Peter's Confession)
 - And from there, they would need to be aware of His mission, and that would need to be revealed to them in the Father's timing. (After Jesus' resurrection)
 - So, where the disciples began in spiritual blindness to God's redemptive mission, it will be a continued effort to open their eyes to the full plan.
 - If I were to provide us with a flow of thought tonight, we are going to see the following things:
 - **1. A Desperate Cry (v. 46-48)**
 - **2. An Immediate Response (v.49-50)**
 - **3. A familiar question yet a different outcome (v.51-52)**
 - I want to tag tonight's text: "Lord, open my eyes"
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures and meet me at Mark 10:46-52.

Mark 10:46 Then they *came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road.

Mark 10:47 When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Mark 10:48 Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Mark 10:49 And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him here.” So they *called the blind man, saying to him, “Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you.”

Mark 10:50 Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus.

Mark 10:51 And answering him, Jesus said, “What do you want Me to do for you?” And the blind man said to Him, “Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!”

Mark 10:52 And Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road.

- Let’s Pray.

Mark 10:46 Then they *came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road.

Mark 10:47 When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Mark 10:48 Many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

- Mark continues in his account, the pilgrimage of Jesus, the twelve, and the crowd as they make their way to Jerusalem.
 - This journey to Jerusalem picks up from Perea, where we were in last week's teaching.
 - And now they are making their way west of the Jordan river to a familiar place called Jericho.
 - At first glance, verse 46 might read a bit strange as it pertains to the coming events.
 - I say that because Mark’s account mentions that “they came to Jericho, and as they were leaving Jericho, they came across a blind beggar.”
 - This detail may seem very vague; however, we must consider the author, the author’s intent, and history.
 - Mark is not trying to bog us down with the details but is trying to provide us with a big picture.
 - And with putting the synoptic gospels up to one another, we can grasp a full picture of this scene.
 - Within Matthew and Luke's gospel, both books provide this account of the blind

beggar.

- However, with the uniqueness of authorship, there are some detail differences within each account.
- For example, in Luke's account, he mentions that **they were approaching Jericho** when the blind man inquired about Jesus passing by.
 - Whereas in Matthew's account, he mentions that **as they were leaving Jericho**, two blind men had inquired about Jesus' passing and cried out to Him.
- So, the question becomes, if the bible does not contain errors, how does a bible student justify these textual differences within each account?
 - Well, the best way to handle these differences is to carefully observe the current text alongside the other similar accounts in light of Israel's history.
- And what we come to conclude is that in the first century, two Jerichos existed.
 - Here is what Dr. Charles Ryrie said about these two Jerichos:

“The other is that since there were two Jerichos (old Jericho and the new city), the healing could have taken place after the group left old Jericho and as they were nearing new Jericho. Thus Matthew’s “as they were going out” refers to old Jericho while Mark’s and Luke’s references to approaching Jericho refer to new Jericho.”

- ○ There was an Old Testament Jericho and a New Testament Jericho and the distance between these two Jerichos was approximately 1 mile.
- The Old Testament Jericho is what we find in **Joshua 6** where the Israelites walked around the city walls for 6 days and on the seventh day, after the trumpets were blown, the walls fell.
 - The New Testament Jericho is where Herod the Great built his palaces.
- So when we see Mark's gospel say "as He was leaving Jericho. they came across the blind beggar," the timeline begins to come together.
 - **Jesus, the disciples, and this large crowd behind them, were traveling between the two Jerichos upon encountering the beggars.**
- Another question comes to mind, two to be exact: The first question is, why the variation of beggars, and secondly, why so many people?
 - Again, here is where having the Synoptics together is important.
 - Where Mark and Luke's gospels document only one beggar, Matthew's gospel documents two beggars.
- Context and authorship is key, therefore the way to resolve these differences is by harmonizing the Gospel accounts.
 - Therefore, we can surmise that if Matthew's gospel only mentions two beggars, then **the one** in whom Mark's account mentioned by name and Luke speaks to one in general, **then the one mentioned by name must be the person of focus within this story.**
- But before we get to the man's name, we must address the second question: "Why

is there such a large crowd in the mix on the journey to Jerusalem?"

- It was this time in which the Jewish people would commute to Jerusalem for Passover.
- Therefore, the amount of people traveling through Jericho to Jerusalem would have been large in number.
- According to one scholar, Jerusalem during the 1st Century had a population of about 20,000-30,000 people, however at Passover the Holy city would swell to an additional 150,000 people.
 - Messianic Jewish Scholar, Alfred Edersheim confirms this mountainous amount of people in his book, the Temple.
- So, with this enormous amount of people traveling to Jerusalem for Passover, it wouldn't be uncommon to find beggars seeking aid from those in passing.
 - And among the multitudes, the text mentions that there on the side of the road was a blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus.
 - Bartimaeus is Aramaic for "Son (Bar) of Timaeus". And Timaeus means "highly prized" or "honored".
- Mark mentions that while Bartimaeus is sitting off on the side of the road between the two Jerichos, that he overhears that Jesus was passing through.
 - Imagine for a moment, thousands are passing along these narrow but newly paved roads headed for the Passover.
 - And discussions and whispers have been made known that among the crowds is Jesus of Nazareth.
 - As word is being passed along, Bartimaeus overhears and is moved to cry out with a loud voice: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!!"
 - You can almost hear the desperation and desire he had for Jesus to respond to his need.
- Notice, the title that he calls out to Jesus, he says "Son of David".
 - This title is a messianic title speaking to the Messiahship of Jesus being the righteous King (Romans 1:3, Jeremiah 23:5) .
 - It would seem that from the title Bartimaeus calls out to Jesus, that he has not only heard of the many things Jesus has done before, but believes He is who He says He is.
 - **And this assurance is without the visual accommodation of sight!**
 - **Friends, this sounds like faith is evident, even without physical sight!**
- As Bartimaeus is desperately crying out for Jesus to have mercy upon him, the text mentions that "many" were "sternly" telling him to be quiet.
 - The word for "sternly" in Greek is *epitimaō* which means to reprove.
 - It's the sense of showing great disapproval in a forceful way.
- And to add fuel to the fire, this word is in the imperfect, active, indicative, meaning that they were repeatedly trying to shut him up – but Bartimaeus would not stay silent.
 - You can sense the desperation, because verse 48b says, "but he kept crying

out all the more."

- Nothing was going to get in the way of Him getting to Jesus.
- That even in his state of lowliness, his high regard and need for Jesus would not keep him there.
- One question that may be raised in your minds is: "Why were the people trying to silence Bartimaeus from calling out to Jesus?"
 - Well, during heightened times such as the Passover in the Holy City, both the Jewish and Roman authorities were on high alert.
 - It's like many public events over a certain capacity require security patrol for safety and oversight.
- So, imagine hearing someone shouting Jesus, "Son of David" – this would have been a huge political threat and would have caused much trouble.
 - This could very well have been the cause of such a stern rebuke from the crowd.
- Well, it becomes apparent in verse 49 that Bartimaeus' desperation not only caught Jesus' attention, but it caused Him **to stop** amid these great crowds.
 - Check out verses 49-50.

Mark 10:49 And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So they *called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage, stand up! He is calling for you."

Mark 10:50 Throwing aside his cloak, he jumped up and came to Jesus.

- Upon Jesus hearing Bartimaeus in desperation, the text tells us that Jesus stopped what He was doing to hear his request.
 - What becomes a beautiful sight to see is that Jesus, who is moving toward a major point of His mission, takes the time to stop His movement to meet the personal needs of this man.
 - This shows us God's sovereignty at work in that He is actively aware and knew Bartimaeus' needs at that very moment and responded.
 - There's a saying I heard growing up in church that said: "God may not come when you want Him to, but He's always right on time."
 - **So, what may have seemed like a huge inconvenience to others in Jesus stopping mid-stride became Jesus' priority!**
 - And this pause in Jesus' plans potentially served as a teaching moment to the disciples.
 - It would reinforce what Jesus had been teaching prior and that was to not hinder those **in need of ministry** – for that is why Christ came.
 - So, it is upon Jesus telling the people to summon the blind men to Himself that the people called forth Bartimaeus.
 - Can you imagine, right after having scolded the man verbally for his vocal outburst they now give him warm welcomes of, "Take courage, Jesus is calling for you."
 - However, their change in behavior was of no concern to Bartimaeus.

- For it's at Jesus' call for the blind men that Mark's account mentions Bartimaeus "threw his cloak" aside, jumped up, and came to Jesus.
 - One question that begs to be asked is: "Why does Mark's account speak to the man "tossing" his cloak aside, but not the others?" (Matthew and Luke)
- Well remember, Mark's gospel is **a gospel of action** meaning that he is pointing us to significant moments of Jesus' ministry through means of movement.
 - Therefore, we can see that there is some sort of significance to be found in this action from the blind beggar – and it's found in the significance of his cloak.
- The cloak was an outer garment which aided in protecting one from the elements.
 - In the ancient world, clothes were a costly investment and often traded as valuable property or confiscated from conquest.
- So, for those who were left as beggars in that day, their cloak was their prized possession and valuable.
 - And here it is that Bartimaeus tosses aside **his only cloak** as if it was no longer of importance or value.
 - And in fact, **it wasn't** now, because Messiah was all he needed, for his Messiah was his "high prize" and his provisions would be met.
- It's upon the man, potentially being assisted towards Jesus' vicinity, that he arrives before Jesus.
 - And Bartimaeus is met with a "familiar question (to us), yet a completely different response is given to him."
 - Check out our last 2 verses for tonight, verses 51-52.

Mark 10:51 And answering him, Jesus said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" And the blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!"

Mark 10:52 And Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road.

- We see that Jesus responds to Bartimaeus' desperate plea with a familiar question from before.
 - It's in verse 51 that Jesus asks Bartimaeus the same question He did to James and John, His own disciples.
 - The difference in the question being asked now is the contrasting responses from the two groups of men (Apostles/Blind Men)
 - The question again was, "What do you want Me to do for You?"
 - This question being asked regarding a need (miracle) in front of a public crowd becomes a bit perplexing.
 - I say that because it was in Mark 3 where because of Israel's rejection of Messiah, that the Kingdom would be postponed for a time.
 - **And with that, Jesus' ministry methods changed as well.**
 - Meaning He no longer performed miracles **where there was no faith** and

would only do these works in private settings.

- However, when Jesus calls the blind men to Himself, this would be private matters addressing two individuals who had publicly expressed faith.
 - And in confidence, the man responds by first calling Jesus, Rabboni.
 - Rabboni is the emphatic form of the word Rabbi, so where Rabbi is common for teacher, Rabboni means "My Master, My Lord".
- It is as if these blind men need not even to see Jesus perform a thing because their faith provided all the insight they needed.
 - The request that is made is in regards to their sight. They say that they want to "regain" their sight.
 - This could suggest that there was a point prior that these men could see.
 - The cause of blindness could have been because of disease.
- **Whatever the cause of blindness was, his sight (physical condition) was not a barrier to his faith (spiritual position) or trust in God.**
 - It is from this great demonstration of faith that Jesus responds to their request, much differently than He did James and John's request.
- Verse 52, Jesus tells these 2 blind men "Go, your faith has made you well!"
 - Remember, Faith has an object, and that object is a Person, and that Person is Christ Jesus, alone.
 - **The blind men were able to gain sight because their faith was in the One who could do all things.**
- They had probably heard how Jesus was healing others before, especially the blind man of Bethsaida.
 - They didn't need constant proof or visuals, they simply believed that Christ could because of who He was and He would because He did it before for those in need.
- As we end tonight's teaching, I want to address the means of faith and healing within tonight's text.
 - We need not create blanket statements that "anytime" someone seeks to be healed that all they have to do is have "enough faith".
- The reality is, there could very well be instances where you pray and are believing for God to heal yet He does not respond to that request.
 - It doesn't mean you lack faith; it simply means that it was not in God's plan at that time or at all – God works in His time and on His timetable.
 - **This simply reinforces God's sovereignty over all things and gives us confidence to trust Him in all things.**
 - Well, let's keep moving.
- You must love how Mark wraps up Chapter 10. Check out verse 52, again.
 - After Jesus immediately provides sight to the blind men, the text says Bartimaeus began following Jesus.
 - What a staunch difference from the rich young ruler. He had everything but gave up nothing, to simply lose everything.

- Yet here are these blind men who had nothing, yet gave up the little they possessed, not just to gain physical sight, (everything they longed for) but to inherit eternal life in the Kingdom.
- The blind man's needs would now be fully met in Christ.
 - I leave us with the words of Paul in Philippians 3:7-9.

Philippians 3:7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Philippians 3:8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, **Philippians 3:9** and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,

- Friends, the greatest loss you experience in this life does not compare to the glorious gain found in Christ.
 - May we strive to have eyes for eternity.
 - Let's Pray.

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Mark - Lesson 11A

Chapter 11:1-10

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- Last week, we went through what I called a “book-end” moment.
 - This consisted of Jesus’ healing of blind Bartimaeus as He and the disciples are making their way to Jerusalem for Passover.
 - And we discovered that through reading the other synoptic accounts, that there were two blind men seeking to be healed.
 - However, Mark’s focus is more centered towards Bartimaeus’ healing, especially his response after the fact.
 - It was this healing of blind Bartimaeus that was completely different from the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida.
 - The two-stage healing with the blind man in Bethsaida reflected the need of spiritual clarity for the disciples concerning Jesus' mission.
 - Whereas Blind Bartimaeus, tossing aside his cloak to respond to Jesus, “Son of David”, is an action of spiritual clarity from faith provided.
 - And immediately after he is healed, the text told us that Bartimaeus began to follow Jesus as a disciple.
 - After this healing, the crowd continued following Jesus amongst the other pilgrims as they made their way to Jerusalem for Passover.
 - Tonight, we make our way to the point of our text known as the "Triumphal Entry".
 - It is here in Mark's gospel that Chapters 11-16 mark what is known as the “Passion week”.
 - This will be where Jesus prepares for His suffering and death just as He foretold to His disciples.
 - However, before His entrance into Jerusalem, there was another miracle that took place and that was the raising of Lazarus. (John 11:45-46)
 - This miracle garnered even more popularity for Jesus upon the ascent to Jerusalem amongst the people, as well as hostility from the religious leaders.
 - This triumphal entry would mark a major highlight in human history, fulfilling a prophecy of old which led to Messiah’s death.
 - If I were to outline our time tonight, we will see the following:
 - 1. Preparation for a fulfillment of Prophecy (v. 1- 3)
 - 2. Providence of the Sovereign (v. 4-6)
 - 3. A Visual Proclamation of an “un” Triumphal Entry (v.7-11)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be: “The Arrival of the Peaceful King!”
 - With that being said I invite you to meet me in Mark 11:1-11.

Mark 11:1 As they *approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He *sent two of His disciples,
Mark 11:2 and *said to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here.

Mark 11:3 If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ you say, ‘The Lord has need of it’; and immediately he will send it back here.”

Mark 11:4 They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they *untied it.

Mark 11:5 Some of the bystanders were saying to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?”

Mark 11:6 They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission.

Mark 11:7 They *brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it.

Mark 11:8 And many spread their coats in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields.

Mark 11:9 Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: “Hosanna!

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord;

Mark 11:10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!”

Mark 11:11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.

- Let’s Pray.

Mark 11:1 As they *approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He *sent two of His disciples,

Mark 11:2 and *said to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here.

Mark 11:3 If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ you say, ‘The Lord has need of it’; and immediately he will send it back here.”

- It’s here that Mark sets up our scene geographically as the Passover week approaches.
 - Jesus and His disciples began the journey in the Galilee in Capernaum, moving south then east across the Jordan river to Perea.
 - From Perea they journeyed to Jericho, and they continued their ascent up towards Jerusalem.
 - This sort of advance travel to Jerusalem for Passover was common for many as thousands of people journeyed on the narrow roads to Jerusalem.
 - Verse 1 begins by saying “As they approached Jerusalem”, meaning they had not entered through the eastern gate and are therefore on the "outskirts" of the city.
 - The "outskirt towns" coming up from the east were Bethphage and Bethany.
 - And, like a typical “Markan” move, Mark provides us with big picture clues.
 - In this instance, he does so geographically by mentioning that these locations

were near the Mount of Olives.

- The town of Bethphage was located on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives between Bethany and Jerusalem.
 - And the town of Bethany was located on the southern slope of the Mount of Olives, about 2 miles outside Jerusalem.
- Bethany was known as the "house of the poor" and this was the village which Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.
 - You can imagine, with Jesus having done such a miracle, as raising a dead child, it would have garnered much attention from the traveling crowds.
 - Not only that but it would have caused animosity amongst the religious leaders, looking to protect their religiosity.
- The name of Bethphage means "house of unripe figs".
 - And as I mentioned earlier, Bethphage was considered an "outskirt town" of Jerusalem.
 - And according to the Talmud, the town was regarded as an extension of Jerusalem.
 - This detail plays a huge role in biblical prophecy, as you will see later tonight.
- Edersheim, in his book "The Temple", mentions that the citizens of Bethany and Bethphage were quite "hospitable towards pilgrims" traveling for the Passover feast.
- As we look at the towns mentioned in Mark's account, geographically, we can't help but recognize the huge theological matter at play.
 - In one case, we know eschatologically that it will be upon the Mount of Olives that Jesus will make His glorious return and split the Mount of Olives in half.
 - His very return will cause cosmological and geographical changes, universally.
- We will also see, prophetically, that the location of Bethphage, plays a huge role Christologically in understanding Jesus' mission and purpose as Messiah, redemptively.
 - I mention this because within rabbinical tradition, they discuss the significance of Bethphage.
 - It is stated that Messiah would ride into Jerusalem from city limits of the eastern side of the city.
 - The Mishnah concludes that the city limits on the eastern side of Jerusalem was the small town of Bethphage.
- In verses 2-3, Mark tells us that Jesus sends two of His disciples out to a village, opposite of them with detailed directives, to gather a colt.
 - What an interesting set of directives given to these two disciples as a means of a "divine errand". (We will review this soon.)
- One question that some would ask is: "With such detailed instructions, how could Jesus have known exactly where to go?"
 - And for that matter, "What they would find as requested, so perfectly?"
 - Secondly: "Why would Jesus need a Donkey to enter Jerusalem for the

Passover feast anyway?”

- For the text does not mention His need of a donkey in His prior pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
- Let's address the first question: These detailed instructions in which Jesus has provided them is based upon the Father's Sovereign plan, by which He has given the Son to instruct the disciples for such a time as this.
 - Consider in verse 3 the details provided:
 - where to go,
 - what to find,
 - who will ask,
 - what to say,
 - what to do,
 - and what's this for.
 - If we see anything in verses 1-3 alone, we can establish a theological truth and that is: God is sovereign.
- For God's word to go forth to be accomplished, being that He is Lord of all, He can use all means, people, and processes to accomplish His plan.
 - As we move to verses 4-6 we will see everything that Jesus told His disciples to do on this "Divine errand" was accomplished to the "t".
- The Second question that we must ask is: "Why would Jesus need a donkey/colt to enter Jerusalem for the Passover feast? And why a colt that has never been sat upon?
 - This answer is twofold.
- On one hand, it was not unusual for someone to borrow a donkey as a means of transportation.
 - And contrary to popular belief, a donkey was not associated with poverty in the 1st century.
 - Where some would expect horses for transportation (used for war), donkeys were of common use at that time and demonstrated peace.
- So, what was Jesus doing having His two disciples gather the donkey and her colt to ride into the Holy City?
 - Friends, Jesus is preparing to make an emphatic statement by demonstration, pointing to who He is, the Jewish Messiah.
- This demonstration of riding on a colt into the Holy City was a means of prophecy in the Hebrew scriptures and would be, a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9.
 - Check out the text with me:

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
He is just and endowed with salvation,
Humble, and mounted on a donkey,

Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

- Now, there is another question that we have not answered, and it pertains to verse 2:
 - "Why did Jesus request a colt that had not been sat upon?"
 - For us to round out this detail, we need to look at Matthew's gospel and in doing so we see that what is requested is both a donkey and her colt, and the colt is to be "unbroken".
 - Having a colt that was "unbroken" could cause one to become seriously injured.
 - It's like a woman who purchased some new high heel shoes.
 - She must break them in by wearing them around the house in an effort to get them to feel comfortable.
 - So, the fact that Jesus is requesting an unused, untrained colt speaks to His very power and control over the animal Kingdom.
 - Let's keep moving. Check our Mark 11:4-6.

Mark 11:4 They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they *untied it.

Mark 11:5 Some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?"

Mark 11:6 They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission.

- It's in complete obedience to Jesus' instructions that the two disciples, whose names aren't provided, follow His instructions to a "t"!
 - Imagine being given instructions to go somewhere to retrieve something that was not previously arranged or purchased, to your knowledge.
 - This request from Jesus, at first ask, would seem like a weird request.
 - However, with hindsight, we see that these provisions were arranged by the Father through means of preparing the hearts of those at play within history.
 - All the two disciples needed to do was have faith in knowing that what Jesus said was true and trust that what He sent them to find they would find.
 - Interestingly enough, the owners of the donkey and the colt have never met the two disciples and yet they make their way to untie the donkey and the colt.
 - And they let the owners know that "The Lord has need of it."
 - This word "Lord" in Greek is *Kyrios* which means Master or owner.
 - However, Jesus is speaking in Aramaic and within the Septuagint translation it translates as Yahweh.
 - So, they tell the owners, "Yahweh has need of it."
 - Friends, this was yet another indicator of Jesus making known to His disciples and those around that He is the God-man (Messiah).

- So just like that, the owners release the animals into the care of the disciples for Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as their true king.
- Even if it meant that the people were not fully grasping the full sense of this “appointed time”.
- And what I pray you are seeing is that God's plans are perfect, and His word will not return unto Him void.
 - Let's move to our last few verses 7-11.

Mark 11:7 They *brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it.

Mark 11:8 And many spread their coats in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields.

Mark 11:9 Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: “Hosanna!

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord;

Mark 11:10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David;

Hosanna in the highest!”

Mark 11:11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.

- Mark tells us that upon Jesus receiving the donkey and the colt, that the disciples began to put their coats (outer garments) upon the back of the colt.
 - We can assume this was done as a means of cushioning Jesus' ride upon the colt.
 - Once Jesus sits upon the colt, notice that the crowd gives two separate responses before the shouts proceed.
 - Some spread their coats on the road while others laid "leafy branches"!
 - This moment marked a critical point in Jesus' ministry. This was the moment that is known in church history as the Triumphal Entry.
 - This type of welcome was one of a royal welcoming in the first century.
 - As a matter of fact, in the ancient east, this type of greeting was given to royal dignitaries and was customary for that day.
 - An example of this royal welcoming is found in 2 Kings 9:13.

2 Kings 9:13 Then they hurried and each man took his garment and placed it under him on the bare steps, and blew the trumpet, saying, “Jehu is king!”

- So, in response to the visual that is seen, the text mentions that people are laying down coats and leafy branches.
 - We are provided with details in John's gospel as to what the “leafy branches” are in John 12:13.

John 12:13 took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.”

- ○ The leafy branches are palm branches.
- So, it is these 2 distinct items that provide us with a contrasting group that see Jesus as king in two different lights. (We will expound later)
 - We also got a clue from last week's teaching on Blind Bartimaeus regarding what the cloaks represent.
- If you recall, Bartimaeus, acknowledged Jesus as the "Son of David!"
 - Meaning that he viewed Jesus as Messiah who would sit upon the Davidic throne and usher in the Kingdom.
- So those who are throwing down their cloaks identify Jesus as their Messiah who will defeat Satan's Kingdom and in turn establish the Messianic Kingdom.
 - So, what about the Palm branches? What did those signify and why were they being laid down before Jesus, riding up towards Jerusalem?"
- Palm branches earned a distinct meaning for Jews in that day. It was a symbol of national liberation.
 - So, with that in mind, those in the crowd laying down Palm branches were indicating their desire for Messiah to liberate them from Gentile rule (i.e. Roman Government)
- History shows us that the Jews first used this symbol to greet the Macabees after they defeated the Greeks in an effort to liberate Israel in the 2nd century.
 - In 1st Maccabees, we see a historical account that speaks to that period and the use of Palm branches.

On the twenty-third day of the second month, in the one hundred seventy-first year, the Jews entered it with praise and palm branches, and with harps and cymbals and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been crushed and removed from Israel.

- So when we consider what “Palm” Sunday is truly about, we can see that the naming of this day is very misleading.
 - For Jesus moving towards Jerusalem on a colt on the 10th of Nisan was not an entrance for political and militant conquering, but rather a means of making known the peace that is found in Messiah and His First Coming.
 - The fact that Jesus is riding on a donkey and not a horse speaks to the meaning of His symbolic message.
 - This further makes the point that seems to be missed by the disciples and most of the crowd – they do not understand Jesus' mission here regarding the 1st Advent.
 - So, the two groups are the following:
 - 1. One group sees Jesus as Messiah to be coronated and crowned king.
 - 2. The other group sees Messiah as a militant leader who will lead a political

revolt and bring the Kingdom in Full Power and authority.

- This moment within history was both pivotal and prophetic as we will see later tonight in verses 9-11.
- Mark tells us that as Jesus is riding up to the gates the people are chanting several statements:
 - The first word is "Hosanna". In Hebrew this word is spelled *Hoshia' na*, which means "save us, we beseech you!"
- Secondly, we see the phrase "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord"
 - This very statement of exultation comes from Psalm 118:26
 - It is a Messianic Psalm speaking of the "One" coming in the name of the Lord and it is anticipatory in nature regarding the expected arrival of Messiah.
- Thirdly is the phrase "Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our father, David".
 - It was this cheer for the coming Kingdom that was promised long ago. It would be this Kingdom that would have no end. (2 Samuel 7:16)
- And lastly was the statement, "Hosanna in the Highest!"
 - So, it becomes a clear indication of Jesus' identity being understood yet there is a struggle with understanding the timing of His mission.
 - It's almost as if it's the right acknowledgement yet wrong timing or shall I say "missed" timing.
- For this Passover would not be the indication of Jesus' coronation and Triumphal Takeover, for they had already rejected the offer of the Kingdom and their King.
 - The point that the disciples were missing was the fact that rather than a coronation, there would be a crucifixion – a "cutting off" of Messiah.
- This very expectation of Messiah being "cut off" was Sovereignly set by God over 450 years prior.
 - It was Daniel, who in Daniel 9:24-27 prophesied a particular coming time that Messiah would be "cut off".
 - So, as Jesus is coming from the east riding on a colt, He fulfills Zechariah 9:9 and we see the people shout of this kingly act.
- Yet, the disciples are struggling with Jesus' reminders of His death.
 - This celebratory and triumphal moment seems to be what they were anticipating for Jesus.
- The rabbis of that day taught upon the coming of a mighty militant Messiah, yet they seemed to forget about the scriptures which speak of the suffering servant.
 - It becomes plain that, in their confusion, there weren't two Messiahs, but rather One Messiah with two separate comings.
- It's at this point that, in verse 11, Mark states that Jesus entered Jerusalem on the day we know in Church History, today, as Palm Sunday.
 - And the very first thing that Jesus does, upon entry into Jerusalem, is go to the Temple.
 - And while in the temple, Jesus was "looking around at everything".

- The word for “looking” in Greek is the word *periblepo*. This word is used seven times in Mark’s gospel, and it speaks to looking about in various directions intently.
 - I find it interesting, the anticlimactic moment here in Mark’s gospel.
 - Jesus, after having been praised and revered by the people is now in the Temple alone because the crowd has faded off.
 - Talk about fanfare with no substance!
- You would think that with this anticipation built up that questions would be asked, or teaching would take place – not just Jesus alone in the Temple.
 - Perhaps Jesus was looking for a response from the people, most especially His own disciples.
 - This moment reminds me of the disconnect between the disciples and Jesus after Jesus tells them a third time that He is headed to die.
 - Jesus, in this last leg, has a sense of determination to get to Jerusalem as if there was an appointment for Him, up ahead – in fact there was.
- According to the text, Jesus must have been there for a while scouting the temple in a survey-like fashion, because the end of verse 11 says “He left for Bethany, with the twelve, since it was already late.”
 - I believe this moment here was to examine the temple to see if the temple was being used according to its purposed intent.
 - For as we will see in our next teachings, there will be several instances where Jesus is going to have issue with the corruption and evil of the religious leaders and their use of the Temple.
 - And because of the corruption that is going on there, we will see in Mark 13 that Jesus will foretell the destruction of the Temple that will come.
- What began as a moment of celebration concludes in a time of sadness for Jesus.
 - For the people had eyes but could not see. They had ears but could not hear.
 - For what could be deemed as Jesus’ self-disclosure as Messiah was completely missed, because people wanted to see what they wanted to see.
- Isn’t that what becomes of us even as followers of Christ, we want Jesus to fit our particular boxes of interest.
 - Yet it is God who wants us to see who He is and what He has done the way He designed it.
- And in this case, as Jesus is inspecting the Temple, He is actually inspecting the hearts of the people of Israel.
 - And as He is looking and examining everything, we will see that the people’s spiritual condition is corrupt and darkening.
- It would be this day, the tenth day of Nisan in which the righteous Lamb arrived, to be set aside, and ultimately killed for the sins of the people.
 - The people missed their spiritual deliverer presented before them all to seek a physical deliverance right then and there.
 - However, before there could be glory admonished to the King, He would have to suffer for the sins of His people.

- This would only be accomplished by the Lamb of God.
- Let's Pray.

Citations:

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Mark - Lesson 11B

Chapter 11:11-21

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- Well, we opened last week with what I would deem, the "un" triumphal entry.
 - This is where we witnessed Jesus' ascension towards Jerusalem as He is riding on the back of a colt, fulfilling Zechariah 9:9.
 - It was this scene of great prophetic recognition that emerged praises from 2 distinct groups within the crowd.
 - One group expressed praises to the "Son of David" as they identified Jesus as their Messiah, the One who would sit upon the Davidic throne and usher in the Kingdom.
 - Whereas the other group identified Jesus as their Messiah who would lead as a military leader and provide national liberation from Roman governance.
 - It was this sense of "two types of Messiahs" in which the people of that day were conditioned to anticipate.
 - **However, the reality was there was only one Messiah with 2 separate comings.**
 - Messiah's first coming would bring peace and right fellowship between man and Holy God.
 - And how this would be accomplished is through and by the suffering of Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection.
 - **That before the glory of the Kingdom would come, there must first be a mighty crushing of Messiah.**
 - It was after Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, that He would conclude that day in the temple.
 - And there He would inspect the temple, which ultimately would lead to examining the heart of the Nation and the children of Israel.
 - From His lone stance in the temple and examining the House of God, this would mark the first day of His time in Jerusalem – the 10th of Nisan (Sunday).
 - Tonight, we move to day 2 of the Passover festival and it will be on this that Israel would be put on notice – by means of judgement.
 - As we approach tonight's text, I would like to offer us an outline of sorts as it pertains to the flow of the teaching.
 - We are going to see the following things:
 - **1. The Cursing of the Fig Tree (v. 12-14)**
 - **2. A Holy Chastening (v. 15-17)**
 - **3. A Convicting Truth and a Stirring Hatred (v.18-19)**
 - **4. A Coming Trouble (v. 20-21)**
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would be: "The Fooling Foliage"
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures and meet me in Mark 11:12-21.

Mark 11:12 On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry.

Mark 11:13 Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but

leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

Mark 11:14 He said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again!” And His disciples were listening.

Mark 11:15 Then they *came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves;

Mark 11:16 and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.

Mark 11:17 And He began to teach and say to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a robbers’ den.”

Mark 11:18 The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching.

Mark 11:19 When evening came, they would go out of the city.

Mark 11:20 As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up.

Mark 11:21 Being reminded, Peter *said to Him, “Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.”

- Let’s Pray

Mark 11:12 On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry.

Mark 11:13 Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

Mark 11:14 He said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again!” And His disciples were listening.

- If we were to follow a sequence of days throughout the time of the Passover festival, in light of the Triumphal Entry (Sunday), It becomes plain that the "next day" refers to Monday, the 11th of Nisan.
 - So, at the start of this new day, Mark tells us that Jesus and the disciples leave Bethany to head back to Jerusalem.
 - However, Mark and Matthew's gospels mention that while traveling Jesus became hungry.
 - And with that detail, it provides us with a reminder that although Jesus was fully God, He was also fully man.
 - Therefore, Jesus too, was prone to being hungry. It provides us with a sense of Jesus' humanity.
 - As they are ascending towards Jerusalem, and passing through the Mount of Olives, Jesus sees a fig tree off in the distance.
 - We know this because Mark's account provides us with a telling detail.

- He mentions that the fig tree was “in leaf”.
- However, as we keep reading to the end of verse 13b, we notice that the text says that it was not yet the season for figs.
 - Now at first glance through the text, one could ask the question: How could it be that from a distance the tree is “in leaf” yet not in season?
- Well to understand what's happening here, we need to understand the appropriate sprouting season for fig trees.
 - Being that it is Passover, it puts the time of year around late March, early April.
- Within Palestine, fig trees produced small edible buds around March which was followed by an appearance of large green leaves in April.
 - This early budding of ripe fruit which consist of a green color was known as “paggim”.
 - We see an example of this “early budding” in the Song of Solomon 2:13
- However, as Jesus got closer to see what was on the tree, potentially anticipating “paggim” based upon the alluding green foliage, He sees that the tree has produced no fruit.
 - The reality of the tree, bearing no fruit, was quite misleading.
- The tree looked productive, it looked like it would be producing some sort of fruit, whether ripe or not.
 - It gave the impression as if it produced something of developing value.
 - **In other words, the tree looked like it talked a big game, yet it possessed empty and fruitless promises.**
- As we consider this reality for a moment, one can't help but to see the parallels in the picture of the fig tree and the two separate crowds from last week's teaching.
 - It would be these 2 groups of multitudes who at one point sang high praises to Jesus, yet the very next moment, they are nowhere to be found.
 - Even more than that, it would be some from this very crowd that would scream for the exchange of Barabbas for Jesus.
- This sense of exterior appeasement, yet lacking spiritual enrichment, is the very thing that becomes reflective in the actions and hearts of the religious leaders, and the children of Israel.
 - There is this desire to yearn for Messiah and to see the glory of His Kingdom.
 - Yet, there is no willingness to submit to Messiah's plans and mission to make way for the Kingdom to come in the Father's timing.
- **It's the fig tree's lack of productivity and bareness that causes Jesus to curse the tree in verse 14.**
 - The cursing of this tree was a prominent moment because this curse caught the hearing of the disciples to the point that Peter finds it necessary for Mark to include this very detail.
- So, Jesus speaks to the fig tree and says, **“May no one eat fruit from you again!”**
 - Now, to assume Jesus gives this curse as a means of being “hangry”, one would miss the prophetic message in this text.

- The reality was this curse that was placed on the fig tree was a foretelling of coming destruction of God's impending judgement upon Israel that would be fully realized in AD 70.
- This begs a bigger question: Why curse the fig tree and not another tree? What was the significance of the fig tree?
 - Fig trees have been mentioned throughout the Hebrew scriptures and speak to both the flourishing and prosperity of Israel, as well as its detriment.
 - And in this case, the unproductive and unfruitful nature of this fig tree was simply a spiritual indication of the bareness of Israel and that generation, nationally.
- From the outside, it would seem as if Israel had it all together, Judaism was in sync with Holy God, but a careful examination of hearts indicated something completely different.
 - We even see the Old Testament prophets speak to the transition of Israel from fruitfulness to fruitlessness.
 - Check out Hosea 9:10, 16.

Hosea 9:10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness;
 I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first season.
 But they came to Baal-peor and devoted themselves to shame,
 And they became as detestable as that which they loved.

Hosea 9:16 Ephraim is stricken, their root is dried up,
 They will bear no fruit.
 Even though they bear children,
 I will slay the precious ones of their womb.

- I want to read for you quickly what Micah says in Micah 7:1.
 - See if you recognize the parallels between what Micah sees in his day and what Jesus is confronted with in His day.

Micah 7:1 Woe is me! For I am
 Like the fruit pickers, like the grape gatherers.
 There is not a cluster of grapes to eat,
 Or a first-ripe fig which I crave.

- Having done a sweep through Micah 7:1-6, it becomes clear that there is an acknowledgement of the growing wickedness of Israel and their departure from God's truth and His ways.
 - And Micah is stricken with sorrow at this sight.
 - And in the same way, we see our Lord, Jesus stricken with the same sense of Holy frustration.
 - So, it will be in verses 15-17 that Jesus will demonstrate physically, the Holy

indignation and frustration He has upon those who have turned the house of God into something it was never meant to be.

- Check out verses 15-17.

Mark 11:15 Then they *came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves;

Mark 11:16 and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.

Mark 11:17 And He began to teach and say to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a robbers’ den.”

- As Jesus and the disciples enter Jerusalem, Mark says that the first stop for Jesus is the Temple.
 - To better understand where Jesus is in light of the coming scene, I want to pull up a map that provides us with context.
 - The location that Jesus was in which consisted of the place of commerce and activity occurred in an area known as the “Court of the Gentiles”.
 - This area surrounded the inner sacred courts of the Holy Temple.
 - No Gentile was allowed beyond the outer courts as noted in this site map.
 - And the activities that occurred in this space was authorized as a market for sale of ritual items by the high priest Caiaphas.
 - It is upon Jesus’ arrival on the scene that He is marked with outrage at the selling and buying within the temple grounds, for there were other designated areas within the city.
 - So upon sight of this commercialization, Jesus responds by “driving out” these individuals.
 - The word for "drive out" is *ekballo* which means to force to leave or expel in a physical way.
 - This driving out was exactly what took place in the garden after the fall in Genesis 3.
 - Not only does Jesus physically drive these men out, but He overturns the tables of the money changers and sellers.
 - Now, to understand the righteous indignation that Jesus displayed, we need to grasp the historical implications of the sellers and money changers and why their establishment in the courts angered Jesus, so.
 - Let’s first begin with who the money changers were.
 - Money changers were similar to tax-collectors during the 1st Century.
 - Their purpose during that day was to exchange foreign coins for Jewish money.
 - The reason being that the Jewish Law required a temple tax of a half shekel.

(Exodus 30:11- 16)

- So, when a large feast, such as Passover came around, Jews and other sojourns from surrounding nations came to Jerusalem, they would need to have their currency exchanged.
 - In that day, the Temple would not relieve coins bearing the image of pagan emperors.
 - So, imagine the money changers as a means of foreign currency exchange.
- However, like tax-collectors at that time, the money changers would charge enormous amounts as a fee for the temple tax.
 - The same approach occurred with the sellers.
- These individuals would sell sacrificial animals as a means to meet the needs of those who were not able to bring their own animals.
 - The requirement for animal sacrifices was that they examined them for any defects and blemishes.
 - If blemishes were detected, the animal was rejected and you were left to purchase a proper sacrifice from the "sellers".
 - And purchasing from them required a hefty fee.
 - It's the difference of buying a soda from the corner store for \$2 versus buying a soda from a theme park for \$8.
- **So, this extortion of money from these individuals was a way that the wicked would profit and the leaders would prosper.**
 - You would think that this type of behavior would be condemned by the religious leaders, especially being that the Mosaic Law spoke to this type of corruption in Exodus 22:21 and Leviticus 19:34.
 - It becomes evident that there was no regard for the house of the Lord and for His work because the House of the Lord had turned into a den of thieves.
- Peter emphasized this very point in 2 Peter 2:3 mentioning that the means of exploitation of the poor by the wicked is not something that goes unnoticed.

2 Peter 2:3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

- ○ Judgement awaits those who “nickel and dime” men and women all in the name of religion and being at peace with God.
- As we examine the reaction of Jesus to the ways of these corrupt men, it should become a means of alert for us today.
 - In that, the means of God's work and His house are not to be used as a get-rich-quick scheme or even commercialization.,
 - The house of the Lord and the matters of our faith are to be used to draw or attract people to Christ.
- So, Jesus sweeps out the trash of these fraudulent traders and sellers and proceeds to call them out publicly by establishing His authority. (He has the Divine right)

- **For the purpose of the temple and its activities had been lost and turned into something completely different.**
- So, it's after Jesus calls out the flagrant disregard for the House of God that He begins to teach them, by saying:
 - **“Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’”**
 - Jesus' response to those present in the temple were highlighted by two Old Testament quotations:
 - One from Isaiah 56:7 and the other from Jeremiah 7:11.
 - And His use of these two scriptures was significant in a few ways:
- **First**, we see that Jesus is speaking possessively of the Temple, in that this is His Father's house, which means the temple was to be a **sacred space** in which the people come to worship and commune with the Lord.
 - **What should be the symbol of a shining beacon of light to the nations has become a place of offense and a den of thieves.**
 - **This was not the intent nor the purpose of God's house.**
- **Secondly**, we see within Jesus' statement that this house of prayers is for “all nations”.
 - Meaning that the temple was a place where the foreigner and sojourner could be welcomed.
- This very statement was a prophetic pronouncement as to Jesus' very mission and that was that the nations be blessed through Israel because of the atonement provided by Messiah.
 - I would imagine for the Roman believer reading through this, it served as a moment of great gratitude and thankfulness, knowing they too will share in the Kingdom.
- So, where Israel was to be a light to the nations, their very hearts were set off by Messiah because their hearts were bent towards wickedness, which would lead to that generation's destruction.
 - Therefore, the means of discipline that would come upon them would be evident in the words Jesus spoke over the fig tree in verse 14.
- As one could imagine, the heart check regarding Jesus' response to those in the temple became a sore spot for the religious leaders.
 - So as Jesus' ministry and teaching become more attractive, due to His authority, it leads to greater attraction.
 - And at the same time, the religious leaders are seeking ways to trip Jesus up and kill Him.
- What we will witness in these next few teachings is, as the timing of the cross draws near, His testing of innocence and blamelessness increases.
 - All of this is further revealing the dark and calloused hearts of the leaders of Israel.
 - Let's keep moving to verses 18-19.

Mark 11:18 The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching.

Mark 11:19 When evening came, they would go out of the city.

- It's in both Matthew and Luke's account that mentions that the crowd was listening to Jesus' teaching.
 - Not only was Jesus' preaching authoritative but it was creating an uprising in the city.
 - Now let's consider this question: Why would Jesus' teaching cause such uproar with the religious leaders? **There was Fear.**
 - The religious leaders' fear of killing Jesus too soon emerged from a previous event during the intertestamental period against Greece, known as the Maccabean Revolt.
 - The Revolt was led by Mattathias (Matt-a-thi-as), a local Jewish priest.
 - This was the time when Antiochus (An-ti-ochus) of the Seleucid's (Suh-loo-suhd) Empire attempted to Hellenize the populace, most especially, the Jewish People.
 - However, Mattathias, led a large group of Jewish people in 167 BC against Antiochus's army and defeated them.
 - This group of victors, led by Mattathias and his family, later became known as the Maccabees which, in Hebrew means "The hammer".
 - So, with the Maccabees having overcome the oppressors of that day, the leaders in Jesus' day were fearful that Jesus' rise in fame would have caused a similar uprising.
 - Therefore, to not tip the scales of "power" too soon, in fear of another insurrection, they paused on an instant killing of Jesus.
 - **Ultimately, what we see here is a power dynamic.**
 - Where Jesus is teaching the people about the proper use of the Temple, the religious leaders feel vulnerable and out of control.
 - This rise and wickedness of Israel's leaders who were to shepherd hearts to God were leading people astray in their ways.
 - So we see Jesus' popularity served as a temporary means of delaying His death, once again showing us God's Sovereign hand at work.
 - It would be after this showdown that Mark says evening came and Jesus and His disciples departed, that evening (Monday) to head back to Bethany.
 - We now arrive to our last 2 verses for tonight, verses 20-21.

Mark 11:20 As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up.

Mark 11:21 Being reminded, Peter *said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered."

- Mark leads us into the next day (Tuesday), the 12th of Nisan.
 - And as they are leaving Bethany towards Jerusalem, as they pass by the Mount of Olives, the fig tree that Jesus cursed reflected His very words.
 - Really quickly, here is where we see another “Markan” Sandwich.
 - Mark begins a story, pauses it, and concludes with it.
 - It is here that Mark provides us with a very detailed description of the fig tree that is “withered from the roots!”
 - Now, reading this without having seen a fig tree, you may not think much about the withering.
 - So, I want to show us a picture of a fig tree for context.
 - The trunk of a fig tree is often 3 feet in diameter.
 - With the trunk of the tree 3ft in diameter, the tree can grow as tall as 20 feet.
 - This was the same type of tree where Jesus mentioned He saw Nicodemus resting under.
 - So imagine this tall, shaded tree now having become completely withered from the root up.
 - In other words, this tree was completely cut off from its source of nutrients and became dead.
 - The tree did just what Jesus' words commanded it to do – **talk about authority and power**
 - This was a direct demonstration for the disciples to see the authoritative work of Jesus.
 - Even more, the fact that all the disciples heard Jesus' words means their attention was fixed upon what they both heard and witnessed.
 - With the fig tree now withered, it begins to paint a bigger picture for us regarding the middle narrative of this sandwich.
 - The upheaval of the money changers and sellers in the court of the Gentiles was a means to show how far the leaders and nation of Israel had departed from God's ways.
 - **Their spiritual house was unclean, and their heart reflected that.**
 - For so long, the leaders of Israel saw the temple as a glimmering place of religious doings, and not a place of communal dwelling with God. (Lack of sacred space)
 - Friends, the reality is, our faith in the Lord is not a means of external appeasements (dotting I's, crossing T's), but rather, an internal dying and submission as "living sacrifices" acceptable and pleasing to God. (Romans 12: 1-2)
 - The unfortunate reality for that generation is because of their unbelief and hardened hearts, that generation would experience a judgement they would not expect.
 - This cursing of the fig tree, an Old Testament symbol of prosperity and flourishing of Israel at one point, now becomes a symbol of judgement and destruction.

- Lastly, notice who responds to this now withered tree first, Peter.
 - **They become reminded of what they heard and now see.**
 - **And he asks Jesus “Rabbi, look the fig tree you cursed withered.”**
- What Peter and the disciples are shown is merely a picture of what Israel would face in the coming future of AD 70.
 - **Let’s Pray.**

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Mark - Lesson 11C

Chapter 11:22-33

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- Last week, we spent some time walking through the cursing of the fig tree and how its resulting physical condition was a manifestation of Israel's internal spiritual condition.
 - That where the fig tree, prior to being cursed, blossomed with a myriad of foliage, it lacked in fruitful production, especially for that time of year.
 - What looked to be a tree full of fruit and promise, exteriorly, turned out to be fruitless and lacking in substance, internally.
 - This very reality for the fig tree, which symbolized Israel and their leaders, nationally, now resulted in “promise without fulfillment” – for a time.
 - We witnessed this heart condition with Jesus in the temple chasing out the money changers and the sellers.
 - The temple, the very heart of worship for Israel, had turned into a den of thieves.
 - That where people should have been coming to commune and worship the Creator God, they chose to engage in deceit and extortion on all levels.
 - Their hearts became calloused to the things and ways of God all in exchange for pleasures of their own liking.
 - Jesus' example of the fig tree's condition the following day spoke to Jesus' seriousness of Israel's heart condition and their rejection of Him as Messiah.
 - For Pharisaic Judaism professed a righteousness in which they could not uphold.
 - There was a desire to be righteous and an attempt at looking holy, yet inside they were corrupted and rotting with no true hope.
 - The only way in which these hearts could be turned over was by the intervention of God Himself.
 - It would take God the Father sending His Son in the form of a human being, to die on our behalf, so that we could be made right with God.
 - So, although the cursing of the tree seemed like a harsh picture of Israel's heart, this cursing would not be an eternal one, just for “the period of an age”.
 - For there would come a day, in the future, in which Israel would be restored to its intended Glory and that day would come when (Israel's) Messiah would “truly” be coronated as King.
 - Tonight, we find ourselves picking up where we left off which was on Tuesday morning, the 12th of Nissan.
 - We arrived to the close of the “Markan sandwich”, where Peter and the disciples are reminded of the fig tree that once had life but was now dead.
 - It will be at this pick up in the text where we will see a private teaching on prayer, faith, and forgiveness for the disciples.
 - And on the other end, we will see a public confronting of Jesus and the religious leaders, as they ask Jesus a deeply rooted question regarding His authority and from whom it comes.
 - As we approach tonight's text, I want to provide us with an outline of thought as we flow through the teaching.

- We are going to see the following things:
 - 1. An Assured Trust (v.22-26)
 - 2. A Battle of Questions (v.27-30)
 - 3. A Blatant Rejection of Truth (v.31-33)
- If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be: "Prayer, Faith, Forgiveness, and Authority".
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of scripture and meet me in Mark 11:22-33, however we will pick up reading at verse 20 for context.

Mark 11:20 As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up.

Mark 11:21 Being reminded, Peter *said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered."

Mark 11:22 And Jesus *answered saying to them, "Have faith in God.

Mark 11:23 Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.

Mark 11:25 Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.

Mark 11:26 [But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.]"

Mark 11:27 They *came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders *came to Him,

Mark 11:28 and began saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?"

Mark 11:29 And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

Mark 11:30 Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me."

Mark 11:31 They began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?'

Mark 11:32 But shall we say, 'From men'?"—they were afraid of the people, for everyone considered John to have been a real prophet.

Mark 11:33 Answering Jesus, they *said, "We do not know." And Jesus *said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

- Let's Pray

Mark 11:22 And Jesus *answered saying to them, "Have faith in God.

Mark 11:23 Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he

says is going to happen, it will be granted him.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.

Mark 11:25 Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.

Mark 11:26 [But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.”]

- As we pick up in tonight’s text, I want to review where we are on our timeline within Jesus’ Passion week occurring during the Passover festival.
 - It was in verses 20-21 that Peter and the disciples were reminded of what Jesus said to the fig tree, the day prior.
 - Now Tuesday morning has arrived and the disciples witness what is now a withered Fig Tree from the root up.
 - What began as a simple statement spoken by Jesus, regarding the tree’s illusive traits, was now a reality.
 - It is from this very scene that the disciples seem to be fixated on this very miracle before them.
 - For it’s almost as if in verse 22, that there seems to be some sort of omission of detail from Peter’s initial statement, reflecting on the tree, to Jesus answering the question about what they’re witnessing.
 - There obviously had to be a question that was asked for Jesus to respond the way that He does in verse 22.
 - So, although Mark’s account doesn’t fill in the space for us, we find our answer in Matthew’s account.
 - Turn with me to Matthew 21:20-22 where we find the question asked regarding the fig tree.

Matthew 21:20 Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, “How did the fig tree wither all at once?”

Matthew 21:21 And Jesus answered and said to them, “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ it will happen.

Matthew 21:22 And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

- So, the question asked by the disciples, Peter, more specifically, is: “How did the fig tree wither all at once?”
 - So, with that in mind let's go back to Jesus’ answer in Mark 11:22.
 - He answers the question by saying, “Have faith in God.”
 - The question that should arise at this point is: “Why does Mark omit the question that Matthew includes in his account?” Why such an abrupt shift in focus?

- Well, it seems that with Jesus addressing matters of faith in verse 22 and the disciples being fixated on the miracle itself, that the disciples have misunderstood the point.
- Where they see Jesus telling them, in Matthew's account, that they will be able to do what He has done to the fig tree, their focus becomes fixated on the miraculous rather than mundane.
- In other words, it became about what they could accomplish rather than the One who makes all things possible.
- Instead of the miracle being the content of the conversation, it is faith that was to be both the content and context.
 - Therefore, we see Jesus respond in the way He does: "Have faith in God!"
- So, Jesus redirects the disciples from their intrigue of the miracle to their need of dependency upon the Source by which the power was provided to curse the tree.
 - It is God who is the source by which all things that seem or look impossible, become possible.
 - This very statement that Jesus makes provides the believer with the true source of all power, truth, and authority.
- I love the "Complete Jewish Bible" translation for verse 22, it reads this way: "Have the kind of trust that comes from God"
 - If I were to say it differently: If God is the object of our faith, then we must be willing to trust that He alone is the source for all we need.
 - This type of trust is an assured trust. One that does not waver because God alone is the source of all things, not a religious position, not beautiful edifices (temple), or even perceived righteousness (external lavishness).
- Again, Israel's leaders esteemed their works/deeds, their religiosity, and control as their means of power and authority. (Like the fig tree full of foliage yet no fruit)
 - All the while rejecting the reality that Messiah, promised centuries ago, was before them.
 - So, it's after this statement that Jesus elaborates on what becomes possible as we behold the object of our faith and trust Him for all the things that seem impossible to do.
 - Check out verses 23-34 again:

Mark 11:23 Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.

- Jesus reinforces the notion of the impossible becoming possible by means of emphasizing trust/faith in God is necessary – it's essential.
 - Remember, the backdrop of the conversation was the withered fig tree.
 - Now, Jesus moves to speak using Hebraic hyperbole by using objects of great

familiarity.

- As Jesus mentions “this mountain” being cast into the sea, it’s important to note where they are standing.
 - They are on the Mount of Olives which is approximately 2,700 feet above sea level; it stands about 300 feet over the city, past the edge of the Temple Mount where the terrain dips into the Kidron Valley
 - From the very top of the Mount of Olives, on a clear day, you can view the Dead Sea, 15 miles to the east—beyond the Judean desert with the mountains of Moab on the horizon (Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament*, 170).
- So with the geography in mind and Jesus speaking hyperbolically, it’s clear that He is speaking about the things that are impossible for man are possible with God. (Mark 9:23)
 - That when we seek the Lord in prayer, we must seek the things in which are in His will and not our own.
 - For if we pray for our own means and will to be accomplished, it will always lead to ineffective results.
 - I believe John said it best in 1 John 5:14. Check out the text:

1 John 5:14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

- ○ Don’t miss the keyword here: His Will
- If we are not careful with our understanding of this passage (v.24), it can be made to become a misguided mystical formula by which people aim to plug in their request to receive whatever their hearts desire.
 - There are many people who assume that whatever they ask, using Jesus’ name, that they can receive it.
 - This “name it and claim it” teaching is not only distorting the gospel, but it makes a mockery of God.
 - For the moment that these “prayer requests” don’t come to pass, the individual feels let down and walks away from the faith.
- Friends, this is not the point of Jesus’ teaching here. The point made is that our prayers and petitions must be “in harmony with God’s Will.”
 - The moment that our prayers move outside the purview of God’s purposes and plans, we find ourselves ineffective.
 - For experiencing the true power of God always comes through and by communion with knowing His will, by way of the scriptures and yielding to the Spirit.
- Therefore, we must check our heart’s motives against what the scriptures require.
 - James 4:2-3 says it this way:

James 4:2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and

cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

- Have you considered the fact that you might not be seeing God move in a particular way because you are in your own way?
 - Our prayer time should be heavenly focused with the intent of partnering with God to accomplish His work in the earth.
 - If there was anyone who understood the power of communing with the Father, it was Jesus, Himself.
 - Even when it came down to Jesus being betrayed by Judas and handed over in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was praying.
 - And although He prayed and asked if there could be a different way, being totally submitted to the Father's will, Jesus says, "Not my will, but thine will be done"
 - Friends, if we desire in knowing God's will, we must be willing to grow in knowing His word.
 - Notice what Jesus says in conjunction to prayer and faith being essential in seeing God doing the impossible.
 - He states that there are conditions to our prayers being answered. Check out verses 25-26, again.

Mark 11:25 Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.

Mark 11:26 [But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.]"

- Mark's account tells us that answered prayers are intrinsically conditioned on forgiveness.
 - Jesus mentions that as we stand in a posture of prayer, trusting that the Lord will respond to our request, that we must approach in a posture of humility and forgiveness.
 - That where transgressions have been committed, we are moved to forgive, just as God through Christ has forgiven us.
 - Friends, forgiveness becomes foundational in the believer's prayers being answered.
 - For how can we expect God to respond to our prayer request if we hold ourselves in a pseudo-position of authority, as if we are the judge and executioner?
 - Where there is no forgiveness, the true issue at hand, pride, emerges – and God's sole means of response to pride is it being crushed.

- Therefore, forgiveness becomes the inseparable link by which the forgiven believers recognize that he or she has been graciously forgiven by the Divine Forgiver.
- And because He has forgiven us, for our prayers to be answered, we too must forgive.
- This very point becomes the emphasis of Mark's bracketed section in verse 26.
 - As a side note, the scribes inserted this here, as it parallels seamlessly with Jesus' statement in Matthew 6:15 and Matthew 18:35.
 - It is at this point that Jesus and the disciples proceed to Jerusalem following this powerful moment of teaching regarding prayer, faith, and forgiveness.
 - Check out verses 27-30.

Mark 11:27 They *came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders *came to Him, Mark 11:28 and began saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?"

Mark 11:29 And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

Mark 11:30 Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me."

- As was Jesus and the disciples' pattern during Passover week, they left the Mount of Olives and now arrive in Jerusalem.
 - And as was custom for Jesus, His first stop was the Temple where He would teach. (Matthew's account mentions this detail.)
 - Based upon Matthew's account, we can see that while Jesus is teaching the people in the temple, He is approached by two of the three major religious groups – the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
 - And we know this because the chief priest and the elders were members of opposing political systems.
 - So with these opposing groups coming together in unity in an "official capacity" to confront Jesus, it spoke to their growing desire to end Jesus.
 - And as they confront Jesus, they inquire about His credentials as a Rabbi.
 - It's in verse 28 that they ask Him, "By what authority are you doing "these things" or under who's authority are you doing these things?"
 - This question was critical and addressed two things: Authority and Truth.
 - In that day, for rabbis to teach, especially within the temple, it required an "official appointment".
 - In other words, one needed credentials to teach as a rabbi, and it needed to be authorized by a sage of that day.
 - As a matter of fact, these types of credentials exist today. Some churches require men to be licensed or ordained and to have some form of seminary education from an accredited institution.
 - During the 1st century, the teachings of the sages were passed down from one

rabbi to the next, as tradition.

- And the only means of changing these teachings was based only upon the recommendation of well-known rabbis.
- So, for anyone who did not have the official “seal of approval” from these rabbinical schools of thought were considered non-trusting and pseudo-teachers.
- Therefore, the religious leader’s current inquiry towards Jesus became one of ill-will and contempt.
- Two questions emerged from their inquiry:
 - 1. What authority are you doing “these things”?
 - 2. Who gave you this authority to do “these things”?
- However, there is another question that the text begs to be asked and that is: What are “these things” referring to? Let’s answer this first.
 - “These things” are potentially referring to Jesus’ authoritative expelling of the money changers and sellers out of the Temple because the Temple belongs to Him – it is His Divine Right.
 - However, if these religious leaders recognized who He was, this question wouldn’t even be a concern.
 - Secondly, “these things” are in direct connection with His Divine authority to teach because He (Jesus) is the very word of God.
- So at the core, the religious leaders’ question is in regards to authority, more specifically, who authorized His teaching and works.
 - The very basis of their question drips with pride as if they were the establishers of the Law.
- In their eyes, they held the political, social, economic, and religious power.
 - However, despite the power struggle at play here, Jesus provides a counter-question that is meant to push these men into a corner they couldn’t escape.
- This question addresses the authority question they seek, yet the question Jesus retorts with will be one that they must face, head on.
 - What I love about Jesus and the Gospel message is that it confronts us all with transcendental truth that cannot be avoided.
 - One will either respond to truth in full submission or they will push against it in blatant rejection.
- So, in verse 29, Jesus responds by saying, “Was the Baptism of John from heaven, or from men?”
 - In other words, was the baptism of John of heavenly origin or of human origin?
- To understand where Jesus is getting at regarding the Baptism of John, I want to briefly go back a few chapters to see what the baptism of John was.
 - Turn with me to Mark 1:4-5.

Mark 1:4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of

repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 1:5 And all the country of Judea was going out to him, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

- This Baptism of John was a Baptism of repentance (Capital R). This baptism was central in the people being made ready to receive their Messiah.
 - Remember, this repentance is dealing with a “change of mind”, meaning that there is recognition of the things in which you have done and a set position of the heart that is contrary to God’s ways and will.
 - Once that is recognized, based upon the illumination of God’s Spirit in light of our own selfish nature, it causes us to seek forgiveness.
 - In other words, we recognize that wrong has been done and that we must be made right with Holy God.
 - So being that we have a refresher on what the baptism was, we must now understand the significance of John’s ministry and why John is key to this question of who’s authority Jesus is coming in.
 - John’s gospel speaks boldly to who John the Baptizer’s ministry was pointing to and from whom that authority came from. Check out John 1:6-13.

John 1:6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.

John 1:7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him.

John 1:8 He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.

John 1:9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

John 1:11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

John 1:13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

- John’s Gospel states that he was sent from God.
 - The Baptizer’s role in his ministry was to prepare the hearts of the people to receive their King.
 - We also see God as the Initiator and Supreme Authority speaking about John the Baptizer as “a messenger preparing the way of the Lord” in Mark 1:2-3.

Mark 1:2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

**“Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You,
Who will prepare Your way;**

**Mark 1:3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
'Make ready the way of the Lord,
Make His paths straight.'"**

- When we understand historically that the very last voice of the prophets was over 400 years prior, John's very message of a coming Messiah and preparing to make way for Him, was a Messianic sounding alarm.
 - So, with the people seeing John as a prophet introducing Jesus as the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world, the people held him in high regard.
 - As a matter of fact, this was the hesitancy of Herod Antipas killing John the Baptist, because he knew that John was well known, yet Herod himself refused to submit to the message or repentance that John proclaimed.
 - Therefore, how the religious leaders handled the ministry of John would determine where their hearts were, even now regarding Jesus' ministry.
 - Watch how the religious leaders respond to Jesus' question. Check out verse 31-33.

Mark 11:31 They began reasoning among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?'

Mark 11:32 But shall we say, 'From men'?"—they were afraid of the people, for everyone considered John to have been a real prophet.

Mark 11:33 Answering Jesus, they *said, "We do not know." And Jesus *said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

- Notice that the religious leaders' discussion regarding this counter-question is not done publicly, but rather it is discussed amongst themselves, in secret.
 - What we should find most interesting is that the content of their discussion is divorced from truly answering correctly.
 - It is almost as if they'd rather plead the fifth than face the truth.
 - There are only two responses that exist:
 - 1. Either respond by acknowledging that John's ministry was of heavenly origin thereby admitting that Jesus is Messiah and stand self-condemned.
 - 2. Deny that John's ministry is of heavenly origin all the while risking their credibility with the people (who believe John to be a prophet) while also standing self-condemned for rejecting God's messenger.
 - It was a situation that these men were stuck between a rock and a hard place.
 - The reality was, these religious leaders should have been the ones leading the people into right knowledge and supporting John's ministry, not condemning it. (Discrediting themselves)
 - So with this trap question Jesus gives, it forces their hand.
 - Friends, the Gospel always demands a response! You will either come to the realization that Jesus is who He is, or you remain in darkness.

- There is no in-between.
- Denying the very ministry of John the Baptist was ultimately denying the means by which God prepared to send His Son to the people of Israel.
- I want you to understand the big thing that is happening in Mark 11.
 - There is both anticipation but also coming movement of great rejection by the people who do not want to submit to truth.
 - Even today, everybody wants their own truth, not to respond or submit to THE truth.
 - We do it our way, says Frank Sinatra.
 - Let's pray for us to accept God's truth.



Mark - Lesson 12A

Chapter 12:1-12

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- Tonight, I want to pick up where we left off in last week's teaching.
 - I believe this pick-up point is a great starting place to understand the Parable that Jesus will use after intense questioning from the religious leaders.
 - We left off with Jesus providing a counter-question to the Sanhedrin council's question of who Jesus' "credentialed" authority came from.
 - And Jesus' counter-question addressed this matter of authority, head on.
 - His question to them was: "Of what origin was John the Baptist's ministry? Was it of Heaven or of men?"
 - To put it plainly: From whom does Sovereign truth come from? Is it from God or is it from man?
 - For, by accepting John's ministry, it pointed to the reality that it is God's authority by which his ministry was accomplished.
 - And with John pointing to Jesus as the Lamb of God, it meant that Jesus' very ministry was authorized by God, for it was His Sovereign plan.
 - Therefore, disregarding or denying John's ministry, by default, concludes that these leaders saw themselves as sovereign, in their own right.
 - And because of their conclusion, it not only led them to be self-condemned, but would eventually bring on greater judgement for Israel, nationally, for that generation.
 - For when one suppresses truth, truth to that individual becomes subjective and therefore everything becomes relative to "their" truth.
 - However, the last time I checked, having read through the scriptures, there is only Absolute Truth and that has been established by God Himself.
 - God's truth and His word does not need our assistance because His truth stands on its own. (Isaiah 40:8 "grass withers, the flower fades...")
 - So, what we can conclude from this is, regardless of how much Christ made Himself known to the religious leaders, they would remain in their unbelief.
 - This is why Jesus constantly emphasized the disciples' need to be dependent on the Father.
 - Their dependence was vital to the mission of the Kingdom Program moving forward.
 - For if they did not recognize the need of dependence, they would be just like the Pharisees, decorated with credentials, knowing Jesus, yet fruitless in their impact for Jesus, missionally.
 - So tonight we will see how Jesus moves this conversation from a private confrontation with the religious leaders, to public teaching to a crowd in the temple.
 - If I were to outline for us a flow of thought in tonight's teaching, it would be the following:
 - 1. A Parable Given (v.1-8)
 - 2. A Question Asked (v.9-11)
 - 3. A Fear Kindled (v.12)

- I would like to tag tonight's text: "The Parable of the Tenants"
 - With that being said, open up a copy of your scriptures and meet me in Mark 12:1-12.

Mark 12:1 And He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and put a wall around it, and dug a vat under the wine press and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey.

Mark 12:2 At the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers.

Mark 12:3 They took him, and beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

Mark 12:4 Again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully.

Mark 12:5 And he sent another, and that one they killed; and so with many others, beating some and killing others.

Mark 12:6 He had one more to send, a beloved son; he sent him last of all to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

Mark 12:7 But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!'

Mark 12:8 They took him, and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.

Mark 12:9 What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others.

Mark 12:10 Have you not even read this Scripture:

'The stone which the builders rejected,
This became the chief corner stone;

Mark 12:11 This came about from the Lord,
And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

Mark 12:12 And they were seeking to seize Him, and yet they feared the people, for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And so they left Him and went away.

- Let's Pray.
- So, it is off of the heels of an intense conversation regarding John and Jesus' authorization of ministry, that Jesus furthers His conversation amongst the crowd as He directly address the Pharisees using a Parable.
 - As a reminder, when Jesus uses parables, it is a teaching moment meant to make a very clear point enigmatic in an effort for the people to come to the spiritual reality themselves, by way of divine illumination.
 - And as we will see, three points will be made:
 - 1. A particular message
 - 2. A clear picture
 - 3. A revealed Spiritual truth
 - We will begin with the content and context of the Parable as being described historically, first.

- So, Jesus begins the parable, in verse 1, with a man who planted a vineyard.
- And within this vineyard, he placed a wall all around it, dug a vat under the wine press, and built a tower.
- And the owner allowed his land to be rented out to vine growers (workers).
- So, let's examine the historical implications of the parable.
- Within the Roman Empire and much throughout the Galilee, most of the land was owned by wealthy landowners.
 - These landowners would typically rent out their land to “tenant farmers” for the purposes of further cultivating their land.
 - And in exchange, the owner would allow the workers a portion of the produce for themselves, while collecting his own portion.
- With any type of cultivation of the land, the owner would provide the means for proper productivity for his land.
 - Within the owner's provision, he provided a watchtower in the center that served as protection to spot intruders.
 - It's clear that the owner of this vineyard invested well into his land so that it will yield great produce.
- Because of the vastness of land, he would hire out workers to tend to the land.
 - Therefore, these workers served as mere custodians (stewards) of the land and not owners of the land.
- These custodians have not invested in any parts of this land, they do not own the land, they simply serve as stewardship managers.
 - The workers were responsible for stewarding well what was provided to them and to care for the land and its yielded produce.
- As a result, if the workers do their jobs, not only did the owner profit from his land, but they in turn benefited from their labor with a portion of the yield.
 - However, something happens between the terms being outlined in verse 1 and the actions of the workers throughout the Parable.
- The workers of the land become self-deceived in thinking that they were the owners of the vineyard.
 - Rather than yielding to the owner what is rightfully his.
 - They take the liberty of withholding his portion as if it were their own. (Pride)
- So, in an attempt of the owner to retrieve his portion, he sends several servants to retrieve what was rightfully his.
 - However, on multiple occasions each slave sent to retrieve the owner's portion is met with opposition.
 - If you notice the intensity of treatment and disdain increases to the point that it leads to the death of one of the slaves.
- So in a last effort to appeal to the workers of the owner's land, the owner sends his son. This is done to demonstrate to the workers the weightiness of the matter.
 - Up to this point, the owner has been more than gracious in tolerating the blatant disregard of his request over a period of time.

- One would assume that with the son coming to retrieve the father's belongings that much respect and honor would be given.
 - Unfortunately, the sending of the son provides an opposite response.
 - They reason among one another to kill the son so that the ownership of the land would be transferred to them instead.
 - If anything, this shows us the deliberate deceit and darkness of their hearts.
 - Now, before we look at the questioned posed within the parable, let's seek to understand the parable with spiritual lenses.
- As we examine the parable, we see the landowner represents God the Father, who has planted a beautiful vineyard that represents Israel.
 - God has made Israel a people for Himself.
 - He planted them in a land that was fertile and prosperous.
 - He was their strong tower and fortress in whom He would provide them security.
 - He also allowed His people to be plentiful in the sight of all the peoples of the world.
- The prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 5:1-2 provides us with a strong comparative passage in which he paints a clear picture of the parable Jesus has provided.
 - Check out the text:

Isaiah 5:1 Let me sing now for my well-beloved

A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard.

My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill.

Isaiah 5:2 He dug it all around, removed its stones,

And planted it with the choicest vine.

And He built a tower in the middle of it

And also hewed out a wine vat in it;

Then He expected it to produce good grapes,

But it produced only worthless ones.

- So, Isaiah tells us plainly who the vineyard owner is, it is the Father's vineyard.
 - And Isaiah states that the purpose of the vineyard was to produce good spiritual fruit.
 - The spiritual fruit was to be godliness and obedience to the Law of God (His Word) from the people of God (Israel).
 - Unfortunately, the fruit that Israel produced was constant rebellion and disobedience, rather than submission and dependence.
 - A question that arises is: "Why did Israel fail to produce good fruit in the land?"
 - Well Jesus' parable provides us with the answer.
 - It is because the custodians or workers of the land failed to do their job.
 - As we further work through the parable, we see that the custodians of the land reflect none other than the religious leaders of Israel, their kings, and teachers.

- These are the individuals meant to steward and lead the people into proper righteous living as a nation.
- If we were to take a survey of the Old Testament, time and time again, we see Israel's leaders' blatant disregard for God's commands and ways.
 - Where the kings and leadership should be submitting to the Lord and His instructions for Israel, they submitted to their own desires and plans.
- Once again establishing the true value system of the nations' heart.
 - To further press the point, check out what Ezekiel had to say regarding the shepherds of the people in his day: (Ezekiel 34:1-6)

Ezekiel 34:1 Then the word of the Lord came to me saying,

Ezekiel 34:2 “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?

Ezekiel 34:3 You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock.

Ezekiel 34:4 Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them.

Ezekiel 34:5 They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered.

Ezekiel 34:6 My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill; My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth, and there was no one to search or seek for them.”””

- The shepherds of Israel were not doing their job which was to truly shepherd the hearts of the people to their Owner, Yahweh.
 - Instead of leading the people to dependence upon the Lord they led the people to dependence upon their leaders and into disobedience to God.
 - This deceit and wickedness from the leaders carried on for centuries on end. The people truly needed a shepherd after God's own heart.
 - This further proving that God Himself would need to intervene on behalf of His people.
 - So, where we observed the owner sending multiple slaves to receive his harvest, this speaks to the mercy and grace that the Father extended to Israel's leaders to repent, time and again.
 - Well this begs another question regarding the slaves within the Parable: “Who were the slaves representative of?”
 - As with the multiple times the owner sent slaves to tell the workers of the master's request, so did the Prophets of the Old Testament speak repeatedly to the leadership of Israel and the people to repent and turn back to Yahweh.
 - But, because of the failure to turn to God time and again, destruction would

be their end.

- Isaiah speaks to this point in the same context of Isaiah 5:3-7. Check out the text:

Isaiah 5:3 “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,
Judge between Me and My vineyard.

Isaiah 5:4 “What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it?
Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless
ones?

Isaiah 5:5 “So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard:
I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed;
I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground.

Isaiah 5:6 “I will lay it waste;
It will not be pruned or hoed,
But briars and thorns will come up.
I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it.”

Isaiah 5:7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel
And the men of Judah His delightful plant.
Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed;
For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.

- ○ So within these few verses of Isaiah, we see 2 things:
 - First, who the vineyard and the produce were in parallel with Jesus’ parable.
 - Secondly, the comparative destruction that Isaiah prophesies and Jesus foretells to that generation.
- Verse 7 of Isaiah shows us that the vineyard is in fact Israel and the fruit of that vineyard was Judah, the people of God.
- The destruction, then, that the Lord spoke to Isaiah in His day, would be the eventual invasion of Assyria and Babylon, leading Israel into 70 years of Exile.
 - And yet again this eventual means of discipline was preceded by several warnings from Prophets speaking to the need of the leaders of Israel and the people to repent and turn back to Yahweh.
- So, what we see Jesus do in Mark 12 in using Isaiah 5 is that He is contextualizing the same matters of Israel’s corrupt leaders then with the very leaders of Israel in His day, now.
 - Nothing has changed, but with His arrival on the scene, the stakes become even greater because now God, the second Person of the Trinity, has come down to provide the very means of mercy before judgement.
- And in the same way that the workers in the parable kill the son, we see the same parallel regarding the coming death of the Son of God, by the hands of Israel’s leaders.
 - Now, with any owner who has been done wrong, justice must be served as the owner cannot stand idly by without a proper response.
- Doctrinally, what we see expressed in the text, as a side note, is the need for God’s

Divine Justice. (Isaiah 5:5)

- God, because of His nature, cannot overlook the injustices committed against Him, therefore it requires that He responds righteously towards it.
- In turn, it prompts Jesus to ask a pressing question in verse 9. (Divine Justice)
- In Mark's gospel, it seems as if Jesus responds to His own question, however, within Matthew's gospel, He invites the people to respond.
 - Check out the question Jesus asks in verses 9-11:

Mark 12:9 What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others.

Mark 12:10 Have you not even read this Scripture:

**'The stone which the builders rejected,
This became the chief corner stone;**

**Mark 12:11 This came about from the Lord,
And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"**

- This question places onus on an action from the owner and how he chooses to respond to this matter.
 - It becomes apparent from Jesus' correspondence within Matthew's gospel that the crowd, including that of the religious leaders, responds to the question.
 - In Matthew's account the crowd answered that the owner should bring about punishment to the tenants of the vineyard and give the vineyard to others who will care for the land and obey the owner.
 - However, in Mark's Gospel this is a pronouncement that Jesus Himself makes.
 - It's not by happenstance that the crowd, particularly the religious leaders, respond to this question.
 - Their response to this question would be deemed a "personal" one.
 - An interesting detail from history is that the religious leaders, having been a part of a particular social status, were oftentimes landowners themselves.
 - So, in this instance they were able to sympathize with the owner of the story, in a way by saying condemnation must be brought to the workers.
 - However, they hadn't quite realized the full impact of the parable yet.
 - For the reality was the religious leaders were the workers of that parable and unknowingly were casting judgement upon themselves.
 - For the punishment that would come upon Israel, because of their unbelief, would result in the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70.
 - It wasn't until verses 10-11 that the parable began to come to a head as Jesus provides Messianic overtones speaking regarding His coming death and that generation's coming destruction for rejecting Messiah.
 - Jesus, quoting from Psalm 118:22-23, says these words:
 - "Have you not even read the scriptures: 'The Stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone; This came about from the

Lord, And it is Marvelous in our eyes’.”

- Jesus referring to Himself as the Messianic “Stone” spoke to both a national implication and an individual exhortation.
 - Nationally, it spoke to the Kingdom and its King, promised to Israel, being withheld from that generation because of their rejection of Messiah due to their leaders’ hardened hearts and misguided ways.
 - And because of the rejection of Yeshua, it would ultimately lead to Jesus’ death in the coming days and Israel’s destruction in AD 70, yet there would be an opportunity for Israel’s future generation.
 - For Israel’s future generation, because of Christ becoming the Chief cornerstone, and their trust in Him, they will produce fruit in the end.
 - This future generation will be those Jews in the tribulation period.
- It also speaks to Jesus, individually, because through Him, His ministry, and work, He would become a “point of division between the remnant of Israel and the non-remnant.”
 - Along with that, He would be considered a “stone of stumbling” and a “rock of offense” for the unbelieving Jew.
 - Therefore, the vineyard would be given to “others” with Him being the foundation of it all.
- The question that you might be asking is: “Who are the “others” in whom the vineyard will be given to as workers?”
 - Remember, Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, but through Him all the Nations would be blessed, therefore the next workers of the field would have to be Jewish and, in their working, it would produce bountiful fruit.
- Therefore, we can conclude that the vineyard will now be given to the Apostles in the church age for the purposes of spreading the Gospel and proclaiming Christ and Him crucified.
 - And from the ministry of the Apostles, not only will there be a remnant of Jewish people who have placed faith in Yeshua, but Gentiles will also come into the fold. (Church Age)
 - And at a future day Israel, nationally, will respond and accept Messiah by proclaiming the Messianic Psalm, Psalm 118:26a.

**Psalm 118:26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord;
We have blessed you from the house of the Lord.**

- We must always remember, salvation is for the Jew first, then for the Gentile. (Romans 1:16)
 - Therefore, Israel will never be replaced by the church, for God has a distinct plan for Israel and a distinct plan for the church.
 - What becomes so beautiful in these last 2 verses, is verse 11 speaks to the sovereign work of God’s plan despite the constant opposition of the leaders of that day. (Psalm 118:23)
 - Check out by whom will establish and fulfill this salvific and glorious plan –

The Lord will.

- Friends, there is nothing and no one that can thwart the plans of God!
- Check out our last verse for tonight, verse 12.

Mark 12:12 And they were seeking to seize Him, and yet they feared the people, for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And so they left Him and went away

- Well, it's verse 12 that we see the religious leaders became a bit perturbed – they knew something they didn't know before.
 - Matthew's account tells us in Matthew 21:45 that the crowd and the leaders understood who Jesus was talking about regarding the parable.
 - This was different for the religious leaders as the parables were meant to disclose the information that Jesus is teaching to bring individuals to the truth themselves.
 - This is all the more pointing to a full disclosure of Jesus' Person and their eventual confronting of this Messianic truth – Jesus is God.
 - Can you imagine that moment, how intense it probably was? If there was a pair of scissors, you could probably cut the tension in the air.
 - Where you would think repentance should have been the proper response of the religious leaders, it only furthered their desire to kill Him.
 - The text mentions they were seeking a way to seize Him; however it was not the "opportune moment".
 - The reason being was they feared the people because of Jesus' earlier statement regarding John's ministry, who the people deemed as a Prophet. (Zealot revolt and uprising was not ideal for religious leaders)
 - So, to diminish and discredit John's ministry was to discredit Jesus' ministry which ultimately points to a denial of God's power, authority, and plan.
 - However, the truth would not be hidden for long for the proof of who Jesus was would soon be demonstrated before all.
 - And his resurrection would be the receipt of what He had been sharing all along.
 - However, the question that would have to be addressed is: "Will their hearts be opened by the evidence of the resurrection or will they continue to deny truth when it's plain as day?"
 - As I mentioned last week, you can choose to suppress the truth, however, there will be a divine reckoning in the end.
 - You will either submit to the truth of the Transcendental One or you will cower to the corners of your own calloused heart with no hope.
 - If we see anything from the constant rejection of truth, it is the reality that destruction will follow in the end.
 - Will you trust God as the Eternal One, or will you place your trust in self?
 - For there is only One Truth that can be trusted that has been tried and true.

- Choose now this day whom you will serve.
- Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 12B

Chapter 12:13-17

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- Last week, we went over what is known in Mark's gospel as the Parable of the Tenants.
 - This Parable painted a vivid picture of Israel's seemingly unchanged leadership from the Old Testament up to Jesus' very day.
 - That where the leaders of that day should have led the people of God to dependence upon God and His word, instead they led Israel into further disobedience.
 - The religious leaders should have been shepherds to the people rather than shepherds feeding themselves.
 - Therefore, where Israel should have been a people/nation of great spiritual blessing and prosperity, they became anemic and in need of their true shepherd – Messiah.
 - Time and again the prophets of old would send message after message for the people and their leadership to repent and turn to Yahweh.
 - Unfortunately, that message would go in one ear and out the other – causing self-righteousness to increase and truth to be dismissed.
 - It would be because of Israel's lack of turning back to Yahweh that a final attempt would be given and that would be through the sending of the Son of God.
 - Yet as we have been seeing, time and again, the religious leaders continue to dismiss and deny Jesus as their Messiah.
 - And the point that continues to arise is the reality that truth, constantly suppressed, will lead to divine judgement.
 - In one way, that judgement was to be seen in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.
 - And another means of God's justice at work was when Jesus made the point that the "vineyard" would be given to "others".
 - This "transference of leadership" for spiritual fruitfulness was given to the Apostles and continues through the shepherds of today.
 - Ultimately, the "others" mentioned in the Parable become the Gentiles who will have the opportunity to become "fruit producers" in the Church Age.
 - However, there will be a future in which Israel nationally, would respond positively and accept Jesus as Messiah which will usher in the Coming Kingdom.
 - And as we clarified, this "transferring of leadership" does not replace Israel with the church.
 - For Israel will forever remain God's chosen people whom He has promised to bless with a Kingdom. (Davidic Covenant)
 - In other words, God's choice to favor Gentiles and the Church within the Church Age is not a permanent substitution for Israel.
 - For more information on how God brings in the Gentiles in His plan, check out our parallel teaching in Matthew 22A/22B.
 - So, where Israel rejected Messiah in His first coming, that rejection became our (Gentiles') opportunity to become recipients of the Kingdom.
 - And the icing on the cake is that this plan was not God's "Plan B", this was

always a part of His plan.

- Tonight, we find ourselves a few days before Christ is crucified and raised from the dead. (Still Tuesday)
 - The intensity of questioning between the religious leaders and Jesus continues to increase.
 - And as we approach tonight's text, do not let the length of our text fool you. There is more than meets the eye!
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would simply be: "Give God What is God's."
 - With that being said, go ahead and meet me in Mark 12:13-17 for the reading of the word.

Mark 12:13 Then they *sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him in order to trap Him in a statement.

Mark 12:14 They came and *said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and do not care what anyone thinks; for You are not partial to anyone, but You teach the way of God in truth. Is it permissible to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?"

Mark 12:15 Are we to pay, or not pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius to look at."

Mark 12:16 And they brought one. And He *said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" And they said to Him, "Caesar's."

Mark 12:17 And Jesus said to them, "Pay to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were utterly amazed at Him.

- Let's Pray.
- One of the most amazing things to witness as a parent is how your children seek to make independent decisions apart from you.
 - Recently, my kids asked about going to a game park where they could race go-carts and play endless arcade games.
 - While they tried convincing my wife and I as to why we should go, my son precedes to say, "If you guys let us go, I'll pay for all of us."
 - Looking at my son with much intrigue I tell him, "Really.... you're going to pay for us...and with what money?"
 - To which he responds, "The money that you give me."
 - And as I thought about his statement, I couldn't help but think about tonight's text.
 - That where these religious leaders stood and with the weight and authority by which the Roman government had over Israel, that authority was given to them by a Supreme authority.
 - There is no authority that exists outside of what God permits.
 - So, in the same way my son came to realize that he needed dad's authority to access what he wanted, we find this lack of recognition of Jesus' authority from the religious leaders.

- That where there should be recognition of Jesus' authority and submission to it, there is a blatant rejection and self-righteous presuppositions that are made.
 - And as you will see, our text will provide us with the means by which all of humanity should approach Holy God.
 - And that is in full obedience and submission to His word and will.
- Tonight, our teaching picks back up on part 2 of a conversation had in the Temple with another set of religious leaders.
 - You would think after the religious leaders suffered public humiliation and embarrassment by Jesus' response to their trite question prior, that they would have hung up their attempts and tucked tail and ran.
 - However, this was not the case for the Sanhedrin group members because they couldn't afford their pride to be crushed.
 - So, in response to their embarrassment, the text tells us in verse 13, that they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to try and "trap" Jesus in a statement.
 - The word for "trap" in Greek is *agreuo* (a-grevo) which means to catch something that is unaware, like that of a wild animal.
 - So, the intent of these leaders was to trap Jesus as if He were some type of wild animal that was unaware that needed to be overtaken.
 - Where Mark's gospel tells us who was sent by this group of Sanhedrin officials, Matthew's account mentions that the Pharisees sent "their disciples", and Luke's account mentions "spies were sent".
 - With these varied accounts, it shows us the intent of the religious leaders' hearts.
 - That by providing "unfamiliar faces" they assumed their line of questioning would be able to trip up Jesus on His statements.
 - And what we find is that those in whom they send have been well coached in an effort to poke holes in Jesus' ministry, authority, and teaching.
 - But before we get there, we must acknowledge the two groups that have been sent to entrap Jesus: They are the "disciples of the Pharisees" and the Herodians.
 - If there were two groups of people who despised being in the same space with one another, it would be these two groups respectively.
 - Calling them friends would be an understatement.
 - But in this case, the old adage "The enemy of my enemy is my friend" is a perfect way to describe this unlikely pairing.
 - The reason being is that the Herodians were a minor non-religious political party composed of supporters of Herod and Rome.
 - Whereas the Pharisees desired complete independence and autonomy for Israel from gentile oppressors. (i.e. Roman government)
 - So, for these two parties to have found common ground on their shared opposition of Jesus, speaks to the fact that prior conversations were had and compromises made to gain each party's self-interest.
 - And indeed, a thorough plan was developed because the question that is asked of the groups, in unity, was one that included the interest of both

parties in a way.

- The question we are going to examine, speaks to both the religious and political implications of that day.
- And Jesus will have to address both while at the same time refrain from causing civil uproar and religious unrest amongst the crowds.
- Notice how these two opposing groups approach Jesus.
 - They begin by lavishing Jesus with these true theological compliments of who He is, despite their true intent of sarcasm and hypocrisy.
 - I can only imagine how much saying those very words to Jesus pained them.
 - Let's re-read it again, in verse 14.

Mark 12:14 They came and *said to Him, “Teacher, we know that You are truthful and do not care what anyone thinks; for You are not partial to anyone, but You teach the way of God in truth. Is it permissible to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?”

- ○ This attempt to appeal to Jesus's moral/ethical uprightness as a means of flattery was a far reach. I mean they milked this introduction!
 - It almost reminds you of when your kids try to tell you that you are the best parent they ever had all for the sake of getting a new toy or present of sorts. This is the scene before us.
- If you aren't picking up what they are trying to put down, you might be able to see it fully exposed in the question they asked after the false flattery:
 - They ask Jesus, “Is it lawful to pay a toll tax to Caesar, or not?”
- This question drips of red flags when you truly consider who is asking the question.
 - As we mentioned earlier, the two groups posing the question are the Pharisees' disciples and the Herodians.
- I mention this because the Pharisees objected to the poll tax (tribute taxes) placed upon them by Rome due to their desire to be independent from them.
 - The Pharisees had no desire to pay the tribute tax to Rome, yet by default they grudgingly submitted.
 - Yet all the while they submit to this line of questioning all for the sake of justifying their end goal – entrapping Jesus.
- Similarly, the Herodians supported foreign rule through the means of taxation since the house of Herod was dependent on the Romans.
 - So, what we have up to this point, according to the religious leaders' point of view, is a no-win situation for Jesus.
 - The question becomes: “How would their line of questioning be deemed as a lose-lose situation for Jesus?”
- If Jesus tells the Pharisees, “Yes, it is lawful to pay Caesar a toll tax”, it will raise issue amongst the following crowds causing Him to lose popularity with the people and therefore, in their eyes, discredits him as King.

- For even the Pharisees despised the idea of having to pay taxes to a foreign and Godless government.
- And if He says, “No it’s not lawful to pay Caesar his tax”, it would unleash retaliation against the government of Rome.
 - And in response to the opposition the Herodians would arrest Jesus for His rebellion against the State.
 - However, this false flattery mixed with a question of entrapment was not hidden from the sights of Jesus.
 - For Jesus knew of their hidden agenda and darkened hearts and He calls out their hypocrisy in verse 15.
- The word in Greek for hypocrisy in verse 15 is *hypokrisis* which speaks to one’s ability to act or be two-faced.
 - They come across as one way, as seeming to be with the best of intentions, yet underneath their “mask” of pleasantries, is deceit and evil intent.
- The way in which Jesus calls out their hypocrisy was by asking the rhetorical question: “Why are you testing me?”
 - This sense of “testing” is closely related to what Satan attempted to do in Mark 1:13 by putting Jesus to the test regarding the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life.
 - But in all three instances, Christ demonstrated why He was perfect in all rights, and this wouldn’t be any different.
 - So, Jesus presses this moment even further by requesting that they bring Him a denarius to look at, and He will do this as a means of an illustration.
- A denarius was a Roman coin which was equivalent to a day’s wage, and it so happened that the denarius was the only coin acceptable for imperial tax payments.
 - Within Palestine, this coin embossed with “the image of the Roman emperor” was deemed offensive to the Jewish people.
 - It was so offensive that, within the Galilee, Herod Antipas avoided its use.
 - However, the leaders, more than likely the Herodians, brought out a denarius with Caesar’s appearance on it for Jesus to inspect – quite possibly from the table of a money changer.
- And as one could image, Jesus holds up this coin in the crowd with the Pharisees and Herodians in plain view and says, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?”
 - And potentially with an anticipatory lean in, in hopes of tripping Jesus up, they tell him Caesar’s likeness is upon the coin.
 - Here would be their opportunity of entrapping Jesus with “an image of Caesar” as King upon the coin.
 - The question for the leaders becomes: “How will He respond?”
- What makes this moment even more daunting is the inscription upon the coin itself.
 - On the front it read: “Tiberius Caesar, son of divine Augustus, supreme commander (imperator) for the eight time”

- And on the reverse side read: Pontifex Maximus, which renders “High Priest”.
- The emperor was deemed both the superior political ruler of the Roman Empire, as well as its supreme religious leader – he was seen as a god.
 - To further press the point of idolatry and arrogance of Rome, Tiberius’ adopted father (Octavius) Augustus, was not a name, but simply a title.
 - The title “August One” was a religious title meaning one who possessed transcendent majesty.
- Therefore, the Pharisees and Herodians were anticipating that Jesus would pronounce Himself as the Divine One.
 - For that response would have triggered the Pharisees deeming that statement to be an act of idolatry.
 - Yet Jesus responds in an unexpected way.
- Jesus answers them, in the first half of His answer, by saying “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.”
 - The word for “render” in the Greek is *apodidomi* which means to pay back, give back, or return, in the sense of obligation or rightful duty.
 - The taxes in which were to be paid was a debt owed to the State (Rome) because of the provision of the state.
 - So Jesus, without hesitation, says, “give to Caesar what belongs to him”.
 - Here, Jesus makes known that the institution of human government is one that is to be obeyed and submitted to accordingly, but ultimately because it has been established by God, Himself.
 - Check out what Paul tells us in Romans 13:7.

Romans 13:7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

- And in the same way, as believers today we are to obey our governing leaders for God has established them for His purposes.
 - Understand that at the end of the day, those in whom are placed in office, whether if you voted for them or not, are ultimately under the Sovereign control of God.
 - Whether the politician’s motives are pure or not, there is nothing that is outside of God’s providential reach and Sovereign control.
 - So as Jesus establishes the legitimization of human government, at the very same time, He disassociates Himself with any means of political or social anarchy, such as the Zealots.
 - And in a very coded way, establishes His Divine authority in the latter half of His response.
 - And the way in which He does this is through an interesting word play, off of the very coin He is holding.
 - Remember the question He asked regarding the denarius? He asked, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?”

- So, the way in which Caesar's image on the coin revealed who owned it, Jesus makes a jaw-dropping statement that will captivate the attention of the crowd including the spies who had come to trip Him up.
- It's at the end of Jesus' prior statement "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's" that He continues by saying, "...and give to God the things that are God's."
 - The question becomes: "What was Jesus' point in mentioning that last half of the statement?"
 - In the same way that Caesar's image was embedded on that coin and the people were obligated to pay what is rightfully due to Caesar in a governmental sense, how much more should those created in God's image give themselves and their very being to God in full surrender.
 - We will expound on this a little later.
- You must consider how clever and how precise Jesus' answers were.
 - Where these men came to trip Him up to kill Him, Jesus retorts with perfect responses.
- As mentioned earlier, Jesus doesn't speak partially, but truthfully, just as the "disciples of the Pharisees" and the Herodians noted in their sarcastic sentiments in their introduction to Him.
 - Therefore, this answer satisfies the Herodians because the tax would be paid according to the State requirement for the tribute tax since the Jewish people were under Roman rule.
 - And the answer would also satisfy the Pharisees because no sacrifice was given to Caesar other than what belonged to him.
- So, Jesus makes it clear: "Give to Caesar what is his and give to God what is God's."
 - How was this accomplished practically within the context of our text tonight?
 - Where the religious leaders are asking questions regarding their obligation to the State, Jesus raises the bar by speaking to the fact that they are withholding their obligations from God.
 - Friends, our lives are not our own!
 - The very breath in our bodies have been graciously given to us and yet many walk around as if they are their own source of life.
 - Rather than submitting ourselves and surrendering to God and His truth, we hijack the grace that has been freely given in exchange for further judgement that will be piled upon us through His wrath.
 - Selfishness and self-righteousness only lead to greater suffering in the end.
 - For in the same way that the full weight of the State is held against us in disobedience to paying taxes, so will the full weight of the wrath of God be unleashed upon those who constantly reject God's truth.
 - This becomes the point of Jesus' response to these men.
 - They would rather debate and argue about what they were grudgingly obligated to, in the sense of that temporary rule, than benefit from the One who offers the blessing of the Kingdom to come.
 - Here is yet another opportunity disregarded by these leaders because of unbelief

in their hearts.

- These were matters of things eternal versus temporal – these are weighty matters!
- For Caesar's empire has a beginning point and an ending point, but God's Kingdom has no end for it is eternal.
- If I were to boil Jesus' point down to one sentence, it would be: Obey God's word and His truth and prioritize it above all.
- Where the Pharisees had presented the poll-tax as an either/or situation, Jesus presents it as a both/and.
 - That although believers are citizens of a coming Kingdom, we still hold residence within an existing kingdom, and we are to abide by those laws that have been placed over us in a righteous way.
 - Paul tells us this in Romans 13:1-2:

Romans 13:1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Romans 13:2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

- As Christians we can find ourselves wanting to push against the demands of government, yet we find here in the text that our Lord and Savior teaches against that.
 - Instead, we are to willingly submit and obey the governing authorities for they have been established by God.
 - The only exception to this rule is when the government's demands come into direct opposition of God's word.
 - It is then that we are positioned to go against the government.
 - However, we do not purposefully seek opportunities to do so, for if we do, it is there that we too become like the Pharisees – self-righteous.
 - I believe what we see here is the importance of submission versus the lack of it.
 - That when we are submitted to the true and living King, our ability to willingly submit is motivated from our submission to Him, because we know who holds true authority.
 - As the Apostle Paul points out in Romans 12:1, our dutiful obligation is to God and our priority is set to obey His word, worship Him well, and live acceptably and pleasing in His sight by daily dying to ourselves.
 - As we see how the culture is informing the State and the Laws more and more, it may feel as though our ability to speak out on these matters gets more restricted.
 - Whatever the case, we serve a God who sees all and knows all, and none of this surprises Him.
 - Therefore, may we all live in a way that points a dying world to a living hope so that they may know the truth.

- And in them coming to know the Person of truth, that truth will set them free.
- Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 12C

Chapter 12:18-27

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- Tonight, we find ourselves in an ongoing interrogation of questions from different members of the Sanhedrin council.
 - To ground us in which day of the week we are in, here is our graphic from the start of the Triumphal entry.
 - The day is still Tuesday, which means that the mounting pressure and instigation of the leaders of Israel continues to increase.
 - The interrogation began with the Sanhedrin council which included the chief priest, scribes, and elders in Mark 11:27.
 - From there, the Pharisees and the Herodians come into the picture to further attempt to trip up Jesus in Mark 12:13.
 - In Mark 12:13-17, we witnessed the issue of the tribute-tax and the underpinning question of who is owed what.
 - Jesus made known, very pointedly, that the people were to render to Caesar what is Caesar's, but to give to God what belonged to God.
 - It was there that we discussed that just as the image of Caesar was on the tribute tax, so does every man bear the very image of God upon them.
 - Therefore, we ought to render to God what is rightfully owed to Him and that is our very lives to be submitted in obedience to Him.
 - However, the constant hurdle Jesus has been dealing with is the hurdle of unbelief.
 - After Jesus hit the Pharisees and the Herodians with that jaw dropping statement, they realized they too had failed at tripping up Jesus.
 - It was after their failed attempt that the next group of leaders arrived, and this is where our teaching picks up tonight.
 - So, when we consider this next round of interrogative questioning with the leaders of Israel and their line of questioning, know that it is not too far removed from the previous groups.
 - If I were to outline our flow of thought tonight, we are going to see the following things:
 - 1. A Premise of Poor/low Theology (Sadducees) v.18-23
 - 2. A Provocative Question (asked of Jesus) v.24
 - 3. A Promise Provided (Pointing to the Living Hope) v.25-27
 - I would like to tag tonight's teaching: "The God of the Living"
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of your scriptures and meet me in Mark 12:18-27.

Mark 12:18 Some Sadducees (who say that there is no resurrection) *came to Jesus, and began questioning Him, saying,

Mark 12:19 "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves behind a wife and leaves no child, his brother should marry the wife and raise up children to his brother.

Mark 12:20 There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died leaving no children.

Mark 12:21 The second one married her, and died leaving behind no children; and the third likewise;

Mark 12:22 and so all seven left no children. Last of all the woman died also.

Mark 12:23 In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her."

Mark 12:24 Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God?

Mark 12:25 For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Mark 12:26 But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?

Mark 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken."

- Mark begins verse 18 by mentioning that the next group is none other than the Sadducees. (*Day of week: Tuesday*)
 - Mark, knowing that he has not previously referenced this group in his account provides some context as to who this group is but most importantly their theological bent.
 - He mentions that this group professes and believes that there is no resurrection.
 - So, with this detail in mind, it begs the need to further explore this group in detail and why Mark finds the need to emphasize their varied view on resurrection.
 - But most importantly, it brings into view the significance of the resurrection, itself. (We will explore this later in the teaching.)
 - The Sadducees came from the most prominent families of Israel and represented the "holy upper class".
 - If you were to consider the "Have and have nots" within a societal/cultural setting, this group was deemed the upper echelon of society.
 - With that level of status came their disdain of all who were outside of their circle and sphere of influence.
 - Regarding their popularity among the people, they were less popular than the Pharisees.
 - And despite them being few in number, they attained many influential positions on the Sanhedrin council.
 - Along with the Sadducees' differing background came variances in their theological views regarding scripture.
 - For instance, the Pharisees believed in the resurrection, future judgement, and the existence of angels and spirits, whereas the Sadducees rejected these truths.
 - The reason being is that the Sadducees held to a conservative view of scripture.

- They insisted that only the Laws that were written in the Law of Moses were the only binding thing.
- Therefore, they rejected the “tradition of the elders” aka the Oral Law and written commentary from that of the Pharisaical party.
- For more of a description of the Sadducees and their theological perspective on the resurrection, Josephus provides the following:

“(164) But the Sadducees are those that compose the second order, and take away fate entirely, and suppose that God is not concerned in our doing or not doing what is evil; (165) and they say, that to act what is good, or what is evil, is at men’s own choice, and that the one or the other belongs so to every one, that they may act as they please. They also take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades.”

- So in their denial of the resurrection, they provide Jesus with a hypothetical question based upon their incorrect theology.
 - Check out the question in verses 19-23.

Mark 12:19 “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves behind a wife and leaves no child, his brother should marry the wife and raise up children to his brother.

Mark 12:20 There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died leaving no children.

Mark 12:21 The second one married her, and died leaving behind no children; and the third likewise;

Mark 12:22 and so all seven left no children. Last of all the woman died also.

Mark 12:23 In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one’s wife will she be? For all seven had married her.”

- So the Sadducees, in an attempt to trip Jesus up in questioning, try to play “cat and mouse” with the scriptures while at the same time creating a trumped-up story that reeks of hypocrisy.
 - They begin by appealing to the scriptures in their scenario involving matters of marriage, regarding what is called the Levirate law in Deuteronomy 25:5-10.
 - Levirate law dealt with what was a cultural expectation designed to preserve some aspect of a deceased’s man’s life.
 - Such marriages could preserve familial inheritance and patrilineal descent, as well as provide support for a widow.
 - And the implications of this law spoke to moral obligation and legislated responsibility.
 - So in the Sadducees’ story, they mention a man who had a wife and the man dies.
 - The man has no offspring to continue on his legacy, therefore the Levirate law insisted that the brother of the deceased was to marry the wife.

- In doing so they would have a child and raise the child to his dead brother, meaning the child, from the living brother, would be deemed the dead brother's child and not his own.
- However, the story becomes even more inflated, as the example given is that the other brother dies.
 - This scenario repeats seven times.
- Eventually, arriving to verse 23, it reveals the true purpose of the question asked.
 - The Sadducees are using this question as a means to speak to their theological perspective on the resurrection in an attempt to make the resurrection look as though it was a farce.
- Their question comes to a head when they ask Jesus the following:
 - "In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one's wife will she be, for she has married seven."
- Now, knowing that the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection and knowing that they only deemed the Torah as binding, the question becomes: What will be their means by which to discredit the resurrection using this example?
 - But another question insists to be asked and that is: "Where in the Hebrew scriptures is there a mention of the resurrection or the lack thereof?"
- Surely, identifying this answer provides the means of "side stepping" their argument and disarming them altogether.
 - Let's begin by answering the first question.
- Understand, the purpose of the question from the Sadducees is to trip Jesus up on matters of the scriptures.
 - In this case, their question on marriage and the idea of a resurrection in the coming future, based on their theology and interpretation, made no sense.
 - It becomes clear that the Sadducees are making a mockery of the resurrection considering their understanding of how this world works.
- They are assuming that what they know about this present life and the things of this present world will continue to persist in the afterlife.
 - However, their understanding of scripture and their presuppositions are off base.
- They are assuming that life now versus the life that is to come, (in the resurrection), is somehow one in the same – an extension of this life.
 - If that were the case, it would bring up many issues regarding one's understanding of marriage as it pertains to the Law.
 - Furthermore, to view the resurrection in this way creates serious issues regarding the Coming Kingdom, such as: "Who would that person be married to in the Kingdom, and how many ex-spouses would that be?"
- Friends, for one to make these poor theological assumptions, would cause one to fail to see the consistency and supremacy of God's Holy Word.
 - It would leave the door open to say that God's character could change as it relates to who He is, His word, and His holiness.
 - If we were to pause here for a moment, this becomes a clear example of

how man can attempt to find ways to contort and confuse the scripture based upon things that individuals either fail to understand or refuse to submit themselves to.

- You can take almost any scripture and make it say what you want it to or to prove your point, yet in doing so, you take God's word out of context and you become the sole means of understanding and that becomes dangerous grounds.
- So, Jesus makes known the ways in which the Sadducees are contorting the text to dismiss and discredit Him, His ministry and Messianic claims.
 - Check out what Jesus says in verse 24.
 - This question outlines the two foundational issues of the Sadducees.
 - Furthermore, it points us to the systemic underpinnings of unbelief. Check out verse 24.

Mark 12:24 Jesus said to them, “Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God?”

- Jesus, after hearing their inflated scenario highlights 2 things in which the Sadducees, in error, mention regarding the resurrection.
 - Notice the phrase that Mark uses here, “Is this not the reason you are mistaken...”
 - The Greek word for “mistaken” is *planao* which means to be lead astray in error or pulled into a specific way outside of proper belief.
 - Their failure in understanding the resurrection is mentioned in the next two clauses: A misunderstanding of the scriptures and a failure of knowing the power of God.
 - The reality is, walking in error of the truth further leads one into a lack of truly understanding God's word and His power.
 - That deception is often rooted in our lack of submission to God's truth and our reliance upon self, status, and relativism.
 - And in this case, according to the Sadducees, their best life was now so why not maximize on it.
 - Herein lies the danger of the current movement of “my truth”.
 - The moment that absolute truth comes in direct conflict with relative truth we find ourselves in a truth war.
 - However, the truth of God's word is the only thing that has remained consistent and has not failed.
 - So, Jesus proceeds to tell them that their error and deception of truth is because they do not understand the scriptures.
 - This response completely pulled the rug from under these men, because in few words Jesus said: You have thoughts about the law, but you don't truly know the Law.
 - It's like telling someone who has been in a certain profession for a long period of time, that they don't truly know what they're talking about.

- So, with this reality being made known to the Sadducees, Jesus will have to further explain why they are ignorant to the scriptures that they claim to know.
- And lastly, Jesus states that this group of men do not know the power of God.
 - Because they are ignorant of the scriptures, in its fulness, not only is their theology shot, but they fail to personally experience the power of the God they claim to know.
 - For the power that they currently possess as members of the Sanhedrin council is but earthly power and pales in comparison to the power of God.
- Now before we move to Jesus' explanation as to why these men theologically are off base, we need to know why we, as believers are not in error.
 - We need to understand why we have assured hope in Jesus Christ and why the power of the resurrection is so essential to the doctrine of the Christian faith.
- I want to begin by stating that the New Testament always interprets the Old Testament, meaning that what has been written in the Hebrew scriptures has been fully revealed in the New Testament canon.
 - This means that God, in His wisdom and Power, has made known through the scriptures that this life is not the means to the end, but the means to a new beginning.
- As believers in Christ, Paul talks about us having a living hope in Christ.
 - This reoccurring term "hope" shows up about 44 times in Paul's letters and speaks to the fact that this hope doesn't disappoint.
 - Consider the following scriptures that Paul writes about regarding this hope that we have in Christ:

Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

- ○ Check out Colossians 1:27

Colossians 1:27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

- ○ Lastly, for good measure, here is 1 Thessalonians 4:13

1 Thessalonians 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

- In each instance, these statements of hope are based upon our faith in Christ the guarantor of the resurrection for the believer, through the power of God.
 - That because Christ was raised from the dead, not only does this mean that we

will be raised with Him, but we too will be raised to new bodies.

- This isn't just some whimsical idea or thought that Jesus talked about, but this is something that He promised would take place because of the providential plan of the Father from the very beginning.
- Jesus mentions this even in John 5:21 and John 6:40, check out the text.

John 5:21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.

John 6:39 This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

John 6:40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

- What seals the deal for the Christian is the fact that there is proof in the pudding.
 - The Lord Jesus had mentioned to His disciples, on several occasions, that He would die, but on the third day be raised.
 - This type of claim was not light in the least bit, for to make such a claim as rising from the dead, one would have to provide the proof.
 - I believe that is why seeing glimmers of that reality such as with Jairus' daughter and Lazarus were simply taste testers of the true hope for all who believe in Jesus.
 - Jesus' resurrection was to be the receipt that those in whom are dead were merely asleep.
 - This ultimately proving that death is not the end of this life, but simply a transition from this life to the next.
 - One day, we will possess a new body that will not corrupt, that will never get sick, and will never suffer the pains of deterioration, etc.
 - This is a guaranteed hope, for if Jesus has said it then the Father has promised it and God is not One in who can lie. (John 6:39)
 - Consider this for a moment, if Jesus did not rise from the dead as He said He would (and did), the very message that we proclaim week after week would be a powerless message therefore speaking to a God with no power.
 - This is why Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 15:13-14 the following:

1 Corinthians 15:13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;

1 Corinthians 15:14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.

- So, Jesus will now approach these fundamental questions that the Sadducees have by providing biblical proof against their error using the very scriptures they claim to know.
 - Check out the last 3 verses for tonight:

Mark 12:25 For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Mark 12:26 But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’?

Mark 12:27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken.”

- Jesus mentions that because of the Sadducees’ lack of understanding and wrong theology, they have taken God’s word and tried to conform it to their own misaligned belief.
 - Jesus makes clear to these men that marriage and giving in to marriage is only an aspect of this present life and not a part of the life that is to come.
 - Jesus mentions that we will be “like the angels in heaven” in that our very existence in the life to come is centered on total fellowship with God.
 - And in that, we will live forever with Him and will have no need of reproducing or intimacy, for all the fellowship we will ever need is found in Him.
 - So, after Jesus makes mention of the Sadducees playing “loosey goosey” with the text, He provides them with clarity using the portion of scripture they deemed authoritative (the Torah).
 - If you recall, the Sadducees, unlike the Pharisees, only considered the Pentateuch, the first five books of the bible, to be authoritative.
 - And within the first 5 books of the Hebrew scriptures there is no explicit mentioning of the resurrection – however it is implied.
 - It is from the book of Moses, that Jesus quotes Exodus 3:6 to plainly explain to these men the reality that the promise of the resurrection comes from the Torah.
 - Exodus 3:6 is the passage regarding the burning bush and how God spoke to Moses regarding the fact that He is a covenant-keeping God.
 - Notice the phrase that Jesus uses here, found in Exodus 3:6: “I AM The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.”
 - This phrase that God used for Moses spoke to the fact that the covenant promises were made with the intent that even those who He has made that promise to/with will be a part of it, therefore meaning they are still alive.
 - The question that we must ask ourselves regarding Jesus’ conversation with the Sadducees is: “If this covenant promise is a perpetual promise, it means it is everlasting.”
 - And if it is an everlasting contract, yet the parties that were benefactors of this contract have died: “How does God maintain His word in that regard?”
 - It must mean that God’s very word being bounded to these men and their descendants is not limited to the confines of human frailty, but rather requires a Divine Power to completely fulfill this promise even to those that have perished under that promise, by faith.
 - Friends, this is Jesus’ point as plainly stated in verse 27. “God is not the God of

the dead, but He is the God of the Living.”

- For, to not believe in the resurrection is a blatant denial and rejection of the Power of God.
 - And if the Sadducees’ failure to see Jesus’ point regarding the resurrection wasn’t sufficient, neither was the physical literal resurrection of Jesus going to be sufficient for them as spectators in the first century.
- This brings up a fundamental theological point regarding the significance of the resurrection and that is: The proof of the resurrection itself is the very culminating demonstration of the Power of God.
 - The doctrine of the resurrection is the very hope of the Christian faith!
 - Knowing what Jesus came to do, points us to a true and Living Promise that God has made and intends to keep!
- This is why there is such great debate on the resurrection event itself because people seek to find evidence they deem justifiable, to somehow disprove God by disregarding Jesus being raised from the dead.
 - This is why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 that the very weight and trustworthiness of the Gospel hinges on the resurrection.
- If Jesus did not die and did not rise, it would completely discount the very power of God, His promises, and therefore His very existence.
 - Friends, you and I have an assured hope in the Person of Jesus.
 - This is why Jesus stresses three times to the disciples their need to understand His resurrection.
 - That all truth that He has spoken about can be summed up in the proof of His resurrection. They needed to believe this!
- Ultimately, we see that from the Sadducees’ rejection of the truth of the resurrection, Jesus tells them “They are greatly mistaken”. (Mistaken used twice here for emphasis.)
 - Mark’s gospel is the only account that emphasizes the severity of their misaligned theological view of the resurrection.
- And because of their lack of understanding the scriptures and their failure of recognizing the power of God, they will lose out on eternal life.
 - They believe that their status in this life is sufficient and that if there were an afterlife they would “somehow” continue in their affluence.
- However, their status and affluence can’t save them, their Jewishness can’t preserve them.
 - It is only through and by the power of God at work through the Second Person of the Trinity, that can fully satisfy the wrath of God and provide salvation.
- Once again, this group of men have missed the point all for the sake of trying to disprove what they do not understand.
 - And friends, herein lies the danger of unbelief.
 - A constant need to reject and disprove God’s truth – because of a failure to acknowledge truth made verbally and visually known – only leads to a life of death, complete separation from a Holy and Living God.

- The way in which one can escape the impending blow of mighty judgement and wrath of God is through simply believing in His Son, the way by which we are reconciled to the Father.
 - It is through Jesus having taken on our sins, died in our place, and being raised back to life, that death was defeated and life, and the fullness thereof, is found in Jesus Christ.
 - You can experience this promise and new life knowing that after this life follows life eternal with God. All you must do is believe upon the Lord Jesus.
 - Let's Pray.

Citation

- Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, [The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 608



Mark - Lesson 12D

Chapter 12:28-34

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- Jesus has been dealing with non-stop inquiries from the religious leaders of Israel as a means of discrediting His ministry, work, and Person (Messiah).
 - This exhaustive encounter began with the members of the Sanhedrin Counsel seeking ways to entrap Jesus. (Mark 12:11).
 - From there, Jesus gave a Parable to the people with the religious leaders amongst them.
 - And this Parable was the Parable of the Tenants.
 - It spoke to the lack of respect that the religious leaders had towards the owner's son and due to their lack of respect, they killed him.
 - Ultimately, the religious leaders were able to see through deductive reasoning that the parable was about them.
 - From there, the Pharisees and the Herodians approached Jesus together (this unlikely pair).
 - Their questioning concerned matters of dutiful obligation to the State concerning taxes.
 - And in response Jesus “one-ups” them and says, in the same way you give to Caesar what is his, “Give to God what belongs to Him.”
 - And being that we are made in His image and likeness, we are to submit ourselves wholly to Him.
 - After that, Jesus is then questioned by the Sadducees regarding matters of the resurrection.
 - They attempt to use the theological premise of the Resurrection in a sarcastic scenario in an effort to discredit the resurrection itself.
 - However, Jesus refutes their faulty theological position using the very section of scriptures they deemed authoritative.
 - And now, after having defeated that group, Jesus is now faced with round four, which consist of a scribe.
 - And it will be in tonight's teaching that we will further see the grandeur of the Trinity while also observing the significance of Jesus' purpose and His work.
 - If I were to outline our text for tonight, we will see the following:
 - 1. The Scribe Probes – (v.28)
 - 2. Jesus Responds – (v.29-31)
 - 3. The Scribe Compliments – (v. 32-33)
 - 4. Jesus Probes – (v. 34)
 - The tag on our text tonight is: “Not Far from the Kingdom of God”.
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures and meet me in Mark 12:28-34.

Mark 12:28 One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost of all?”

Mark 12:29 Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God

is one Lord;

Mark 12:30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

Mark 12:31 The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:32 The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him;

Mark 12:33 and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Mark 12:34 When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

- It's after Jesus has informed the Sadducees of how misinformed of the scriptures they truly were, that Mark mentions, in passing, that one of the scribes overheard the conversation being held.
 - And while overhearing the discussion, the text makes mentions that they "recognized" that Jesus had answered the question well.
 - One question that may arise is: What sect is the scribe representing that they recognized the legitimacy of Jesus' response?
 - I want to bring this graphic up again to remind us of the different groups that Jesus was encountering in the temple during His inspection.
 - If you notice, the scribe is someone that was deemed a copyist, a recorder, and an expert of the Law.
 - What we must keep in mind is that the scribes could be recruited for services either for the Sadducees, Pharisees, or any other State matters.
 - And based upon the phrase that we just mentioned regarding how well Jesus answered the previous question, it alludes to the fact that this scribe:
 - 1. Knows the Law very well
 - 2. Also agrees with Jesus' teaching of the resurrection.
 - Which means that it eliminates this scribe working for the Sadducees and therefore we can conclude this scribe is probably a Pharisee.
 - Furthermore, it's confirmed for us by scripture in Matthew's gospel, more specifically, in Matthew 22:34-35. Check out the text.

Matthew 22:34 But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together.

Matthew 22:35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him,

- Even more detail is revealed in Matthew's gospel because he informs his audience that this Pharisee is in fact a lawyer.
 - What becomes different in the questions asked of the other religious leaders

versus this scribe is that there seems to be no sense of ill-will or hostility in the question of this scribe.

- It looks to be that he is rather impressed with Jesus' ability to maneuver around the foolish understandings of the Sadducees.
- So instead, the lawyer's primary objective is to test Jesus' understanding of the Law in its fullness.
 - So, he asks Jesus: "What commandment is the foremost of all?"
 - Now, the NASB 95 translation provides a more accurate understanding of the Greek text here.
- One of the words that we must consider at this point in the text is the word "foremost".
 - This word in Greek is *protos* (pro-tos) which means "first" or the earliest.
 - In other words, if you were to sum up all the law into one phrase or command, this statement establishes it in summary format.
 - However, it does not mean that one command is more important in the sense that you negate this one for the sake of the other.
- So, where the NIV translation mentions which commandment is "most important" a better translation would be: "Which of the commandments supersedes everything and is incumbent on all humanity?"
 - So, with this question in mind, one would have to consider the Jewish laws themselves (Mosaic Law).
- Given that the laws of the Jewish people were important, the reality was there were times in which their laws would come into conflict with one another. (Lighter vs. Heavier commands)
 - And when this occurred, the religious leaders would gather to figure out which law was "greater".
 - And that debate, over time, would lead them to ask questions regarding which of the laws superseded them all.
- So, Mark's account tells us that the scribe asks Jesus to respond to this question of which command He deemed the foremost command, as a means of testing Jesus' knowledge of the Law.
 - Check out verses 29-31.

Mark 12:29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord;

Mark 12:30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

Mark 12:31 The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

- So, Jesus begins, only in Mark's account, with the Jewish Sh'ma found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5.
 - The Sh'ma were the very words that every Jew recited daily, once in the morning

and the evening.

- It was the command vocalizing the Jewish individual's love for Yahweh and declared that their highest duty was to love God with their whole being.
- As Dr Alfred Edershim mentioned in his work, "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah", "...this was the inmost expression of faith for a Jew".
- It begins with these words: "Hear oh Israel! The LORD our GOD is ONE LORD."
 - This "preamble" set forth the very theological premise that there is only One True and Living God. (Monotheism)
 - This solidified that the individual's devotion and affections were not divided amongst "other gods".
 - In other words, it spoke to the very "first command" in the 10 commandments: "You shall have no other gods before Me."
- After the preamble, Jesus moves into the body of the Sh'ma: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."
 - It is important to note that although Matthew's account only mentions three nouns (heart, mind, strength), we should not see this variation as somehow critical or problematic.
 - But rather, we should recognize Mark's use here as a more comprehensive understanding of Jesus' point in his account.
 - And that is, the foremost command should be that nothing comes before or beside our love for God.
 - With that in mind, Jesus mentions how our love for God is to be accomplished or lived out.
- He begins with the fact that we are to love the Lord with all our heart.
 - In other words, our affections should be centered upon God being the primary focus.
 - That above our love for things, careers, and anything else that can draw away our attention, God should be primary.
- Secondly, we are to love Him with all our soul.
 - Meaning, with our very worship and lives, we are to esteem God as the focal point of who we are.
 - Put differently, this place of worship can't be shared with another, but wholly belongs to God.
- Thirdly, Jesus says we are to love God with all of our mind, meaning our understanding, our disposition.
 - Our very minds and dispositions as believers in Christ, as Paul says in Romans 12:2, should be based upon our renewed minds in Christ.
 - In other words, our minds and understanding should be centered upon the word of God and not the world around us.
 - The word of God leads our thoughts, actions, and beliefs, and the only way we conform to that is if we are in the word of God.

- Lastly, Jesus says we are to love God with all our strength.
 - This is our ability to use the wisdom, knowledge, and might we have to resist or evade the sin and struggles within this present life.
 - In other words, our strength is found in our dependence upon what and who we possess to overcome the trials and struggles we may face.
- However, Jesus does not stop with the Sh'ma, but He further extends His response by mentioning a second command that is directly tied to the first and that is: "You shall love your neighbor as Yourself."
 - Jesus, using this command, is quoting from Leviticus 19:18. This is how it reads.

Leviticus 19:18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

- From this, Jesus makes a powerful statement and that is: "There is no other commandment greater than these."
 - But did you notice how Jesus ends His statement: "There is no other commandment (singular) greater than these (plural)."
 - This is a peculiar yet powerful statement!
 - Ultimately, Jesus is saying when these two commandments are put together, that they summarize the entire law.
 - This is why in Matthew 22:40, Matthew records Jesus saying: "On these two commandments, "depend" the whole Law and the prophets.
 - Friends, this is huge!
 - The word "depend" in the Greek is *kremannymi* (kre-mah-me) which means "to hang from" or to depend upon.
 - In other words, if you were to take the entirety of the Law and prophets and sum them up into one statement it would be:
 - Love God with all your being and love your neighbor as you love yourself.
 - As Edersheim quotes: "As God is love – His nature so manifesting itself – so is love to God also love to man."
 - Well, this begs a more serious question then and that is: "Why not just name these two laws and leave it at that?"
 - Why list out 613 commands which, as Jesus has made clear, can be summed up in two commands?
 - Perhaps, more clarity in commands was given to outline a greater problem being revealed.
 - It's like when I give my kids a general instruction: Clean your room.
 - About 30 minutes later, I go in and only the clothes on the floor are picked up.
 - Clarity is provided and further outlined to show my kids where the mark has been missed.

- In the same way, the Law is further outlined in an effort for the people to realize their failure in truly loving God and obeying Him.
 - Paul puts it this way in Galatians 3:23-24:

Galatians 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.

Galatians 3:24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

- ◦ They needed to be made right, internally! We all need to be made right, internally (the heart)!
- Perhaps this was the very means by which the Pharisees struggled in truly understanding the scriptures.
 - They had an external means of worshipping and loving God while all the while their hearts needed to be cleansed.
 - Scripture tells us they were more focused on feeding themselves rather than feeding the flock. (Ezekiel 34:3-4)
 - The Pharisees were more focused on ceremonial processes that they missed the heart of the Law.
- Herein lies the very dangers of religion and religiosity rather than truly attaining a relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
 - As we will see later tonight, you cannot separate loving God from loving those created in His image. The two go hand in hand.
- So, what we are witnessing practically is the ethical and moral conundrum by which humanity fails in loving God, therefore someone must meet that standard.
 - Well, it's after hearing Jesus' summation of the foremost commandment, that the scribe provides Jesus with a compliment of sorts.
 - Check out verses 32-33

Mark 12:32 The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him;

Mark 12:33 and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

- The scribe responds positively to Jesus' response and provides Him with a compliment, saying "Right teacher, you have truly stated...".
 - Now, the English translation does not properly articulate the compliment which is being given here.
 - In the Greek, the scribe is saying, "Well said, or, commendable response Jesus!". It is this sense of approval from the scribe.
 - So note, this response from the scribe is not one of sarcasm, but rather, one of true and sincere commendation.

- The scribe continues by telling Jesus that He has addressed the very matters of the Law by beginning with a foundational theological premise found in the preamble of the Sh'ma:
 - That is, that God is One and that there is none other beside Him.
 - And I believe, herein lies where the test of the scribe comes in to play. (We will expound further)
 - The scribe referred to Deuteronomy 4:35 which solidified monotheism: That there is but One God!
 - Check out what Deuteronomy 4:35 says:

Deuteronomy 4:35 To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him.

- ◦ So, with Jesus having affirmed the Sh'ma, the scribe, in his mind, sees an “out” to completely deny Jesus’ claim as the Son of God (Messiah).
 - So what’s the test you ask: If Jesus confirms that God is One, then He most certainly couldn’t claim to be God, Himself.
 - This is the premise of the test.
- After establishing the reality that God is One, the scribe reaffirms the means by which we are to love God and love our neighbor. (Mark 12:33)
 - Again, before we lose our minds and say, what is the purpose of the variance between what Jesus said and what the scribe said, know that God’s word does not contradict itself.
 - Therefore, the text and its meaning as quoted in Mark’s account does not impact or change the summary of the Sh'ma.
- Both point to the same thing, in that with understanding for the Jew came application/doing/living.
 - I say that because in the Jewish mind, for one to hear the word of God also meant that they were to live out and to do what the Law of God required. (Obedience)
 - All of this was to be accomplished because of our love for the Lord and because He commanded it from His people.
 - Check out how Moses reinstates the Law for the generation who will inhabit the Promised Land.
 - Check out Deuteronomy 6:1-3:

Deuteronomy 6:1 “Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, Deuteronomy 6:2 so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

Deuteronomy 6:3 O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

- ○ So, the point of the Law given a “second time” hence where the name Deuteronomy comes from (second Law), speaks to God’s point.
 - Do these things that you may prosper and see the promise (Blessing)!
- Finally, it is at Mark 12:33b that the scribe demonstrates a level of spiritual insight that has not been seen by the other leaders who have questioned Jesus before.
 - He says loving God wholeheartedly with all our affections, ways, understanding and strength (complete obedience and submission) is better than burnt offerings and sacrifices.
 - This realization is huge and is why Jesus tells him in verse 34 that he answered “intelligently”.
- This word “intelligently” is only found once in the Greek New Testament, and it is here in Mark 12:34.
 - It is the word “*nounechos*” (noon-ech-os) which means he answered with wisdom or with understanding.
 - Something has been revealed to this scribe that was not understood by other religious leaders before
- It is as if this man’s eyes are being slowly opened to divine perspective and understanding of the scriptures which would eventually lead him to see the reality of who Jesus truly is.
 - The question becomes: “What has been made known to him in this illuminating way?”
- The Ceremonial sacrificial system in Israel had become the “default” for individuals to be made right with God to the point that it became ritualistic.
 - The primary focus for the Pharisees were to become experts of the ceremonial rituals rather than truly seeking to love God relationally and not religiously.
 - In other words, the most sacred duties of sacrificing to God was meaningless unless done out of intimacy (relationship) rather than legitimacy (ritual).
- The purpose of the Law itself was not to take on these ceremonial rituals as some type of badge of honor and to one up the next person to see how ritually clean and pure one was, but rather for them to recognize how much in need of God’s intervention they were in.
- The purpose of the burnt offerings and sacrifices was intended to put people in right standing with God in a temporary sense.
 - However, the intent was not to make the sacrificial/ceremonial system the desirable thing, but rather it was to be a constant reminder to the people that they are constantly in need of a sacrifice.
 - Check out what Samuel said in 1 Samuel 15:22.

1 Samuel 15:22 Samuel said,

**“Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
As in obeying the voice of the Lord?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.**

- ○ This constant need of sacrifice was to point the people of Israel to the one that could completely obey the Father: The God-man (Messiah).
 - He would be the One to take on sin so that we would be made right before God.
 - The sacrifice of animal’s blood was to simply point to a greater sacrifice that was to come, only this time, the shedding of blood would be from the God-man (fully God and fully human) done once for all.
 - Check out with me Hebrews 10:1-10.

Hebrews 10:4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

**Hebrews 10:5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says,
“Sacrifice and offering You have not desired,
But a body You have prepared for Me;**

Hebrews 10:6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure.

**Hebrews 10:7 “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come
(In the scroll of the book it is written of Me)
To do Your will, O God.’”**

Hebrews 10:8 After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have not desired, nor have You taken pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the Law),

Hebrews 10:9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

Hebrews 10:10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

- The question that should be percolating in the mind of the scribe is: How?
 - “How does one perfectly obey God’s instructions and love Him wholly and completely in perfect submission all the while loving their neighbor?”
 - Especially if God desires whole devotion and love over sacrifice?
 - Well, the quick answer is we can’t. The Law points us to our need of the promise God made regarding His Provision (The Son).

Galatians 3:19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

Galatians 3:20 Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.

Galatians 3:21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

Galatians 3:22 But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

- Friends, this obligation in which Jesus explains is the foremost command (which He provides two) deals with matters of an ethical/moral standard. (Holiness)
 - In other words, for someone to love the Lord and to obey Him, requires Holiness/perfection and the standard by which holiness is accomplished is solely in one that is deemed Holy.
 - Scripture tells us this in Psalm 14:1-3.

Psalm 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.

Psalm 14:2 The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God.

Psalm 14:3 They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.

- There is none that is good! There is none that meet the holy ethical/moral standard by which God deems acceptable to stand righteous before Him.
 - There is only One, Jesus Christ!
 - Therefore, in order for man to be in right standing with God, it would take God Himself to come on our behalf, in the form of a human being so that we could become the righteousness of God.
 - Again, as the scribe mentioned, a sacrifice was necessary because the reality was no person could obey and submit to God according to the Law.
 - To miss this section is to miss the significance of the Person of Christ and His work and need to die!
 - So, in this scribe recognizing loyal love is better than the sacrificial system, Jesus makes a profound statement.
 - Jesus essentially tells him, based on the scribe’s statement: Salvation is within reach.
 - It’s in reach in the sense that Jesus, the Messiah is standing before him – the answer to humanity’s very need.
 - The only thing that the scribe must now come to is transferring his trust to Jesus (believe in the Lord Jesus).
 - I believe that what Jesus was doing here was inviting this man to truly see that the Promise was made revealed and complete in the Person of Jesus Christ.
 - God, the Second Person of the Trinity, wrapped in human flesh.

- Jesus wants Him to see that truth is found in a Person.
 - Jesus wants the man to see that the unhindered love of God was fully demonstrated in the God-man.
 - And that it would be Jesus' coming death, just days away, that would demonstrate God's love that would bring salvation to those who believed.
 - This is why Paul said this in Romans 5:6-8:

Romans 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 5:7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- Friends, herein lies the necessity of a crucified Christ.
 - That the answer to the Gospel is found not in the duties and works of mere men or the Law, but in the finished work and Person of Jesus Christ.
 - Next week we will see Jesus' point being driven to a singular point: His very deity as the God man, being fully God and fully man.
 - For where the scribe struggled to understand how God could take on flesh or how there could be plurality in the God-head will be further explained.
 - Join us next week for this discussion. You don't want to miss it!
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 12E

Chapter 12:35-37

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- Over the past few weeks of our study, we have witnessed Jesus being questioned by several groups of Israel's religious leaders on a Tuesday.
 - This line of questioning was initiated to discredit Jesus' ministry, deny Him of His deity, and ultimately reject the message He came to deliver regarding matters of the Kingdom and eternal life.
 - This method of inspecting the Lamb of God occurred in 4 phases over a period of a day.
 - And as we have witnessed, despite the serious inquiries of the leaders, their questions were constantly obliterated by Jesus.
 - As a brief recap, I want to summarize the 4 attempts and angles that the religious leaders sought to question Jesus in.
 - And in doing so, we can see how all of Jesus' answers were glimpses of His Messiahship as the God-man.
 - The testing and inspection of the lamb began with Jesus' authority being challenged by the Sanhedrin council as a collective. (Attempt 1)
 - It was here where the chief priest, scribes, and elders sought to see by what authority and by whose authority was Jesus accomplishing these great works and teachings.
 - To that end Jesus responds to their question with a question, as a means for them to come to their own conclusions.
 - And that question was: "What was the origin of John the Baptist's ministry? Was it from human origins or from heavenly origin?"
 - This question served as a means of "checking" the leaders because the people affirmed John's ministry as being from God.
 - And therefore, confirming John's message as from God confirmed who John pointed to – which was the Promised One from God (Messiah).
 - From there, Jesus gave the parable of the tenants which outlined the reality that the religious leaders and stewards over Israel became self-deceived and prideful.
 - Rather than the tenants yielding to the owner's request to provide the owner with the fruit of His land, they withheld his portion as if it were theirs.
 - The owner's attempt to retrieve His possessions by way of his servants became a picture of the prophets of the Hebrew scriptures.
 - That where the prophets of old would be used to communicate God's truth, it would constantly be rejected by Israel's leadership.
 - This eventually leading to the prophets being killed because of their proclamation of truth to the leadership.
 - The parable then transitioned to the owner of the vineyard sending His last resort, His one and only son.
 - However, like the prophets, the Son was killed as a result of the unreceptive hearts of the tenants.
 - And in the same way, so were the hearts of the religious leaders in Jesus' day – seeking their own way versus responding to God's revealed truth through the Person of Jesus.

- The leaders eventually realized that they were the very subject matter of that parable and in embarrassment fled.
- The Second attempt came from the Pharisees and the Herodians, the unlikely pair.
 - These two opposing groups came together in unity to disprove and disparage Jesus through means of the tribute tax.
- The question for these two groups becomes a matter of priority.
 - *The Pharisees* are looking to see if He will uphold the Law and reject idolatry from the Roman Government. (Tribute coin)
 - Whereas *the Herodians* are looking to see if Jesus is attempting to be a zealot which could potentially lead to overthrowing the Roman government.
- However, Jesus side-steps both attempts and states that the people are to render to Caesar what is Caesar and give to God what is God's.
 - This response completely silences them because not only does Jesus establish the recognition and submission to human government, but it also renders that God's demands supersedes it all.
 - In that we are made in God's image and likeness, we should be fully submitted to and obedient to God's instruction and ways.
- The third attempt dealt with *the Sadducees* questioning Jesus on matters of the resurrection.
 - Their lack of belief in the resurrection caused them to develop a farce scenario to trump up the Levirate Law to disprove the resurrection.
- Jesus, knowing they deemed only the Pentateuch as authoritative, used Exodus as a means to explain the rational and implicit understanding of the resurrection.
 - This came about with the explanation of Moses at the burning bush.
 - Where Moses is told that Yahweh was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Exodus 3:6)
- It showed that although these men had died, the Abrahamic Covenant was an unconditional, perpetual promise made by God.
 - This meant that although these men have not seen the promise fulfilled, because God can not lie, these men will see it complete.
 - Therefore, by default, it confirms that God would have to raise these men from the dead.
 - Ultimately, Jesus makes known to the Sadducees that God is a truth teller, He is a covenant keeper, and therefore He can't lie.
- And the last attempt dealt with the scribes of the Pharisees regarding testing Jesus' understanding of the Law.
 - Last week we saw that Jesus was confronted with the scribe who had witnessed Jesus' profound response to the Sadducees.
- It's from that point that the scribe asks Jesus a question regarding the Law: "Which command was the "foremost" of all?"
 - Jesus responds by beginning with the Sh'ma (Deuteronomy 6:4) followed by Leviticus 19:18 regarding loving thy neighbor as thyself.

- From there, Jesus summarizes all the Law into two commands: Love God and Love People.
- Surprisingly enough the scribe agrees with Him, but begins by addressing the “elephant” in the room – matters regarding the fact that God is One.
 - We discovered that the scribe was looking to test Jesus on the claims of Him being Messiah, yet attempting to forgive sins was something only God could do.
- The struggle that the scribe wrestled with was the comprehension of what is known as the hypostatic union: Jesus being 100% God and 100% human.
 - So, as we look at Jesus’ retorts to each group that questioned Him, we see that theological truths become unearthed from these discussions regarding the Person of Jesus.
 - However, the religious leaders and members in the crowd do not yet have eyes to see or ears to hear.
- If you notice, each question is dealing with Jesus’ connection as Deity in relation to: Truth, Authority, and Divine Promise and Provision in some shape or form.
 - And with hindsight and the full counsel of God in hand, Jesus is subtly making known His Divine Person as the God-man.
- Friends, what we will see tonight is that truth has a name. That what has been veiled at one point in history has now been fully revealed in a Person.
 - That Person has made known the Truth of God in that being God, wrapped Himself in human flesh.
- How this reality and truth came about in human history becomes the question, and tonight, I intend to, by the illumination of the Spirit, unfold this truth for us from scripture.
 - Our outline is straightforward and is wrapped in tonight’s tag of the text, and that is: “The God-man”.
- As we pick up in the text, Jesus is still in the temple and is before a crowd of people who have just heard the conversation between Jesus and the scribe.
 - We discovered last week that the scribe’s means of testing Jesus was found in his recitation of the Sh’ma.
 - The scribe’s point becomes: “How can you claim to be Messiah and forgive sins if you are only human?”
 - The scribe seems to be confused as to Jesus’ claim of being Messiah while agreeing that God is One.
 - How does one reconcile the plurality yet unity of God?
 - Well, Jesus will outline it perfectly here for the scribe and the crowd in that David himself was rationalizing within himself how this reality existed.
 - So, Jesus asks the group of gathered Pharisees, scribes, and the surrounding audience (according to Matthew’s gospel): Whose “son” do you think the Messiah is?
 - Mark’s account however shows Jesus’ question as a teaching point regarding the experts of the Law and their understanding of who Messiah is.

- With this background in mind, I invite you to open up a copy of the scriptures and meet me in Mark 12:35-37.

Mark 12:35 And Jesus began to say, as He taught in the temple, “How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?

Mark 12:36 David himself said in the Holy Spirit,

‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at My right hand,
Until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.”’

Mark 12:37 David himself calls Him ‘Lord’; so in what sense is He his son?” And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him.

- Jesus now begins to teach the crowd and gathered scribes of the Pharisees on matters of understanding who The Christ (Messiah) is and furthermore who’s lineage He would come from.
 - It’s important to note here that Christ is not Jesus’ last name, but rather it is a title meaning “Messiah” or “the Anointed One”.
 - And what we must notice within Mark’s gospel is that Mark doesn’t provide the dialogue between Jesus and the crowd because this is Jesus’ teaching addressing an important matter.
 - Jesus poses a question to the gathered crowd by asking: “How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the “son” of David?”
 - The word “son” here can be translated to mean male “descendant” of a particular person and in this case that person is King David.
 - We see this promise of God made to David through the prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel 7:12-13. Check out the text.

2 Sam. 7:12 When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.

2 Sam. 7:13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

- ◦ We also see the prophet Jeremiah mention Messiah as a descendant of David in Jeremiah 23:5. Check out the text:

Jeremiah 23:5 “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord,
“When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch;
And He will reign as king and act wisely
And do justice and righteousness in the land.

- Within Rabbinic Theology, it was always taught that Messiah would be a descendant of David.
 - So far, Jesus and the scribes agree on this matter.

- However, one particular Messianic concept that was missing from the scribes' teaching about Messiah was understanding Messiah as the "God-man".
 - To understand this missing concept, we need to go to the Old Testament to see what the people of Israel were anticipating regarding Messiah's arrival.
- Traditional Judaism has always talked about the Messiah as a man, anointed by God, from the line of David with unusual power from God which would show off qualities of a prophet, priest, and king in Israel.
 - And the claims that were being made about Jesus from the people is that they viewed Him as Messiah.
 - But even more, the mere fact that He was doing things that only God could do, baffled them.
- This is the angle by which the scribe attempted to undermine Jesus' understanding of the text within Judaism; There was no concept of the Trinity.
 - The emphasis that both Jesus and the scribe made was that there is only One God.
 - However, with the understanding that the scribe had of Messiah versus what Jesus was demonstrating in His work, clearly spoke to Him being more than a mere human.
 - So, with the claims of Jesus as being Messiah and the religious leaders only recognizing Jesus as a "good teacher" at best, the religious leaders were seeking to find a way to accuse Jesus of blasphemy.
- One New Testament critic, Rabbi Daniel Asor said this regarding Jesus' claim of not only being Messiah but also being God:

"The Bible rejects pagan idolatry that revolves around human-like gods, men as gods."

- Furthermore, the Rabbinical teachings of the day were not able to synthesize or compute God condescending (coming down) as a man.
 - However, this reality of God's ability to condescend was not a foreign thing.
- Let's do a quick survey through the scriptures to see how God was able to dwell with His creation. We will begin in Genesis 3.
 - In Genesis 3:8-10, we see that the LORD GOD (Yahweh) is shown to be "walking" in the garden after man had eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- The mere fact that Adam and Eve went to hide from His presence meant that there was some form or figure by which the Lord God put on in order to walk among His creation.
 - Secondly, the text lets us know that Adam and Eve heard the "sound of Him walking through the garden".
 - This sound is not mystical, metaphorical, or ethereal but literal.
- We see another instance of God's condescension to man in Gen.18:1-3, 22. Check out the text.

Gen.18:1 Now the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day.

Gen.18:2 When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth,

Gen.18:3 and said, “My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by.

- ○ Check out verse 22.

Gen.18:22 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the Lord.

- In Genesis 18, we see that Abraham comes face to face with three men and upon their arrival, he bows before them and said, “My Lord”.
 - If you fast forward to verse 22, we see that the men depart from Abraham and go to Sodom, yet verse 22b states Abraham was still standing before the “LORD” (Yahweh).
 - I’ll give us one more example that speaks to God condescending to be with His creation and that is in Exodus 3:2-5 regarding the burning bush.
 - The text mentions that “the angel of the LORD” appeared to Moses in flames of fire within a bush.
 - Now what is interesting to note is that the bush was not burned or consumed, but rather it contained the very presence of God.
 - The fact that God could occupy a bush by fire, but yet not consume the bush as a means of sustaining the fire, lets us understand a few things:
 - 1. God can indeed condescend and take the form of His creation however He so chooses, to accomplish His plans and purposes.
 - 2. Therefore, if God can take on human form and communicate with man as He did before, and there are many other instances in the Hebrew Scriptures, then how much more could God take on human flesh as the God-man.
 - So, with this in mind, Jesus speaking with this group of Pharisees aids in explaining this reality of tri-unity within the Godhead by explaining what David said, in the Holy Spirit.
 - Check out what verse 36 says.

Mark 12:36 David himself said in the Holy Spirit,
 ‘The Lord said to my Lord,
 “Sit at My right hand,
 Until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.”’

- Jesus tells the crowd what David said and saw by citing a powerful Messianic psalm – Psalm 110:1, which is written in Hebrew.

- This is what the text says:

Psalm 110:1 The Lord says to my Lord:

“Sit at My right hand

Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

- Many people knew this psalm was written by David and the subject of this psalm centered on Messiah as a coming descendant of David.
 - However, if you notice, David calls his future descendant (son) Lord, and in Jewish thinking this was quite confusing to understand.
 - If we were to read this in Hebrew, it literally reads, “The LORD (Yahweh) says to my Lord (Adonai) which means Messiah.
 - David records that the Father instructs Messiah to do something.
 - He is to “sit at my right hand”.
 - Remember, the phrase “sit at my right hand” deals with Power and Authority.
 - In this case, David hears that Yahweh instructs his descendant to sit at the greatest position of authority and honor above all else and that is at the right hand of God.
 - Well, wait a minute: How in the world could David’s descendant (son) be in a greater position of Power than David, himself.
 - For in Jewish society, the father was always greater than the son or other male descendants.
 - So, to say that a descendant of David would be superior to David himself was a huge stretch, in human understanding.
 - This was the matter that Jesus was addressing for those in the crowd.
 - In human comprehension, this statement from David made no sense and therefore was the reason why the crowd in Matthew’s gospel was not able to answer the question.
 - Without the illumination of the Spirit, one would only understand that Jesus, being the Son of David, could not be superior to David, Himself.
 - However, this is where Jesus’ teaching and revelation of Himself begins to be fully flushed out.
 - Jesus was not merely of human descent from the line of David as was assumed by the religious leaders, but much more, He was God incarnate.
 - The text makes it plain that within the Person of Jesus Christ dwelled the fullness of Deity and humanity in One.
 - And it was this revelation that was given to David that was recorded in Psalm 110.
 - One question that comes to mind is, “How is it that David knew this reality of the God-man, but the religious leaders and scribes missed this very point of God dwelling among us as a human being?”
 - Well, we see that evidence at the start of verse 36.

- David said and recorded these words, in the Holy Spirit.
- It is the Spirit of God that reveals truth and without the illumination of the Spirit for us to understand the scriptures, we too would miss this reality of the incarnation of Christ.
 - Not only did the Holy Spirit reveal this truth of Messiah as the God-man, but Jesus Himself points out the fulness of the Godhead to the crowd (The Trinity).
- In one verse, Jesus points out the plurality of the Single Godhead.
 - We see the Spirit reveals Truth,
 - The Father (Yahweh) that speaks and accomplishes what He puts forth,
 - and then we see the Son (Adonai Messiah) who obediently accomplishes the will of the Father to the Glory of God.
- The Deity of the Son and having always co-existed and being co-eternal with the Father is not a New Testament phenomenon.
 - The Old Testament expressed these matters implicitly whereas the New Testament speaks to these matters a bit more, explicitly.
- This is why scripture completely debunks those in the Jehovah's Witness and Mormon religions.
 - Jesus was never a created being, He has always been and always will be.
 - Check out the following Nicene Creed (Western Church):

“I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; Begotten of His Father before all worlds [God of God], Light of Light, Very God of Very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance [essence] with the Father; by whom all things were made . . . And [I believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father [and the Son]; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;

- ○ Paul makes this reality of the Son's eternality explicitly clear in Colossians 1:15-20:

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Colossians 1:19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

Colossians 1:20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having

made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

- ◦ Friends, the question we must think through is: Where did Paul's theology come from?
 - Paul searched the Hebrew scriptures, and the Spirit provided the illumination for him to see just how Jesus was the very image of the invisible God.
- So, it's because of these learned men's lack of understanding of the scriptures and their unbelief, that they failed to see Jesus as Messiah, the God-man standing before them.
 - Finally, in verse 37 of Jesus' exegesis of Psalm 110, He brings the reality of the hypostatic union (being fully God and fully man) into full display.
 - Check out verse 37.

Mark 12:37 David himself calls Him 'Lord'; so in what sense is He his son?" And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him.

- So it's here that Jesus presses the question of the scribe's understanding of what David was shown in the Spirit regarding his descendant.
 - Yet, we find that the very experts of the Law who are to lead the people to God are failing to do so because of their unbelief.
 - For to understand the word of God means that there must be a willingness and submission to the word itself.
 - Yet here it is that the scribes, after having seen how Jesus handled the questioning in the temple and succeeded in answering every religious group before Him, that they have yet to respond to the truth of who Jesus is.
 - So, Jesus concludes with this final jaw-dropping question that would puzzle the masses.
 - The question was so profound that it caused great intrigue.
 - The question was: "If David calls his son Lord, in what sense is He his son?"
 - Herein lies the conundrum that all humanity faces in recognizing Jesus as being God.
 - The world wants to deem Him as a good teacher or a great speaker of truth, but yet they cringe at the thought of Jesus being God.
 - The reality is, Jesus is not a created being, nor is He lower than the angels. Jesus is God, the Second person of the Trinity.
 - Jesus makes it clear in verse 37 that because God is God, Messiah could be both a descendant of David and David's LORD.
 - The reality is when confronted with Truth, you will either respond and submit to it or you will continue to reject it.
 - Truth does not change. It is made known through divine illumination and once that happens you are faced with the reality to either respond to it or not.

- Furthermore, Mark mentions in verse 37b that, like the many times before, the response of the crowd, due to Jesus' teaching, is well received, yet there is still no full comprehension as to who Jesus truly is.
 - It will be in the next few days that will lead the people to either see the truth that Jesus is proclaiming regarding His purpose and mission, or it will cause them to reject Him altogether.
- Next week, we will witness that as Jesus goes back to teaching in the temple, that it will speak greatly to the reality that despite the unbelief of the people, there will be a coming day in the future that they cannot reject – judgement.
 - And what a day that will be where the unbeliever will have to stand before a Holy God, Truth itself, and be held accountable for all they have ever done.
 - But most importantly having rejected the very opportunity to receive salvation, by way of God's provision.
- Friends, we saw tonight that truth has been made plainly known throughout the teaching of the scriptures.
 - Truth is only from God and God revealed His truth to man through the scriptures, but most evidently through His Son, the second Person of the Trinity.
 - Truth wrapped itself in flesh so that we could experience it firsthand and to know the very means of escape from the wrath to come.
 - Truth is made available to you today.
- The question on the table is will you believe it or not?
 - For it is through and by the Person of Jesus Christ that salvation is attained.
 - And all you have to do is believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ and you can be saved.
- Let's Pray.

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- www.foi.org/2020/05/01/what-is-the-jewish-view-of-the-messiah



Mark - Lesson 12F

Chapter 12:38-44

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- We are coming to the close of Chapter 12 and the conclusion of Jesus' public ministry.
 - Over the past few hours of Jesus' intense questioning and testing, He has been inspected to the fullest by the religious leaders of Israel.
 - Their testing of the lamb on Tuesday in the temple was solely aimed at discrediting Jesus, His Person, and His ministry.
 - Except Jesus has, yet again, emerged victorious despite the intense questioning.
 - Now, almost 48 hours or so away from His coming death, Jesus will conclude His public ministry by announcing great judgement upon Israel's leaders.
 - He has officially proven to these men that He is Israel's spotless lamb, the sacrifice to be given on their behalf and for those who place faith in Him.
 - However, Israel's very leaders have failed to recognize Him as their Messiah.
 - Tonight we will see Jesus, once again call out the religious hypocrisy and failure of Israel's leadership and Torah teachers.
 - And at the same time, contrast their ways and wicked hearts with that of a poor widow who will give all she has to be sustained by God.
 - To outline our flow of teaching tonight, we will see the following:
 - 1. Religiosity Exposed – Internal corruption (v.38-40)
 - 2. A Widow's Heart Revealed – (v.41-44)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would simply be: "The Measure of the Heart".
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your copy of the scriptures and meet me in Mark 12:38-44.

Mark 12:38 In His teaching He was saying: "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places,

Mark 12:39 and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets,

Mark 12:40 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation."

Mark 12:41 And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums.

Mark 12:42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.

Mark 12:43 Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;

Mark 12:44 for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on."

Mark 12:38 In His teaching He was saying: "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places,

Mark 12:39 and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets,

Mark 12:40 who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation."

- Jesus begins His final teaching to the public collectively by issuing a warning of sorts.
 - This warning, recorded in Mark's gospel is an address directly related to Jesus' disciples, specifically, and to the crowd, generally.
 - I mention this varying detail because Matthew and Luke's gospel mention specifically that the target audience was the disciples.
 - However, with such a large following and gathering, the crowds of people would become bystanders of this teaching, collectively.
 - This warning that Jesus issued to His disciples was provided in the imperative form meaning that this is something the disciples should be cautious of.
 - The word for "beware" in Greek is *blepo* which means to be vigilant or to be on the lookout, to watch carefully.
 - In other words, Jesus is warning His disciples of the types of men in whom the disciples should be cautious and watchful for.
 - It's clear that Jesus is making known that the scribes, specifically, but Israel's religious leaders, collectively, are a problem.
 - It's after issuing this imperative, that Jesus begins to list out for the disciples the reason for their need of caution against these men.
 - Notice, that Jesus lists five behaviors/descriptors of these men so that the disciples would be aware of and vigilant against these types of men.
 - For this type of behavior would continue even throughout the ministry of the disciples within the Church Age. (False teachers, religious leaders, etc)
 - 1. Men who like to walk around in long robes.
 - 2. Men who like respectful greetings in marketplaces
 - 3. Men who like chief seats in the synagogue and places of honor at banquets.
 - 4. Men who devour widows' houses
 - 5. Men who for appearance's sake offer long prayer
 - In listing these behaviors, they all boil down to one thing; matters of pride.
 - The reality is that the religious teachers and leaders of Israel desired more public praise than true private prostration before Holy God.
 - There was more of a focus on prominence, position, power, and prestige than submission, obedience, and humility to God.
 - Let's quickly look at each of these external behaviors and see how the leaders' attempts of external acknowledgment gives light to their internal darkness.
- Jesus begins by saying that these scribes seek to walk around in long robes for the sake of being seen and respected in the marketplaces.
 - Jewish teachers in that day wore "special identifying garments".
 - In many cases these robes were long, white robes which were like that of priests and temple officials.

- These types of garments were of high-quality and reflected positions of high status and priestly function.
- The term long “flowing robes” spoke to the *tallith*, which refers to the Jewish prayer shawl worn during formal prayer.
- So, to wear these types of garments out in public to simply “walk around in” was a means to seek out public attention.
- And along with these exaggerated items of garment wear came the desire for respectful greetings in the marketplace.
 - For it wasn’t enough for these men just to be seen in public but they needed to be publicly acknowledged for “who they were”.
 - So, with public viewing came the titles that tickled their ears, titles with “high honor” such as Rabbi (teacher), master, or father.
- What is quite telling is this type of behavior is like that of some Christian leaders today: There are some that demand to be called Pastor, or Bishop, and the list goes on and on.
 - If you see these individuals out in public, they require a certain entourage or security detail as if they were some type of government official, instead of a servant of God.
- Next, we see that these men enjoyed being seated in chief seats in the synagogue and places of honor at banquets.
 - The word in Greek for chief seat is *protokathedria*.
 - This word is a combination of *protos* which means “first” and *kathedra* where we get the word seat, or chair.
 - Which is why when put together it speaks to a seat of honor, meaning highest or uppermost seat of prominence.
 - This practice in most churches exists today where the place where the pastor or guest preacher sits has roped-off seating areas separated from the people.
 - In some instances, the pastors sit on elaborate furniture on the stage behind the pulpit so that everyone can see them.
 - This type of treatment becomes a means of separating “the haves” from “the have nots”.
 - And when this type of culture is perpetuated in the church and amongst believers, the sight of being “servants of all” becomes lost.
 - This is why James says these words in James 2:1-4.

James 2:1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.

James 2:2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes,

James 2:3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,”

James 2:4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with

evil motives?

- Lastly, Jesus mentions that these men devour widows' houses and for appearance's sake, offer up long prayers.
 - Widows during that day had very little means of support and were socially powerless in a society centered upon honor and status.
 - Being that the husband was the sole provider of the household, and the property and assets were in his name, when he died, unless a male heir was provided, the property and honor was lost.
 - Therefore, by God's grace provisions were made under Jewish Law for the widow and her protection.
 - However, because of the wicked hearts of the scribes and leadership of Israel, these religious leaders found means to exploit the widow for wages.
 - The term "devour" regarding the scribes' treatment toward the widow is quite oppressive and destructive.
 - The word "devour" in Greek is *katesthio* which means "to consume or devour in a greedy fashion".
 - This use of figure of speech and using the term "devour" which would commonly be used for vicious beasts was a perfect illustration of the hearts of the scribes.
 - In the first century, the Law Teachers were not paid for their services, rather they depended on the hospitality extended to them by devout Jews.
 - But in many cases, these extended measures of hospitality turned into ravenous wolves seeking to extort monies from the helpless in society.
 - Here are just a few ways in which the scribes could have potentially caused societal, economic, and personal damage to the widow:
 - 1. It could be through exhaustive legal fees
 - 2. Mismanaging the financials of an estate in which they were trustees
 - 3. Through making the widows make their homes as pledges for unpayable debts
 - 4. Or through exploiting their hospitality and trust.
 - To make matters worse, when it came time for prayer in public places, they would offer up long prayers as a means to impress people.
 - The longer the prayer the more trusted the teacher was being that they were the "religious men of influence".
 - In every instance, it becomes clear that these men were manipulative and wicked and sought to use their positions and piety as a means of posterity.
 - This was religious prostitution at its best.
 - What is even sadder is that these types of acts still occur today.
 - People are told that if they do not give more to the church or to a particular ministry that they won't "receive the blessings of God."
 - In other instances, people are told if they buy a particular TV pastor's "oil" or prayer shawl that they can have their prayers answered.

- The means of masquerading religion for the sake of financial gain and popularity is not only horrendous, but it's downright wrong.
 - And herein lies Jesus' point at the end of verse 40 – these types of men (including women today) will experience greater judgement.
- Why? Because of their knowledge and understanding of the scriptures, they will be held to a higher accountability of it because they teach it.
 - I find it quite interesting that James, Jesus' half-brother understood this scriptural reality and included it in his epistle.
 - Check out what James 3:1 says:

James 3:1 Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

- ◦ ■ It's the famous line from Spider-man where Uncle Ben tells Peter Parker, "With great power comes great responsibility".
- In the same way, the more that we grow and know in the word of God the more we are held accountable to.
 - And the staunch reality is, there will be a day that every pastor, bible teacher, and layman, will have to stand before Holy God accountable for what they taught and how they lived.
- The scribes and Torah Teachers of that day lacked in their ability to truly love God and love His people in being good shepherds.
 - And that pattern of poor leadership that existed in Israel long ago continued to persist with the religious leaders of Jesus' day.
 - I believe Ezekiel, by the leading of the Spirit of God, recorded it best in these words.

Ezekiel 34:1 Then the word of the Lord came to me saying,

Ezekiel 34:2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?"

Ezekiel 34:3 You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock.

Ezekiel 34:4 Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them.

Ezekiel 34:5 They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered.

Ezekiel 34:6 My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill; My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth, and there was no one to search or seek for them."'"

- ◦ Well, it is after Jesus' public teaching and warning against the behavior and dispositions of the scribes, that His public ministry concluded and His remaining time was devoted to His disciples.

- Check out with me the last 4 verses of Chapter 12.

Mark 12:41 And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums.

Mark 12:42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.

Mark 12:43 Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;

Mark 12:44 for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on. “

- The scene now switches from Jesus’ public discourse to the crowd and the scribes, to the disciples in a different area of the temple.
 - Jesus and the disciples moved from the court of the Gentiles where He conducted His public teaching, to the court of women.
 - The court of women was the area within the temple where the activities of the treasury were conducted, and people were able to donate money.
 - With the court of women being one of the inner courts this area was the furthest that a woman was allowed to travel within the temple.
 - Within the treasury, against the wall of the court, were 13 trumpet shaped collection receptacles to receive the free-will offerings and contributions.
 - Each receptacle was dedicated to a special offering.
 - The shape of these receptacles was that of a Shofar or ram’s horn.
 - And out of all the receptacles, the last 5 were designated for what was “left over”.
 - This could consist of trespass offerings, offerings of birds, and a voluntary free-will offering.
 - Mark mentions that Jesus and His disciples positioned themselves opposite of the treasury to observe how the people were giving.
 - At this point, the question becomes: “What would be the purpose of Jesus observing this moment of people giving in the treasury?”
 - If you notice, Mark’s description begins to outline for us the matters that are at play here.
 - Jesus is observing the difference in giving from that of the wealthy and the rich, versus the widow whom Mark is beginning to introduce in verse 42.
 - Mark states that those who were rich and wealthy were putting in large sums of money.
 - In other words, they were giving out of their abundance. There was no true means of sacrifice that was provided here.
 - We then see that the text begins to pivot to the opposite spectrum of wealth, prominence, and economic status – to the “poor widow”.
 - So, where the rich individuals were putting in large sums of money because of their abundance, the text tells us that the widow put in “two small copper coins”.
 - The Greek word for “small copper coins” is, *lepta*.

- Lepta was the smallest bronze Jewish coin in circulation in Israel.
- To understand the numerical difference in value between the rich and the widow, two lepta were worth 1/64 of a Roman denarius, which is a day's wage of labor.
 - In today's currency 2 Lepta equates to 14 cents in USD currency, and 12 cents in European currency.
 - I believe Mark's usage of this term and later explanation of the currency was for his Roman audience to understand the amount given.
 - This woman literally gave her day back to the Lord for it belonged to Him!
 - And it would be through seeing this varied value of offering that becomes the object lesson of Jesus' teaching.
- Now, one question that could be asked is: "How did Jesus know the actual amount of money that the widow deposited into the treasury?"
 - Regarding matters of treasury contribution, the priest would first examine the currency for authentication purposes (acceptability).
 - Secondly, they would inquire of the purpose of the gift itself,
 - And finally, would verify the contribution corresponding with the prescribed sacrifice (which receptacle).
- It was after this verification process that the priest directed the individual, out loud, to deposit their contribution to the appropriate receptacle.
 - In the case of the widow, if the gift were a free-will offering, then it is possible that the sound of the two coins and their weight being deposited could be heard from a distance.
- Herein lies our contrasting picture of the extravagant giving of the rich, the ostentatious ostracization of the scribes' and the small, yet abundant giving of the poor widow.
- It's in verse 43 that Jesus calls His disciples to Himself and tells them that the offering of the woman was "more than all the contributors to the treasury".
 - Now, at face value this was not the case.
 - The text is clear that the value amount that the widow gave in comparison to that of the rich contributors was not significant at best.
 - However, Jesus tells the disciples that despite the significant amount of silver and gold contributed to the receptacle in bulk, it paled in comparison to what the widow provided.
 - What is Jesus speaking about here?!
 - Friends, it's clear that Jesus is speaking to spiritual matters and not physical matters.
 - Jesus further expounds on this spiritual reality by stating that the giving of the rich came out of their surplus, whereas the widow, out of her poverty, gave everything she owned.
 - Understand that both groups provided what surplus they had to offer to the Lord.
 - We must also recognize that Jesus commends the woman for her contribution yet doesn't condemn the rich for their elaborate giving.

- Jesus' point becomes simple and that is: the woman's generosity was not measured by the amount that she gave, but by the sacrifice she made.
 - The reality was these 2 cents were all this woman had for the day.
 - This unnamed widow gave no thought, question, or hesitation to what she gave for all she had she entrusted fully unto God.
- Clearly, this woman knew that God was the provider and sustainer for all her physical needs as she fully relied upon Him despite what she had financially.
 - Wasn't this the point that Jesus was making to His disciples all along: Following Him required a whole life commitment.
 - For the disciples to follow Jesus, it required them to leave what they had in pursuit of Christ. (Mark 1:17, "Come follow Me")
 - For the disciples to accomplish all that Jesus was calling them to do would require they entrust themselves fully to the Father, especially in Jesus' coming death and ascension.
- This illustration of the widow and her wholehearted commitment to God spoke to the reality that God was all she had and all she needed.
 - Friends, this cost of following Jesus is not for the weak. It will require great sacrifice. (Discipleship)
 - Your sacrificing may not show up financially, but it may show itself in other ways.
 - Through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, every area of your life will be tested as you pursue God deeply.
- Ultimately, this illustration of the widow showed an even greater picture of what Christ came to do.
 - For just as the woman gave all she had to live on to God, so would Jesus give all of Himself to die for the sins of world.
 - Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity would put Himself in a position of great poverty by becoming fully human yet remaining fully Divine.
 - He would live a perfectly holy and righteous life by completely obeying and submitting to the will of the Father.
 - And in being obedient, submitted His life unto death so that in His dying, we would live, if we believe in Him.
 - I love how Paul says in Philippians 2:7, that Christ laid aside His privileges. Check out the text.

Philippians 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

- ◦ That just as the widow gave all she had, Jesus in the next few days would give of Himself, knowing that the plan and provision of the Father would be

accomplished.

- We must not measure our cost of sacrifice on perceived value, for if we do, we will miss it every time.
- But rather, we must recognize the divine value and know that His cost (Jesus' death) is much more than what we could ever truly offer.
- Friends, this has been Jesus' point from the start of His ministry: The perceived righteousness of man will fail us every time.
 - That it is not what we do or what we bring to the table (in works) that deem us valuable, but rather it is our hearts, being surrendered and submitted unto God.
 - Wholly committed without reservation.
- God will not do anything with white-washed tombs (external righteousness) , but He can do mightily with a broken and contrite heart.
 - There is nothing you or I can do (deeds-wise) to receive such a glorious gift.
 - We must simply surrender to His truth and respond in submission to the Lord by believing in His Son, His Only begotten.
- Truth has a name, and His name is Jesus.
 - Place your trust in Him today.
- Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 13A

Chapter 13:1-13

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- Tonight, we pick up at an exciting and monumental point in the Gospel record and that is dealing with the Olivet Discourse and the discussion of end time matters.
 - We are in the final week of Jesus' earthly life and just a few days away from Passover and the death of Christ on the cross.
 - The day is still Tuesday, and the afternoon is approaching.
 - Jesus has spent countless hours in the temple teaching and being questioned by the religious leaders.
 - Jesus has been inspected, vetted, and has proven to be the lamb who will be slain for Israel's sins and for the sake of the many who will come to place faith in Him.
 - It's at the end of Jesus' inspection period that He pronounced a heavy condemnation on these men for their hypocrisy and poor leadership.
 - These men used their religious positions as a means of dishonest gain by taking advantage of the most vulnerable in society.
 - Matthew's gospel provides even more detail pointing to these leaders being excluded from the Kingdom and facing their fiery demise in hell.
 - If you recall earlier in our Mark study, it is the leadership of Israel that has caused the offer of the Kingdom to be rescinded.
 - Rather than leadership attributing Jesus' works to God, through the Holy Spirit, they said it was from the power of Satan.
 - Therefore, because that generation blasphemed the Holy Spirit it led to that generation not seeing the Kingdom come right then and there.
 - The consequences of Israel's leadership would now move Jesus' focus to further preparing the disciples for the Church Program (Kingdom Program).
 - And from there the momentum and thrust of Jesus' sentence to the cross begins to increase even more.
 - As Jesus and the disciples move from the court of Gentiles to the court of women, Jesus positions them across the temple treasury.
 - And it is there that Jesus provides a beautiful contrasting picture for the twelve.
 - He explains that the giving of the rich and the poor demonstrated a particular measure of the heart.
 - That where the rich gave in their surplus, the widow gave her all.
 - This ultimately painted a picture of great sacrifice in that although the rich gave what they had, which was honorable, the widow gave all she had.
 - She demonstrated great faith in the Lord, knowing that God is her sustainer and provider and that because she is His, her needs would be met, regardless of her circumstances.
 - This very truth would need to be etched into the disciples' minds because in the coming weeks their teacher, Rabbi, and Messiah would no longer be with them.
 - They would need to hold near and dear to every word that proceeded from His mouth.
 - For once He was no longer with them, the pressure cooker would be turned up.

- They would need to trust and know what was given to them was worth the pain and suffering they would come to endure.
- So, with that moment having closed, Jesus and His disciples now make their way back to Bethany.
 - And as they leave the temple, they are going to witness both a beautiful sight and breath-taking news.
- If I were to outline our time in the text tonight, we will see the following things:
 - Destruction of the Temple Foretold: Landmark as reference - (v.1-2)
 - The Disciples' Questions - (v.3-4)
 - Jesus provides a Response - (v.5-7)
 - The Signs of the End of the Age - (v.8)
 - Warning for the Apostles - (v.9-13)
- If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would simply be: "Things to Come": The Olivet Discourse (Part 1).
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures and meet me in Mark 13:1-13.

Mark 13:1 As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples *said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!"

Mark 13:2 And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."

Mark 13:3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately,

Mark 13:4 "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"

Mark 13:5 And Jesus began to say to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.

Mark 13:6 Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many.

Mark 13:7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end.

Mark 13:8 For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

Mark 13:9 "But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.

Mark 13:10 The gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

Mark 13:11 When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.

Mark 13:12 Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.

Mark 13:13 You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

- As the afternoon is approaching, Jesus and His disciples are making their way out of the temple.
 - They're moving from the court of women to the court of Gentiles, towards the east gate to their stay.
 - And one could imagine this day has been extremely exhausting for Jesus.
 - He has dealt with 4 instances of questioning and inspecting from the religious leaders.
 - And to no avail, the religious leaders remain in their hardened hearts and do not come to the realization of who Jesus is – their promised Messiah.
 - As they proceed through the east gate of the temple area, they will take a path across the Kidron valley to the Mount of Olives.
 - And as they reach the Mount of Olives, it seems to be that one of the disciples (the scriptures do not mention who), is admiring the beauty of the construction of the temple.
 - Herod's temple was noted as one of the most architectural wonders of the ancient world.
 - It was built by the Herodian dynasty to win the favor of the Jewish people as well as being written down in history.
 - With this type of building, it was the longest building project Herod ever undertook and in fact was not accomplished in his lifetime.
 - The temple was not fully complete until around AD 64.
 - Josephus documents in his writing "Wars of the Jews 5.222" that the temple was built of large white stones and accented with gold.
 - So, it becomes clear why the disciples were so amazed by this building – it was the centerpiece, if you will, of Jewish society.
 - The temple became "the sacred item in Grandma's house" that was locked away in the glass cabinet for eyes only.
 - So, without saying, the culture of the day, including the disciples, see the temple as Israel's very glory.
 - And while the disciples speak well of the beauty of the temple, Jesus responds rather abruptly to their admiration.
 - Rather than engaging in conversation of the beauty of the temple, Jesus speaks to the coming destruction of this temple in verse 2.
 - It's like being told of a well-known building of the times, one in which you deeply admire (National admiration), will be torn down to rubble.
 - It would leave one with many questions!
 - And in like manner, knowing that Jesus was who He claimed to be, they believed Him which sparked the percolation of questions.
 - Especially, regarding such a monumental building.
 - However, rather than asking the questions immediately, they ponder and wait to ask the question that is eating them up inside.
 - The question becomes: Why? Why would they wait to ask the question?

- Well, when we consider Jewish society in the 1st century and their high regard for the temple, that destruction would trigger “end-times” vibes.
 - In other words, in the mind of the Jew that sign was an ending of the “present age” and the beginning of the “New Age”.
 - For how could a building so robust that was still in the process of being built come down so mightily?
- Remember, Jewish eschatology was built from the Hebrew scriptures (there was no New Testament) and that meant the Hebrew writers had written about these end-times events regarding a “new age to come” (Messianic Age)
 - So, with such a great sign of judgement and destruction meant that the Kingdom and its King was around the corner.
 - And the scripture that was raised in their minds regarding this geo-physical calamity was Zechariah 14:1-4. Here is what it says:

Zechariah 14:1 Behold, a day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you.

Zechariah 14:2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city.

Zechariah 14:3 Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.

Zechariah 14:4 In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

- This type of geo-physical change would be like that of an earthquake with cataclysmic ramifications that would cause the temple to be destroyed.
 - We must remember, up to this point, the disciples did not understand what Jesus’ death was all about until He was resurrected.
 - Therefore, they understood what Jesus said regarding the destruction of the temple as the sign of the end of the present age and the ushering in of the Kingdom (The Messianic Age).
 - So, the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in AD 70 was not in their purview.
 - Their lack of understanding what Jesus was showing them and teaching them would be clarified, once the Holy Spirit came.
 - So, their pause in questioning is addressing their confusion which will ultimately prompt Jesus’ explanation.
 - So it happened that after reaching the height of the Mount of Olives and looking back towards the temple, Mark tells us that Peter, James, John, and Andrew questioned Jesus in private regarding His statement of the temple.
 - This is a huge detail because neither Matthew or Luke provide us with which disciple or disciple(s) asked the questions.
 - The questions these men asked Jesus will serve as a flow of thought for the whole

of Chapter 13.

- Here are the questions that are asked according to Mark's Gospel.
 - 1. When will "these things" be? (Regarding the destruction of the Temple)
 - 2. What will be "the sign" when all "these things" are going to be fulfilled? (Regarding the second coming and the end of the age)
- So, what we find here is that Mark's gospel provides us with an abbreviated version of the questions along with Luke.
 - Whereas Matthew's Gospel provides us with three questions which can really be boiled down to two questions in the Greek.
 - This varied detail lets us know, once again, that authorship and audience is key to understanding why some questions are asked and others are not.
 - And remember that Mark's gospel is short and sweet. He wants to provide the big picture.
- So, where Matthew's questions deal with:
 - 1. When will these things happen? (Regarding the Temple)
 - 2. Sign of the 2nd Coming (The King)
 - 3. Signs of the end of the age (The Kingdom)
 - Luke's gospel will give "the sign" that will take place regarding the destruction of the temple and the end of the age.
- So, as we enter this end-times discussion, we need to understand terms and one of those terms that shows up in the Olivet Discourse is the word "age".
 - The Jews had been taught about God's plan for them and the world and how the plan dealt with a "present age" and an "age to come".
 - The term "age to come" has always been synonymous with the Messianic Age or the Messianic Kingdom.
 - Whereas the "Present age" is dealing with what the book of Daniel tells us is regarding being under Gentile rule, and that started in 605 BC to date.
 - This "age to come" is what every believer in Christ awaits for regarding Christ's physical return to earth regarding the Millennium Kingdom under the control of the Jewish Messiah. (Jewish Rule)
 - So, with this in mind, we will see how Jesus' response to their questions will provide them clarity regarding their misunderstanding.
 - Most importantly, how the destruction of the temple will serve as a picture of the eschaton.
 - However, Jesus is not going to answer their questions in the order in which they ask, rather He will answer in the order that He chooses.
 - Why? Because it is God that is unfolding the very history of the world before their eyes.
 - Clearly, He can do what He so chooses.
 - So, Jesus begins by answering their questions in verse 5, by answering a question not posed and that question was: "What are NOT the signs of the end?"

- And this question would be important so that the disciples would not jump to conclusions, looking at every sign as if that is the indication that the end is near.
- Now keep in mind the context of the conversation and the disciples' questions:
 - They are not only asking about the destruction of the temple itself and the signs for when this will happen, but also, they are asking about the coming of the end of this present age and the age to come. (Matters regarding "The Messianic Age").
- Secondly, the context of the conversation is dealing specifically with the Jewish people (Israel).
 - Nowhere in this discourse do we see the church mentioned: Why?
 - Because the church was not in effect yet and the Holy Spirit had not come to indwell the Jewish believers. (There has been no death and resurrection)
 - We will see matters regarding the Church/Church Age later in the upper room discourse.
 - So, as we move through these end-time questions remember that Israel is in mind.
- Let's re-examine the three questions that are now at play according to Mark's gospel and see how Jesus will answer them accordingly: it's quite brilliant:
 - 1. What are NOT the signs that the end of the age is near? Present
 - 2. What will be "the sign" when all "these things" are going to be fulfilled? (Part 1 - End of the Present Age - beginning) – Future
 - 3. When will "these things" be? (Regarding the destruction of the Temple) – Present [Luke's gospel ONLY provides answer]
 - 4. What will be "the sign" when all "these things" are going to be fulfilled? (Part 2 - End of the Present Age - middle) - Future
 - 5. What will be "the sign" when all "these things" are going to be fulfilled? (Part 3 - 2nd Coming of Christ - end) - Future
 - Now, what you see is that questions 2, 4, and 5 are the same questions speaking to future events surrounding this immediate event and the implications of it regarding a future time of Great Judgement. (Slide 14)
 - Let's begin with question 1 which we will see in verses 6-7.

Mark 13:5 And Jesus began to say to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.

Mark 13:6 Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many.

Mark 13:7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end.

- In verse 5 and 6, Jesus begins with answering the question they need to know first: What is NOT a sign?
 - And He begins with a warning to the disciples telling them they should not be misled regarding false messiahs claiming He has returned.
 - The phrase "See to it" in Greek is the word *blepo*.

- It means to “take heed” or “be on guard”, not easily fooled.
- What an encouraging warning this should have been for the Apostles.
- Understand, these men would eventually be the very foundation of the church alongside the Chief Cornerstone, Jesus Christ, Himself.
 - So, if anyone were to know Jesus, His Character, nature, and teachings, it would be these men.
- This is why our New Testament canon is so important because anyone who claims to be Christ can easily be debunked!
 - Why? Because the Apostles, through the Holy Spirit, have made known all we need to know about Jesus and His coming back.
 - Here we also see the significance of studying biblical prophecy – it allows us to be informed and not fooled.
- At the same time, this is a warning for the Apostles to guard the truth.
 - With their present failure on grasping all that Jesus is teaching, they will need to be reminded of what they know.
 - Therefore, the coming of the Holy Spirit will be paramount to their coming ministry in the Church Age.
- This warning was also necessary because the increase of false messiahs, after Jesus’ ascension, grew in number.
 - The reality was, in Jewish History, Jesus was the first one that had unmasked such a large following that claimed Him as Messiah.
 - So, it would not be a surprise that there would be others that the enemy would use to attempt to claim being messiah to mislead many.
- Jesus continues his warning by saying: “When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened, those things must take place.”
 - The reality is that in this present age, war is a constant thing along with rumors and murmurs of war throughout the lands.
 - The cause of these wars is the result of human rebellion and sin.
 - So, when you hear about rumblings in the Middle east or with other major world leaders and their countries, Jesus says: Do not get up in arms!
- Why? Because notice the line that Jesus states in verse 7b: “those things MUST take place”
 - Friends, the reality is, the world stage has to be set up for the judgement that is to come, globally.
 - If these wars and uprisings did not take place, we would not see the world players being divinely setup by God to bring about a final act for His eschatological drama in the end.
- To put it plainly, if God is Sovereign, that means He is in control of History.
 - This is God’s history unfolding before our very eyes, so we ought not to become weary or frantic, but seek to know what He has said about it.
- Finally at the later end of verse 7b, Jesus says, “but this is not yet the end”.
 - This means there has to be intense growth of suffering, war, famine, etc before

the dawning of a new age, The Messianic Age.

- That before new life can come in there must first be great sorrow and this is the drama that Jesus says is being set up.
 - But do not think that “these things” are indicating the end has arrived. It’s just getting started.
 - It is as if there is an extended time period of groaning before the pressure is increased.
- What becomes so beautiful in all of this is how Mark brings this all together beautifully in the Greek.
- At first glance, you would think that verses 7 and 8 are unrelated, however the fact that the word “For” is at the start of verse 8, means that verse 7 are not signs of the end, but verse 8 ARE signs.
 - Let’s look at verse 8:

Mark 13:8 For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

- It’s in verse 8 that Jesus moves into the discussion of what will be the demarcation of the “signs of the end of the age” and it will be characterized by birth pangs.
 - Let’s keep in mind our context here.
 - To a Jew in that day, they recognized two ages: the Present age (Age of the Gentiles) and the Messianic Age, which is the age to come.
 - Then Jesus makes it clear that “wars and rumors of wars” are not an indication of the sign that the end is near, but simply that these things are setting up the global stage.
 - It’s as if Jesus compares verse 7’s events to that of Braxton Hicks Contractions. (Slide 16)
 - Braxton Hicks contractions are known as prodromal or false labor pains that are mostly felt during the second to third trimester.
 - These contractions are the body’s way of preparing for true labor, but do not indicate that labor has begun.
 - So, if “wars and rumor of wars” are early indicators of new life coming, then what Jesus describes in verse 8 regarding birth pangs is the real deal.
 - This means that this particular period that Jesus is speaking about is going to be a more aggressive and severe case of events and doesn’t compare to what was previously experienced.
 - In other words, if you think that World War 1 and World War 2 were bad (and they were bad), you haven’t seen anything yet.
 - So with this comparison in mind, Jesus now gets to the details of the sign itself, beyond its frequency.
 - Verse 8 begins with “Nation rising against nation and Kingdom against Kingdom”
 - Now this sounds a lot like war as verse 7, but as we explained, the sign of

these events (in verse 8) are much more intense.

- So how are these two verses different?
- Well, this is where the phrase “Nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom” comes into play and we find this within the historical context of that day.
 - In the 1st century, to describe a certain type of war that was never seen before on earth, rabbis would use the phrase “Nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom”.
 - The term was a rabbinic idiom for a “World War” involving all nations and kingdoms on earth in a common conflict.
- As a matter of fact, in the Midrash Rabbah, the following statement is mentioned: “When you see the Powers fighting each other, look for the coming of the King Messiah.”
 - However, during this period in history, the wars will be more intense.
- The next sign of the end of the age is earthquakes and famines.
 - Doing a quick google search and study on trusted websites through means of advanced technologies, you can quickly find quantitative data that speaks to these increases over time.
- However, in this particular period that Jesus is talking about it is going to be much more catastrophic and intense.
 - The question becomes: What point in this present age (The Age of the Gentiles) is Jesus speaking about?
 - To answer that question, we need look no further than Daniel 9 regarding Daniel’s 70 weeks.
- Friends, it becomes clear that Jesus is speaking to the Tribulation period.
 - Let’s look at our outline by which Jesus is answering the questions and I want you to see how He moves from present to future, present to future.
 - 1. What are NOT the signs that the end of the age is near? Present
 - 2. What will be “the sign” when all “these things” are going to be fulfilled? (Part 1 - End of the Present Age - beginning) - Future
 - 3. When will “these things” be? (Regarding the destruction of the Temple) - Present
 - 4. What will be “the sign” when all “these things” are going to be fulfilled? (Part 2 - End of the Present Age - middle) Future
 - 5. What will be “the sign” when all “these things” are going to be fulfilled? (Part 2 - 2nd Coming of Christ) Future
- The chart that I want to show you is how the Olivet Discourse (specifically Matthew 24) aligns perfectly with that of the seal judgements in Revelation 6.
- So, if our understanding is correct, what we are going to see Mark unfold in the entirety of Chapter 13 are aspects of each section of the Tribulation:
 - 1. The first 3.5 years
 - 2. The midpoint of the tribulation

- 3. The last 3.5 years (The Great Tribulation)
- What we know from the 1st half of the tribulation is it will consist of: War, Famine, earthquakes, woe judgements, 144,000 being sealed and many saved, temple sacrifices opened and 2 Witnesses Minister.
 - And as you can see from the discussion of War, Famine, and Earthquake, Mark's account addresses this great severity in detail.
 - And for a deeper study on these matters, please check out our Revelation Study taught by the Founder of VBVM, Stephen Armstrong.
- As we look around our world today, we can see some of these events ramping up in intensity year by year.
 - And as bible students, we should be encouraged for two reasons:
 - 1. The Lord has provided us the wisdom and revelation necessary to know how to navigate and stand firm in our faith in this chaotic world.
 - 2. With the intensity of these signs mean that the rapturing of the church may be just around the corner.
- Lastly, knowing these revelational truths give us the ability as believers, to share the gospel with those who are unaware.
 - The reality is judgement is near and the question that the non-believer has to answer is, where will I spend eternity?
- With 40% of the bible containing prophecy, it behooves us to learn and study the word so that we may live with our eyes set on eternal things.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 13B

Chapter 13:9-14

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- Tonight, we pick back up in what is known as the Olivet Discourse here in Mark's Gospel, and we will begin with our outline of questions Jesus was answering.
 - Here is also an extended chart of the outline of the Chapter regarding how Jesus addressed each question.
 - Last week, we saw that the disciples were distraught regarding Jesus' words of the temple's coming destruction.
 - Their understanding of Jewish eschatology was that the destruction of that magnitude was the indication of the end of the present age and the arrival of the New Age.
 - So, in an effort to correct and clarify their understanding of the true sign of the end of the present age, He responds by telling them what are NOT signs of the end.
 - It was after that, that Jesus answered for them their question regarding what signs they should look for regarding the coming of the end of the age.
 - We learned last week that an age was a finite period of history that has a beginning and an end.
 - And according to Daniel, our current age began in 605 BC which was when Babylon conquered Jerusalem. (Due to Israel's rebellion)
 - This age, known as "the age of the Gentiles", continues to this very day and will last until the arrival of the Messianic Kingdom (under Jewish Rule).
 - So, the Lord Jesus explains to the apostles that there will be significant signs that will indicate that this present age is beginning to conclude.
 - Those signs were World Wars, Famines, Plagues (Luke's Gospel), and Earthquakes.
 - And although these events were like that of what "were not signs", Jesus mentions that these cycles will be of greater frequency and severity.
 - He describes these events as being like birth pangs.
 - That over time, these events will grow in frequency and severity in a fashion resembling the birth of New Life.
 - And indeed, the new life that will come from these cataclysmic events will be the dawning of the New Age (The Messianic Age)
 - I mentioned last week that if the events that are not signs are like Braxton Hicks, then the indication of what is to come (birth pangs) will only get worse.
 - And we saw that what will occur in the first half of the tribulation period will be just that (The Beginning).
 - That throughout the duration of the tribulation period it will only get worse.
 - This is why the first 3.5 years is called "Tribulation" and the last 3.5 years is called "The Great Tribulation."
 - And as we look at our world today, we are only seeing an increase in these (Braxton Hicks) signs (2/3 trimester) which indicates the worst is still to come.
 - And lastly, as reassurance, because the Church is still here, we know that the tribulation has not started, because we won't be here for that.
 - We now arrive to question 3 regarding matters of the destruction of the temple

and what will be the signs of its destruction.

- So, with that in mind, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures and meet me at Mark 13:9-13.

Mark 13:9 “But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.

Mark 13:10 The gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

Mark 13:11 When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.

Mark 13:12 Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.

Mark 13:13 You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

- As we arrive to verses 9-13, we find ourselves in a bit of a transitioning section of the text.
 - It seems that Jesus has now moved from providing signs of the beginning of the coming of the end of the age (future moment) to now coming back to the present.
 - And in doing so, He will now address their question regarding what will be the sign of the coming destruction of the temple, which was their first question.
 - And as we make this transition back, we notice that within Matthew’s gospel He doesn’t address this matter, but rather speaks to the coming of the Kingdom.
 - Whereas, in Mark and Luke’s gospel, they both address the Apostles’ opposition as a sign of the coming destruction of the temple.
 - However, Luke’s Gospel provides specificity to the signs of the coming destruction itself.
 - For example, here is a side-by-side comparison to see the diverge that Matthew takes from Mark and Luke.
 - Notice the word “then” that Matthew uses versus the word “But” that Mark and Luke use.
 - The word “then” can also be phrased as “at that time” which speaks to a continuation from the previous verse which was speaking to matters regarding the tribulation period.
 - So clearly, Matthew is continuing with understanding the unfolding events of the tribulation period.
 - Whereas Mark and Luke are shifting to a different focus (i.e addressing the disciples’ first question).
 - When will the destruction of the temple happen and what will be the sign of the destruction of the temple?
 - Here is a side-by-side comparison of Mark and Luke to see how both are speaking to this Apostolic opposition which will lead to the coming destruction of the temple.

- Once again, Luke's gospel is the only gospel that provides the sign by which is to be recognized as the coming destruction of the temple.
- What I want us to see at this point in Mark's gospel, considering the synoptics altogether, is that the language is very similar.
 - They are similar in the sense that both the coming persecution of the apostles, with the destruction of the temple and the tribulation saints, are comparable in dealing with persecution.
- So, considering these two different periods of history, persecution becomes a common theme.
 - Persecution will happen shortly before the temple is destroyed in the first century and will be greatly present after, during the tribulation period.
- So with this in mind, we will see this present and future reality of growing persecution amongst that of the apostles and the coming persecution of the tribulation saints.
 - Now, because Mark's gospel does not provide us with the signs of the coming destruction of the temple, we need to hop over to Luke's Gospel.
 - So, let's begin now by jumping to Luke's gospel (Luke 21:20).
 - Due to time, I will summarize for us what Luke's gospel documents regarding the sign of the destruction of the temple.
- Jesus mentions that before the destruction of the temple commences, the church and its leaders would see persecution. (Luke 21:12-19)
 - He mentions that the Apostles would be dragged before the governors and leadership of Rome.
 - We see this reality splattered throughout the book of Acts which describes the history of the early church unfolding. (Acts 8:3; 12:4; 21:11; 22:4; 27:1; 28:17)
 - It was the persecution of the early church in the first century that was an early indication of the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.
 - It is then that we find in Luke 21:20 the key sign for believers in the first century, to know of the coming destruction of the temple.
 - Hopefully, you can see why Jesus providing distinctions of what are signs of current, versus future, tribulation is so key.
 - What could have been confusing for the early church then becomes a means of clarity now.
 - So, here is the sign that Jesus provides regarding the coming destruction of the temple.

Luke 21:20 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.

- This sign occurred in AD 66 where General Cestius Gallus brought legions of soldiers out of Caesarea to surround the city.
 - The legion of soldiers was sent by Rome to end a Jewish rebellion in Jerusalem.
 - According to Historian Josephus, it is documented that Cestius was a civil

administrator with no battlefield experience who was appointed by Nero.

- With this lack of skillset, there were multiple instances of military errors along the way.
- It would then be discovered that the general mistakenly assumed he was facing regional uprising from Jerusalem, but realized it was simply Jewish guerilla forces.
- In light of that information, he was eventually forced to lift the siege.
- Historian Josephus mentions that this retreat was “without any reason in the world.”
- To potentially explain this retreat, Josephus mentions the following, which speaks to God’s Sovereignty and the reality that History belongs to Him.

"It was, I suppose, owing to the aversion God had already toward the city and the sanctuary that He delayed from putting an end to the war that very day." [2.19.6 539]

- So when the siege was lifted, what Luke documented according to Jesus’ sign of Jerusalem’s coming destruction was adhered to by the Messianic community.
 - Therefore, because of their obedience to Jesus’ instructions, the believing Jews escaped the city by the thousands.
 - And with this exodus came believing Jews being dispersed to various parts of the land, such as Judea, the Galilee and Pella.
 - Josephus documents this exodus of believing Jews in this way:

"After this catastrophe had befallen Cestius, many of the distinguished Jews abandoned the city like swimmers from a sinking ship." [2.20.1 556]

- It was soon after, in AD 70, that the judgement Jesus said would befall Jerusalem and the Temple came about by Titus of Rome.
 - It is recorded by Josephus that over 1,100,000 Jews were killed in the first revolt and 97,000 were taken into slavery .
 - Not one of the believing Jews that responded obediently to Jesus’ command to leave Jerusalem at the surrounding of its walls, lost their lives.
 - Talk about obedience to the word of God and the significance of biblical prophecy.
 - I mentioned, in last week’s teaching, that the benefit of studying biblical prophecy is it provides immense hope for the believer.
 - We won’t be blind-sided by struggles and pains of this life, but rather, we can stand firm on the very words of Jesus.
 - Most importantly, we recognize as the Church that we are blessed to escape this coming period of judgement.
 - Contextually, I can just imagine for Mark’s audience reading Mark 13 and maybe with some fear and trepidation, having incredible hope.

- Their hope is in knowing that whether Nero burns them at the stake or they're dragged by horses, Christ alone is theirs.
- These Roman believers knew suffering well, they knew what it was like to be betrayed, and many put to death, yet their hope was secured.
 - And what a great day it will be when we all stand together in the Kingdom with the King, the Lord Jesus. It will all be worth it!
 - Friends, there is always grace before judgement!
- Salvation is available, but if you do not respond, know that great judgement is on the horizon.
 - Now that we have answered question 3, let's now move to the content of verses 9-13.
- By now, you should be noticing this movement of present to future related struggles.
 - And as I mentioned earlier, these patterns of persecution and frequency of trial continue to grow.
 - So, as we examine these verses, we must identify: In what time period is Jesus referring to in Mark 13:9-13?
 - So, let's re-read this passage together again.

Mark 13:9 “But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.

Mark 13:10 The gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

Mark 13:11 When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.

Mark 13:12 Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.

Mark 13:13 You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

- Notice, Jesus begins verse 9 of Mark 13 with the word “But” (*blepo*), which is another issued warning to be observant and watchful of the times around you.
 - And at this present moment, Jesus is addressing the apostles regarding some events that will lead up to the destruction of the Temple.
 - He mentions that these believers will:
 - 1. Be delivered (handed over) to the courts (*paradidomi*)
 - 2. Flogged in the synagogues
 - 3. Will stand before governors and kings for His sake, as a testimony to them.
 - Verse 10 continues in mentioning that these growing persecutions the apostles will face will be due to their proclamation of the Gospel.
 - However, keep context in mind: Although Jesus is speaking to the Apostles’

coming (present) conditions, the context points to future circumstances during the Tribulation period.

- That where the present demarcation of coming circumstances would lead to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple –
- A future time would come where greater persecution and circumstance would befall the believers during the tribulation.
- Ultimately, this growing drama is centered upon the Gospel being made known and being preached to all the nations.
 - Friends, this confirms that evangelism and the proclamation of the Gospel will continue to go forth even in the tribulation period.
- It becomes clear that these indicators of persecution and the proclamation of the Gospel both precede the start of the tribulation and continue into it in an intense way.
 - Remember, that Braxton Hicks contractions eventually transition into birth pangs.
 - So, what the Apostles will experience is nothing in comparison to what the believers during Daniel's seventieth week (Tribulation) will encounter.
- Jesus then mentions in verse 11-12 that when they are arrested and handed over, that "they should not worry about what they should say before the council and the leadership of the day."
 - For in that hour, they will be given what to say.
 - The question of How is answered at the end of verse 11:
 - Because the Holy Spirit will provide them wisdom and words to speak.
- The means to accomplish the work of the spreading of the Gospel was regarded as a Divine necessity despite the persecution that would come.
 - And therefore, the helper (*parakletos*), the Holy Spirit, will both guide and give instructions when and where needed.
 - *We see the evidence of this reality in the Book of Acts. (Ref. Acts 2-4) as well as within the tribulation period.*
- Jesus then makes the point here that this rise in evangelism will eventually lead to martyrdom on many levels because of the impact that the message of the Gospel will have.
 - This plays out beautifully, historically, because 10 of the 11 faithful Apostles of Jesus were killed for the sake of the Gospel.
 - And in the same way there will be martyrs in the tribulation. (Revelation 6:9-11)
- What becomes even more interesting is that in verse 12 the familial relationships, because of the proclamation of the Gospel, will cause:
 - Brother to betray brother
 - Turn Fathers against their sons
 - Children rising up against parents
 - All of this even to the point of death

- There are many instances where new believers because of their faith in Jesus have been excommunicated from their families.
- What a cost that comes with following Jesus!
 - Following Jesus is not for the weak or the faint of heart now or even in the days to come!
- Friends, we are beginning to see that the results of this coming persecution will steadily grow in the Church Age, but intensify even more throughout the tribulation period.
 - Again, the birth pangs only intensify and on top of that, we have only discussed the first half of the tribulation period.
 - Lastly, Jesus brings a means of exhortation and encouragement despite the coming devastation and persecution in verse 13.
- He concludes this section of growing persecution by stating that though they will be hated because of Him, “He who endures to the end will be saved”
 - Now, this section of scripture is often misinterpreted and not understood because of two words that are mentioned and they are “endure” and “saved”.
- The word “endure” in Greek is *hypomeno* which speaks to resisting and standing one’s ground or waiting on another.
 - And the Greek word for “saved” here is *sazo* which means to be delivered or rescued from sin, or consequential judgement.
- The biggest mistake some make is to see endurance and immediately assume “perseverance of the saints” without seeing context and the Greek language.
 - Because if we assume this is dealing with “perseverance of faith”, it reads as if to say:
 - “If you do not persevere one cannot be saved”
 - This is not the case!
- In other cases, it would suggest that to maintain salvation one must endure to the end – well now we enter into an equally incorrect works-based salvation situation.
 - So, what is Jesus saying here and how do we resolve this matter biblically regarding this well-known verse, “But he who endures to the end, he will be saved.”
- Well, when we look at the Greek words in context (knowing how salvation works) and we carefully observe the overall subject matter in context, we see a few things:
 - 1. The subject matter is dealing with the coming time of tribulation for the Jewish people in that future day.
 - 2. We know that the Gospel will go forth during the tribulation and that individuals will come to faith which means that they will also enter the coming Kingdom whether by death or walking in.
 - 3. With the increase of great persecution of believers in that day, we know that towards the end of the seven-year period of tribulation, that the arrival of the Kingdom and its King will soon arrive.
- So, with the tribulation intensifying, as the signs become more evident of the

arrival of the King and His Kingdom, those who make it to the end (*hypomeno*) will be delivered physically from their surrounding judgement.

- The question becomes, How?!
- Well, we see the how in verse 26-27 of Mark 13. Check out the text with me quickly:

Mark 13:26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

Mark 13:27 And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.

- It will be because the King will come and gather together (*episynago*) His elect (those who have believed) from all over.
 - Well, how is it that believers are being gathered from all over?
 - Because the Gospel has gone forth and people have responded to their Messiah!
 - Here is the beautiful thing: That whether you die now or later, as we suffer for the sake of Christ, our eternal rewards and glory in the Son await us. (Revelation 2:10)
 - Or as Paul says, to live is Christ and to die is gain!
 - So, when verse 13 says, “for the one who endures to the end will be saved”, he is speaking about the physical deliverance of the remaining tribulation saints.
 - So, what we are seeing both in the sense of the Tribulation as well as this inter-advental period is that persecution is a reoccurring theme for the Christian.
 - From the increase of persecution from the government against Christians and sound doctrine, to the vitriol that is spewed about believers across the world.
 - Verse 13 mentions, we will be hated by all, not because of who we are, but who we live for and represent – Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus mentions these very words in John’s Gospel where He says:

John 15:18 “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.

- The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the truth by which the world seeks to hide and shun, yet it is the service of believers to share this news with the world.
 - For this is the only means by which men and women can be saved!
 - The Gospel brings truth to light which means that one is only left with either responding to it or rejecting it.
 - I believe Paul paints for us a beautiful picture on the necessity of suffering for the Gospel because it aids as a catalyst for evangelism.
 - Check out what Paul says in Philippians 1:12-14.

Philippians 1:12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have

turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,
Philippians 1:13 so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,
Philippians 1:14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

- Repeatedly, the New Testament speaks greatly about suffering and in the same breath connects our present suffering to the hope of things to come.
 - Why? Because as we suffer in this life, we even more are able to identify and draw nearer to Christ.
 - Lastly, Paul in Philippians 3:8-11 and 20-21 tells us the treasure and the grace gift of our suffering:

Philippians 3:8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,
Philippians 3:9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,
Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;
Philippians 3:11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;
Philippians 3:21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

- I wanted to end with this tonight because the reality is, the Church will not see this period, because we will have been raptured to be with the Lord.
 - The grace for the church is that our present suffering and trials are the means, through sanctification, by which we are conformed to Christ.
 - That because of trusting in the Lord now in the Church Age, we escape these coming and terrifying days of judgement.
 - But there will be a day when the Lord takes up His Church and the coming chaos will soon begin.
 - Therefore, the mission of the church becomes quite simple:
 - Evangelize the Loss,
 - Grow in understanding of the word for the edification of the body
 - Live to the Glory of God
 - And it will be in doing this, that through our living we too become witnesses to a

dying word, pointing to a Living Hope found in the One True Living God.

- Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 13C

Chapter 13:14-23

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- Tonight, we continue our study of the Olivet Discourse and will arise to yet another unique section of Daniel's 70th week known as the Tribulation Period.
 - However, let us begin by reviewing what we have covered up to this point.
 - If you recall, we began with the disciples asking Jesus several questions regarding their understanding of end times.
 - More specifically, how the Present age would come to an end and how the New Age (Messianic Age) would begin.
 - Their questions began with Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.
 - Jesus would later explain, in His time and order, the sign by which pointed to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in a future day.
 - And what we witnessed last week was that history played out in the exact way Jesus said it would – to the very detail.
 - Their next question dealt with the signs of the close of the Present Age.
 - Jesus explained that these signs, although similar to what were not signs, were very distinct in the fact that the true signs would be like birth pangs.
 - There would be growth in frequency and severity whereas the previous signs were the ebbs and flow of societal uproar due to the nature of humanity in our sin nature.
 - And as I mentioned, I believe those signs are paralleled with what we see in the seal judgements in Revelation 6.
 - And finally, the disciples asked Jesus what the sign of His Coming into His Kingdom would be.
 - It is this question that extends to several sections of Mark 13 that we will address in the next teaching.
 - As I mentioned before, I believe, based upon Jesus' framing of answering the questions in Mark 13, that Jesus beautifully sections each aspect of the Tribulation period.
 - Then in verse 8-13, we saw Jesus addressing matters of the first 3.5 years of the tribulation period which could be paralleled to that of the 1st century.
 - We witnessed this present/future reality of events of persecution being a reality both during the Apostles' time, our day, as well as during the first half of the tribulation.
 - For as we noted, persecution is a staple for every generation of Christians in every century throughout history.
 - But as we will see tonight, the conditions of the tribulation period will be, in a sense, unparalleled in its severity, frequency, and intensity of persecution than what has ever been seen before.
 - Tonight, we will find ourselves looking at question number 4 regarding what the sign will be indicating Christ's Second coming along with His Kingdom.
 - And as we will see, Jesus will describe this unique time in this 7-year period as the "Great Tribulation".
 - Lastly, just as a reminder, you will not see any mentioning of the Church at this

point as this judgement has been specifically set aside for Israel themselves to respond to their Messiah with the words:

- “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord”
- The world stage at this point will have been completely setup and prepared for the heavenly cosmological drama that will unfold for the coming return of Christ and His Kingdom.
 - So, with all that having been established, let’s see how God unfolds this drama to the final curtain call.
 - Pick me up at Mark13:14-23

Mark 13:14 “But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

Mark 13:15 The one who is on the housetop must not go down, or go in to get anything out of his house;

Mark 13:16 and the one who is in the field must not turn back to get his coat.

Mark 13:17 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

Mark 13:18 But pray that it may not happen in the winter.

Mark 13:19 For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will.

Mark 13:20 Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

Mark 13:21 And then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ’; or, ‘Behold, He is there’; do not believe him;

Mark 13:22 for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

Mark 13:23 But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance.

- As we dive into tonight’s teaching, let us keep in mind again, we are examining the Apostles’ second question regarding the end of the age and the Second coming of the King and His Kingdom.
 - More specifically, in our extended question outline, we are addressing question 4 which speaks to Christ’s Second coming and His Kingdom.
 - We discussed the fact that these signs, from verses 8 and onward will occur during the tribulation period.
 - So, as we approach tonight’s text, we will further see the signs increasing in severity, pointing to the coming of the King and the Kingdom.
 - Now, upon our arrival to verse 14, notice the first two words “But when”
 - This provides us with a time indicator letting us know that there has been a movement to another section of the tribulation period.
 - This is further confirmed by Jesus’ words where He says “...when you see the

abomination of desolation standing where it should not be...”

- Herein lies the specific sign that Jesus gives regarding what is known as the “abomination of desolation”.
 - We see this term mentioned in the book of Daniel.
 - And it is in Daniel’s prophecy in Daniel 9:27 that he speaks to this moment having taken place in the “middle” of the seven years of tribulation.
 - Check out the text:

Daniel 9:27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

- Daniel 9:27 tells us that this moment within the tribulation period is called the “abomination”.
 - Daniel by the Spirit of God says that this moment will happen in the “middle of the week” which refers to the mid-point of the seven-year tribulation.
 - A week in Hebrew regarding Daniel’s prophecy was a way of saying a “seven-year period”.
 - And it is in the middle of this seven-year period that Daniel records that a man will put an end to sacrifices and grain offering.
 - We know that within Jewish culture the means of sacrifices and grain offerings occurred within a Jewish Temple.
 - Therefore, Daniel is speaking to a future event regarding a future abomination of a Jewish Temple.
 - And with this man (the anti-christ) putting an end to the Temple’s operations and causing an abomination, it would render the temple desolate and unusable.
 - Although Daniel does not mention what action was deemed as “the desecrating act” within the temple, we see from Jesus’ words in Mark 13 that “something/someone is standing where it should not be”.
 - Well, this begs the question: “Who or What is the sign or action of this abomination moment in the temple?”
 - Well, we see from two places in scripture, what this action/sign is that indicates the desolation of the temple has/is occurring.
 - This first stage of desecration will be where the Antichrist will sit in the temple of God (on the mercy seat) declaring himself to be God.
 - We see this in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4. Check out the text with me:

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,
2 Thessalonians 2:2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect

that the day of the Lord has come.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

2 Thessalonians 2:4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

- ○ Paul explains in 2 Thessalonians that the arrival of Christ in His second coming will not occur until certain events occur.
 - And these events within the tribulation (the day of the Lord) are outlined by Paul in verses 3-4 of 2 Thessalonians 2.
 - Paul says that the first event is that there will be a mass turning from God's truth to worship of the Antichrist, himself. (Apostasy)
 - So, it's in verse 4 that we see what the first stage of abomination is – the Antichrist declaring to be god.
- Secondly, there will be the false prophet that appears and makes an image of the Antichrist and sets it in the Holy of Holies of the temple. (Abomination)
 - We see this further explained in Revelation 13:11-15. Check out the text:

Rev.13:11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.

Rev.13:12 He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

Rev.13:13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.

Rev.13:14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who *had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

Rev.13:15 And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

- It will be these events at the mid-point of the tribulation which will mark the soon return of the Lord in 3.5 years.
 - So Jesus makes clear, this will be a major means of upheaval and lawlessness unlike ever witnessed before.
 - It's in verse 14b that Jesus mentions that at that moment in time, those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.
 - The Greek word for "flee" here is *pheugo* (fo-ego) which means to run or move away quickly.

- Clearly, this sign is one that men and women in that day do not want to be near or around.
- Jesus further explains the need of expedience that men and women must have during that day. Check out verses 15-18:

Mark 13:15 The one who is on the housetop must not go down, or go in to get anything out of his house;

Mark 13:16 and the one who is in the field must not turn back to get his coat.

Mark 13:17 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

Mark 13:18 But pray that it may not happen in the winter

- In verses 15-18, Jesus describes a great necessity for urgency to flee from the land to the point that there is no need to hesitate in flight.
 - It is noted that at the very point of this desecration of the temple, that all individuals are to flee to the mountains.
 - To further emphasize this moment, Jesus says that women that are pregnant or nursing will be under excruciating circumstances given their current condition.
 - The reality is, for a pregnant mother carrying the extra weight of a child, it would be overbearing.
 - One could assume that the very conditions of pregnancy could be the difference between life and death.
 - Furthermore, Jesus mentions the weather conditions are to be considered as well.
 - That those believers should pray that this desolation does not happen in the winter months.
 - For those types of weather conditions would be deathly to those traveling up the mountains.
 - Lastly, and not included in Mark's gospel, Matthew mentions to pray that this event does not occur on a Sabbath.
 - If the Jews had to flee from this desolation on the Sabbath, it would be impossible for them to go due to the fact that transportation was largely halted during sundown Friday until sundown Saturday.
 - One question regarding this urgency to flee to the mountains becomes: "Why would the desecration of the temple cause such vast panic amongst the believers in that time?"
 - Well, we need look no further than the next two verses, verses 19-20. Check out the text:

Mark 13:19 For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will.

Mark 13:20 Unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

- Jesus makes note that these days, regarding the midpoint of the tribulation period into the time of the great tribulation, will be “of such devastation that has not occurred since the beginning of creation.”
 - We know this because He says “until now and never will”.
 - In other words, this will be an unprecedented distress that is unlike any other that God has physically poured out in the earth.
 - This coming moment will mark the last 3.5 years of life on earth in the Present Age.
 - There would be a “final” Great Tribulation that would create a distinction between this “near” future devastation of AD 70 and a “far” future where the Present Age is drawing to its termination.
 - A thorough study through the book of Revelation will show us that these coming judgements will result in the loss of all fresh water and vegetation on earth. (Revelation 8:1-19:21)
 - And knowing that water is essential to the sustaining of life, these great terrors and times only become greater indicators of Jesus’ impending return.
 - It is only by God’s mercy that He has set limits to these years to rescue His elect for the purposes of physically delivering them from this turmoil.
 - Once again, what a great mercy it is that the Church will not have to experience this coming wrath and judgement from God.
 - This reality is what the Apostle Paul had been teaching and reassuring the church at Thessalonica.
 - That there would be no need to worry of this judgement for the Church Age believer because of their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ by way of the proclamation of the Gospel.
 - Check out what 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 says:

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Thessalonians 5:10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

- It’s after this description of time during the Great Tribulation that Jesus mentions amidst this great devastation and pouring out of judgement, that false christs and false prophets will rise providing false hope.
 - Check out our last three verses for tonight, verses 21-23.

Mark 13:21 And then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ’; or, ‘Behold, He is there’; do not believe him;

Mark 13:22 for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

Mark 13:23 But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance.

- So as this chaos and turmoil is spinning out in the earth, the people would be looking for some sort of savior to rescue them from this mess.
 - However, Jesus offers this firm warning of caution and discernment:
 - Plainly put: Do not be fooled or misled to believe the things you will see from these false prophets and false christs.
 - For it will be the very purpose of these displays of ‘signs and wonders’ to mislead many from the true Messiah who will not be too far off from His actual arrival.
 - Matthew’s gospel provides specific locations as to where these false christs will appear. (Matthew 24:26)
 - “That the false messiah is in the wilderness or in the inner rooms, which means in the temple, itself.”
 - So, although the causation of the tribulation is an indication of Jesus’ return, His return will not and does not depend upon the announcements from false prophets.
 - But rather, He will make Himself known, and it will be evident.
 - We will see this in next week’s teaching.
 - What a gift it is to know that the very words of Jesus provide the believer with timeless truth.
 - That although these instructions from Jesus were provided for a far off yet coming reality, that these very words provided insight for His apostles to make the people aware of even in that day.
 - Remember, that although these instructions are regarding the tribulation period, that the instruction of warning and dependency upon the Lord is prevalent even today.
 - And if we take heed to the instructions of Jesus, He is faithful to provide our very means of escape from the whims of false teachings and the like.
 - I love how in verse 22b, Jesus says that these signs will try to, “if possible” mislead the elect.
 - This becomes why so many of the Apostles, especially the writers of the Jewish epistles, made such efforts in emphasizing truth and the very words of Christ.
 - Because if we do not learn to stand firm on the words of truth, we will fall for anything.
 - This is why the proclamation of the gospel must be exalted and proclaimed beyond this “social gospel”.
 - This is how the enemy lures believers from the truth.
 - That if sprinkled with a hint of truth but splattered with emotionalism and social and societal interest, then it moves the mind of the believer from Absolute truth to making this current life better now.
 - Friends, the reality is, this world in its current state is not meant to last, but rather

is longing to be made anew.

- Therefore, social initiatives and societal programs to make this world a utopia is yet another means to have our minds set apart from the truth and off of eternal things.
- The only means of true change in the hearts of men is through the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!
- My responsibility as a Pastor and Bible Teacher (80%) of my job is to remind the believers of what the word of God says.
 - It is to point you back to this book that you and I may heed to eternal and everlasting truth so that we may not be tossed to and fro by every wind and wave of doctrine.
 - Check out what Peter writes in 2 Peter 3:10-18 regarding anticipation of the coming of the Lord (rapture) and the hope the believer should have until we meet Him in the clouds:

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

2 Peter 3:11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

2 Peter 3:12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

2 Peter 3:13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

2 Peter 3:14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

2 Peter 3:15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,

2 Peter 3:16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

2 Peter 3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,

2 Peter 3:18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

- Every word from God is necessary for us to: Know, Learn, and Grow in.
 - As Paul told young Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

2 Timothy 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every

good work.

- Every section of scripture is necessary for:
 - Teaching
 - Reproof
 - Correction
 - Training in righteousness
 - Therefore, if what Paul said here is true, then even the teaching of prophecy is necessary for us to be trained to know and to live according to truth as we await to meet Him in the clouds.
 - And as we read earlier, if we are not trained in righteousness and right teaching, then we become susceptible to the growing movement of false teachers, false prophets, and false doctrines, even in our current time.
 - And in all of this, to know that the Lord Jesus provided the Apostles with what is true and wise early on, even in their lack of understanding, they still came to the full knowledge of knowing how to guard and teach the church well by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - Friends, if God is control of all history and uses his creation as instruments to accomplish His work and plans, then most assuredly, He provides those in whom He has called with the guidance they need to endure well.
 - This is why I love what Jesus says in verse 23, He says “But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance”
 - There we see that Greek word, *blepo*, again.
 - It means to watch carefully, to be vigilant and on the look out.
 - We must be on constant watch for the things that are around us that may try and deter or distract us from the truth of God’s word.
 - If we want to learn how to navigate well, the times we are in, we must be students of the bible.
 - If we want to be on guard regarding our hearts and minds, and our very lives, we must be good students of the bible.
 - If we want to grow in the hope of our salvation, we must know His word.
 - This bible which contains 66 books, are the very revealed words from God and He has made this truth verbally known and at the right time that very word became flesh (John 1:14) .
 - May we all grow in being disciplined in this truth.
 - Let’s Pray.



Mark - Lesson 13D

Chapter 13:24-37

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- Tonight, we will pick up in the natural flow of Jesus responding to the fourth question within our expanded question outline which deals with the disciples' second question: "What will be the sign of Jesus' Second Coming?"
 - So far, we have walked through major components of the 1st half of the tribulation and its events.
 - We then walked through the mid-point of the tribulation and what would be the sign of the close of the present age.
 - We discovered that the mid-point would begin what Daniel called the "abomination of desolation".
 - This is where the Antichrist would sit on the mercy seat of God in the Temple declaring to be God himself, and will be worshipped by men during that day. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)
 - The next sign that would mark this abomination was something that would be standing where it did not belong.
 - It would be "an image or statue" of the Antichrist that would be set up in the Holy of Holies in the temple.
 - Furthermore, this image would be made to come to life. (Revelation 13:11-15)
 - And it was upon that event, that Jesus informs the reader that they need to flee to the mountains.
 - This "sense of urgency" was that time should not be wasted because this coming of great tribulation would be an unparalleled moment in history.
 - This detail from the Lord Jesus was significant because it shows us that this period will indeed be unique.
 - It is unique in the fact that the very demonstrations of God's judgements, even from the beginning of History, will be astronomically different than what is to come.
 - If we think those judgements such as the flood or the raining down of fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah were great demonstrations of judgements, then these events in the Great Tribulation would be unprecedented.
 - This period was going to be an increase of pressure that would move God's plan and human history to a culminating point. (Birth pangs)
 - For the dawning of the New Age and the visual announcing of the world's true Messiah is coming.
 - For where the false messiahs would seek to mislead many into believing their savior had already arrived, Jesus' entrance will be marked with visual "pomp and circumstances" on a cataclysmic and cosmic level.
 - So tonight, we arrive to the last few verses of Chapter 13 as we deal with the return of Jesus, physically upon the earth.
 - Our outline of this portion of the text can be broken down into 3 sections which are as follows:
 - 1. The Return of Christ (v.24-27)
 - 2. The Parable of the Fig Tree (Illustration) (v.28-31)

- 3. Exhortation: Be on the Alert (v.32-37)
- With this outline in mind, let's look at our first section of the outline by reading through verses 24-27.

Mark 13:24 “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light,

Mark 13:25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.

Mark 13:26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

Mark 13:27 And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.

- Verses 24-27 begins with transitional language: “But in those days, after “that” tribulation”.
 - Clearly, the language is indicating a movement or transition from one section of the tribulation to the next.
 - More specifically, Jesus provides us with a stark contrast between the arrival of the false messiahs on the scene versus that of the true Messiah's arrival into the earth.
 - Notice, verses 21-23 Jesus mentions the “signs and wonders” of the false messiahs and how they will attempt to mislead the believing remnant.
 - This is why Jesus issued the warning in verse 23. (Take heed!)
 - The believing remnant will need to be on guard, take heed, and not be misled by these false signs.
 - So, to provide the believers with what signs are indicative of His coming, Jesus provides a response in verses 24-27.
 - And it will be that generation that will visually see the cosmological curtain unfold, and the scene set for Jesus' Kingly arrival.
 - Notice how this event begins. Jesus mentions in verse 24b-25 that the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.
 - There's much to consider, so let's begin with the sun being darkened.
 - We know that the sun is the very source of light for earth and therefore with the sun being our source of light, and the moon itself not emitting light, but rather reflecting it, points to the reality that this phenomenon could not be a mere eclipse.
 - Beyond that, the universe itself will experience celestial changes which will indeed alter the universe as we know it.
 - Now, the question becomes: How will this darkening of the sun directly impact life on earth in that period of history?
 - Within our human understanding, by means of conjecture, science tells us that the

sun going dark and not emitting light would cause global extinction for human life. (We would freeze to death)

- However, scripture tells us that human life will continue with the arrival of the King because He will gather His elect.
- Therefore, it begs a question: How does this darkness of the sun and the celestial changes still permit human life while on earth if the sun goes dark?
 - Friends, this only proves one thing: God is the sustainer of life and accomplishes His purposes how He sees fit.
 - He can choose to demonstrate His Power and miraculous work however He wills for He is the Creator of all things.
 - To put it plainly, if God can cause the sun to stand still for a 24-hour period as in Joshua 10:12-14, how much more could God demonstrate His power with the return of His Son as King by turning off the lights.
- Along with these cosmic phenomena will be the falling of stars from heaven and the very forces in the universe will be altered.
 - This would be what is known in theater as the Final Drama.
 - This universal darkness witnessed from the earth will be how Messiah will come in power and authority showing forth His great light and power - being the very light of life.
 - This arrival of Messiah would be greatly anticipated with much joy for believers in that day!
- Now, Matthew's gospel mentions a very interesting contrasting response for non-believers in Matthew 24:30 which is to be expected.
 - Jesus states that the "tribes of the earth" will mourn at this sight of Jesus' Second coming.
- The "tribes of the earth" is referring to that of the unbelieving Gentiles in that day and they will be mourning because they recognize that the Lord's return means their judgement is coming.
 - Whereas in verse 27 of Mark 13, regarding the believing remnant of Israel, they will be physically delivered and brought to safety by the angels that Messiah will send forth.
 - This "gathering together" (*episynago*) will be an assembling of all who have endured through the hard trials, growing persecution, and sinful upheaval in the earth by the Antichrist and the wicked kingdoms of the earth.
 - Therefore, for the believing Jew and Gentile in that day, this sign will be one of great rejoicing and anticipation that Messiah is around the corner.
- This final sign of great turmoil and judgment is spoken about in the Hebrew scriptures.
 - The prophet Isaiah, by the Spirit, speaks about this coming judgement of the world and the gathering of the Jewish people back in Jerusalem.
- And this moment will begin with a great trumpet sounding forth.
 - Check out what Isaiah writes down in Isaiah 27:12-13.

Isaiah 27:12 In that day the Lord will start His threshing from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt, and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel.

Isaiah 27:13 It will come about also in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

- It is this threshing that Isaiah uses as a metaphor, to reflect the coming future judgement of Israel in the tribulation period for those who are non-believing.
 - So, Mark's gospel, here in verse 27 mentions this reality of a final gathering into safety for the believing remnant in that day.
 - We will now see that as Mark transitions to section two of our outline, that Jesus moves to the believers' needed response, in parabolic form. (Illustration)
 - Check out verses 28-31.

Mark 13:28 “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.

Mark 13:29 “Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door.

Mark 13:30 “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

Mark 13:31 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

- Throughout the entirety of Mark 13, Jesus has been answering the pressing questions of the disciples regarding Messiah's physical return to earth with the Kingdom.
 - Jesus has walked through the first half, mid-point, and the last 3.5 years (great tribulation) which leads to the return of the Lord.
 - And in our prior verses, we witnessed what the key sign will be that points to the return of Messiah and the coming of His Kingdom.
 - It is in this section of the text, that Jesus will use parables to express the sign of His return by plainly illustrating for the disciples what they must do in the meantime as well as for believers in that future day.
 - Ultimately, this parable will express the need for believers to trust and rely on God's trustworthiness and His word.
 - So, Jesus opens verse 28 with the Parable of the Fig tree.
 - He mentions that this fig tree has moved from its dormant state during the winter months to its budding season in the summer months.
 - And the timing for the budding of the fig tree is in accordance with its seasonal timing for ready and ripe fruit.
 - In other words, when you see the budding of the leaves of the fig tree come forth, know that summer is around the corner.

- It's as if Jesus uses the illustration of the fig tree as a time clock for the unfolding of the end of the age and the coming of the New Age (i.e Jesus' return)
- And Jesus using the illustration of the fig tree is not by happenstance, but rather by a Divine timetable set by God.
- There is a "sense of awareness" that Jesus is saying that the Jewish believers living in that day must be cognizant of regarding the signs of the times.
 - For it will be this key sign (cosmological changes of v.24-25) which will signal that Christ is at the door – He is arriving, so be prepared.
- The point of the parable here is of watchfulness and anticipation of the signs and the times.
 - Jesus wants the believing Jews to be aware and alert for these signs whereas the leadership of Israel had missed them in His first coming.
- You might remember in Matthew 16:3, Jesus called the leaders of Israel out with the following statement:

Matthew 16:1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.

Matthew 16:2 But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.'

Matthew 16:3 And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?

- ○ It was because of the failure of Israel's leadership to understand the very signs of Messiah due to their hardened hearts that they missed His first coming.
 - Therefore, by Jesus providing this illustration it serves as a teaching for the disciples and the believers in that day to be watchful for these signs.
 - This is the point that Jesus is making: the believing remnant must recognize these signs and not stumble where the previous generation did in the first century.
- Now, we can clearly see what Jesus is saying and who He is referring to especially as we move to verse 30.
 - This section of the text has been interpreted in many ways and has caused much confusion regarding who Jesus is referring to and what period this is pointing to.
 - So, remember, context is key to lead us to proper understanding of the text.
- To begin, there are a few terms we need to underline and closely examine and they are the following:
 - 1. "this generation"
 - 2. "until all these things"
- Some people looking at this verse assume that Jesus is talking about when Israel became an independent nation in 1948. However, this is the wrong starting point.

- The term “generation” is roughly 40 years, so if the generation that Jesus was speaking about was in 1948 then that means that the second coming would be in 1988 and we’re still here – so that can’t be right.
- Then individuals extended their timeline to 1967 trying to connect “the 6 day war” when the nation of Israel gained control of Israel (as the new starting point).
- However, add 40 years to 1967 and what do you get – 2007 (we’re still here)
- So, to understand what “this generation” means, we have to look at the context of the Olivet Discourse and not within the period of the church age.
 - And when we examine the context of the Parable of the Fig Tree considering where it is placed in Mark’s Gospel, we see that the general context is dealing with the believing remnant of Jews during the tribulation period.
 - The last question that we have to address here is: What is “all these things” referring to?
- If it’s not the nation of Israel becoming a State as some suggest, based on the context, then it is speaking to everything we have reviewed from verses 14-27.
 - “All these things” are referring to the sign of the Abomination of Desolation which means “this generation” that Jesus is talking about is none other than the remaining believing remnant of Israel during the 2nd half of the tribulation.
 - This will be the sign which marks the soon coming of Christ in His return.
 - And Jesus lets them know that this second half of the tribulation, the believing remnant, will not pass away for they will have been gathered and will see the Kingdom.
- As these cataclysmic events occur and the dawning of the New Age commences, Jesus tells the disciples, in the present age, in preparation for the believers in this future moment that, His words are eternally established. (Emphasis on “My”)
 - That even with the heavens and earth passing away, Jesus’ words will not.
 - And being that these words came out of Jesus’ mouth, who is the very Logos, it further emphasizes the eternality of the second person of the Trinity.
 - God’s words are true for if they weren’t He would not be God.
- Jesus is now preparing to bring about a close of this discourse.
 - However, He will not do so until He encourages the disciples by means of exhortation in diligence in the faith.
 - Check out verses 32-37.

Mark 13:32 “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Mark 13:33 “Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come.

Mark 13:34 “It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert.

Mark 13:35 “Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—

Mark 13:36 in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep.

Mark 13:37 “What I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’ ”

- Jesus explained previously the necessity for believing Israel to be aware of the signs that He mentioned which would distinguish false messiahs versus the true Messiah (false signs vs. true signs).
 - These contrasting descriptions make it very clear that there will be a future attempt by the enemy to eliminate the believing remnant of Israel, and if possible, mislead them out of enduring well to the end in faith. (Rise of Anti-semitism)
 - Therefore, Jesus provides these assurances of sorts that will be reminders of what to look for and how to not be deceived during such evil days.
 - However, as we enter verse 32, we notice the phrase in the first half of that verse which reads: “But of that day or hour no one knows”.
 - The question becomes: What day or hour is Jesus speaking about?
 - Clearly, Jesus has provided a proper timeline, and signs as to the return of Christ, however a specific day or hour is not disclosed.
 - Jesus mentions that neither do the angels nor He Himself know the specific date or time in which the Second coming will occur.
 - Now, I can imagine for some this could be extremely confusing. How can Jesus who is fully God and fully man not know when this day is to come?
 - Well, it’s here that we see, yet again, another example of the Son submitting to the will and plans of the Father.
 - This does not make Jesus less divine or lesser in nature from the other members of the Godhead, rather this shows us that Jesus was willing to voluntarily restrict independent use of His divine attributes to not make things easier for Himself, in order to demonstrate dependency upon the Father.
 - This theological term is known as Kenosis which we get from Philippians 2:7 which speaks to Jesus “emptying” Himself. (Another example can be found in 2 Corinthians 8:9)
 - The word “emptied” is a form of the Greek word *Kenoo*’(ke-no-o) by which we get the word Kenosis.
 - Dr. John Walvoord explains Kenosis in this way:

“The act of kenosis . . . may . . . be properly understood to mean that Christ surrendered no attribute of Deity, but that He did voluntarily restrict their independent use in keeping with His purpose of living among men and their limitations” (Jesus Christ Our Lord, p. 144).

- ◦ Simply put, Jesus did not cease to be God at any point in His earthly ministry.

- The question becomes: Why would Jesus go to the length of providing all of these signs and demonstrations yet come short of providing an exact moment, day, and time?
 - It goes back to our earlier point regarding the leadership of the past.
 - They failed to respond to the signs God had already provided them because their hearts were far from the Lord.
- However, for this believing remnant, they would need to depend upon the very words of Jesus as recorded in scripture.
 - These believing Jews would need to take Jesus at His word and depend upon His very words, as Christ depended upon the Father in His every command.
 - Isn't this what believers in Christ are to do even today, despite the craziness of the culture around us?
 - That we are to not be fixated upon the things of this world and the distractions that come with it, but that we set our eyes on eternal things.
 - We must set our minds on things that are above, for the moment that we become distracted with temporary things we lose sight on the important things that are to come.
- Israel's leaders were more focused on their own agendas and feeding themselves rather than preparing the sheep for their Messiah. And this was John the Baptizer's rebuke towards the religious leaders in his day.
 - So it's after Jesus tells the disciples about this future period and the readiness the believers must have in that day, that He mentions the phrase "Be on the Alert" four times.
 - And whenever you see a phrase in the same context repeated multiple times by Jesus, this means you might want to pay attention to what's being said and, in this case, the exhortation is: Be watchful!
- Verse 33 begins with the phrase "Take heed, keep on the alert".
- This once again is pointing to Jesus' statement in the previous verse regarding the coming appointed time that no one knows, but should be aware due to the signs.
 - The warning is clear: Do not get distracted or lose sight of the goal – stay awake!
 - It is that of being on constant watch, not distracted by the noise of the culture or the world. These are specific instructions!
- It's in verse 34-36 that Jesus provides another parable to further illustrate His previous points from verses 32-33. This is how the parable reads:

Mark 13:34 "It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert.

Mark 13:35 "Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—

Mark 13:36 in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep.

- This parable, known as the Parable of the Porter, pictures a homeowner heading off on a journey and before departure the owner assigns various tasks to His slaves.
 - We see in verse 34b that tasks were given to the slaves and the doorkeeper for the purposes of keeping watch of the Master's return while being diligent in their duties which have been distributed by the Owner of the home.
 - It becomes clear that the owner who is going away for a time is representative of Jesus.
 - And the slaves and the doorkeeper, all in whom are charged with a task from the master, of some sort, are told to stay alert.
 - Notice how verse 35 addresses the unknown "timing" of the Master's return.
 - Clearly, the night represents the master's absence.
 - Furthermore, Mark uses a Roman system for calculating time within a day for His audience. The times correspond as follows:
 - In the evening (6-9PM)
 - At Midnight (9PM til Midnight)
 - When the rooster crows; third watch (12AM-3AM)
 - Or in the morning (3AM-6AM)
 - The point here being, that regardless of the time of day, the believer should always be on the watch for the signs that Jesus has provided in order to be ready for when He comes so that they are not taken off-guard and not off duty.
 - For our neglect of spiritual matters results in missed opportunities for ministry service to the Lord and having served our best.
 - If we end up abdicating our responsibilities as believers, we begin to look more like the unbelieving world who is asleep.
 - This is what Paul was getting at in Romans 13:11-14. Check out the text:

Romans 13:11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.

Romans 13:12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Romans 13:13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

Romans 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

- Therefore, Jesus' warning here is that every believer should be actively working/living in service to the Lord and being watchful in anticipation of His coming.
 - Contextually, these signs are for the believing Jewish remnant to be ready for the Coming of Christ and His Kingdom and to endure in obedience to His word and warning.

- However, for the Church Age saints, we too should find ourselves being diligent in our service to God and that begins in faith and obedience to His word.
 - Once again, observe this present/future reality that the believers in every generation should be watchful and diligent in our work, our lives, and our dependence on the Lord.
 - The question on the table is: What will Jesus find you doing, or acting, or behaving when He comes to rapture His Church?
 - Secondly, how will Jesus find the tribulation saints upon His return to gather them? Will they have been misled or will they be in faith trusting the Lord through it all?
- I believe our interpretation, although speaking to a specific generation, can be applied to all believers in every age: “Be on the alert. Be watchful!”
 - What a prophetic pronouncement and such timely words for every generation of believers.
- We should stand firmly in our faith in the Lord and not be blindsided or lured away from the truth of the word of God.
 - And being that these are the words of Jesus, may I remind us of His very words in verse 31: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.”
- God’s words are indeed eternal, and we must depend and rely on His very words to guide us without the influence and distraction of the culture, demonic influences, troubling times, or even growing persecutions.
 - Let’s Pray.



Mark - Lesson 14A

Chapter 14:1-11

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- Tonight, we find ourselves continuing through the events of what is known as the Passion week that ultimately leads us to the crucifixion of our Lord, Jesus Christ.
 - The culmination of Mark's Gospel all hinges on what happens during this very week.
 - It points to the very thesis statement that Mark begins with in verse 1 of Chapter 1:

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

- At the start of this Passion week, Jesus has proven to be the lamb selected by means of His Triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (Mark 11)
 - From there, we saw Jesus as the Lamb inspected which consisted of multiple events that ranged from his cleansing and teaching in the temple to His questioning by the religious leaders of the Sanhedrin council. (Mark 11:12-Mark 12:44)
 - This teaching, questioning, and inspecting on Monday and Tuesday concluded with Jesus giving the Olivet discourse to His disciples in Mark 13 on the Mount of Olives.
 - It was there where Jesus outlined for the disciples future events which would outline the leading to the close of this present age and start the beginning of the New Age.
 - So, as we enter Chapter 14 of Mark, we will notice at the onset of the verse that, once again, Mark is moving us into another chronological starting point.
 - And the way in which he does so will be quite “Markan” centering around a particular event within the Passion week which we will read about momentarily.
 - And this event, ultimately being a signal for the arrival of His coming death.
 - As we always do, I want to outline our text for tonight as we walk through our next few verses. Here is what we will see tonight:
 - 1. Seeking an opportune moment (Setting the scene) (v.1-2)
 - 2. A Worthy Cost (v.3-9)
 - 3. A Worthless Waste (v.10-11)
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures as we read the entirety of verses 1-11.
 - After we read through our text for tonight, we will reread our first two verses.

Mark 14:1 Now the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread were two days away; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest Him covertly and kill Him;

Mark 14:2 for they were saying, “Not during the festival, otherwise there will be a riot of the people.”

Mark 14:3 While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the Leper, He was reclining at the table, and a woman came with an alabaster vial of

very expensive perfume of pure nard. She broke the vial and poured the perfume over His head.

Mark 14:4 But there were some indignantly remarking to one another, “Why has this perfume been wasted?”

Mark 14:5 For this perfume could have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.” And they were scolding her.

Mark 14:6 But Jesus said, “Leave her alone! Why are you bothering her? She has done a good deed for Me.

Mark 14:7 For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me.

Mark 14:8 She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.

Mark 14:9 Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the entire world, what this woman has done will also be told in memory of her.”

Mark 14:10 Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests in order to betray Him to them.

Mark 14:11 They were delighted when they heard this, and promised to give him money. And he began seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.

Mark 14:1 Now the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread were two days away; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest Him covertly and kill Him;

Mark 14:2 for they were saying, “Not during the festival, otherwise there will be a riot of the people.”

- Mark, like the other synoptic gospels begins to transition the reader to a new start point in the Passion Chronology.
 - What ended in the last few verses of Chapter 13 regarding Jesus’ glorious return to the earth now shifts to the moment that He has been preparing the disciples for.
 - And He does so by mentioning two significant Jewish events: The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
 - As you may know, the Passover was observed in Jerusalem and was an annual Jewish feast celebrated on Nisan 14.
 - It commemorated the Israelite’s deliverance from Egyptian oppression by way of God’s divine instruction.
 - The instruction given was to slaughter a spotless lamb and place the blood over the doorpost and the lintel. (Exodus 12:1-14)
 - That way the death angel would Passover the Israelite homes preserving them from the coming judgement and destruction of the Egyptians.
 - This Passover meal would be eaten at the beginning of Nisan 15 which is between sunset and midnight Thursday evening.
 - The Passover meal was then followed by the festival of Unleavened Bread

which was celebrated from Nisan 15-21.

- And this festival would be included in the festivities of the Passover itself.
- Therefore, these two Jewish feasts, Passover, and the feast of Unleavened Bread, were often lumped together as “the Jewish Passover Feast” totaling 8 days.
 - So, with Mark mentioning that Passover was “two days away”, it sets up a timeline for the reader to see that Jesus’ death was drawing near.
- We find a similar pattern in Matthew’s gospel as well, only this time after His Olivet Discourse, He lets the disciples know He was about to be “handed over” to die.
 - I mention this because right after Matthew 26:2, Matthew explains the plotting by the religious leaders to seize and kill Jesus.
 - Ultimately, although these events are dealing with man’s plan to kill the Jewish Messiah, these events are Sovereignly designed by God for His Glory.
- I want to highlight these events and the day of the week in which these events fall on because having a proper timeline helps to have a clear chronology.
 - More specifically, it helps in providing the actual day in which Jesus was crucified versus the traditional day we recognize as Friday.
- In prior weeks, we have been able to trace what day of the week certain events took place regarding Jesus and His engagement with people in the Temple.
 - Moreover, these transitions to a different Jewish “day” were made clear with words such as “on the following day” (Mark 11:12) or “as they passed by in the morning” (Mark 11:20).
 - However, as we approach Mark 14, it seems as if the details become a bit obscure.
- The question becomes: “What day do we find ourselves in at Mark 14?”
 - In order to better understand these events, especially the accurate date leading to Jesus’ coming death on Passover, we need to know how Jewish days were reckoned.
- By understanding how a Jewish day was reckoned, it will provide us the opportunity to know the actual day of the week that Jesus died, more specifically what day we find ourselves in in Mark 14.
 - Although these details for some may seem unimportant, it will allow us to properly put together the entire Passion week timeline.
 - As well as understand this strange transition that Mark makes after 14:2.
 - So, in preparation for developing a proper timeline, let us review the structure of a Jewish “day” according to scripture.
- To begin, the start and end of a Jewish “day” was established according in Genesis 1 by God’s establishment of “a day” within Creation itself.
 - In Genesis 1:5, each day of Creation began with a 12 hour period of darkness followed by a 12 hour period of light.
 - Because God, according to scripture established each day within Creation as an evening and a morning, Jews adopted this same convention for counting their days.

- Therefore a Jewish day begins as darkness arrives, which is around 6PM and that pattern from dark to light persists for 24 hours until the next dark cycle arrives.
- Our modern “day” differs in the fact that we count our days starting at midnight which means our day starts six hours later in the middle of a dark period.
 - So, as we can see when we compare the Jewish reckoning of a day versus the modern reckoning of a day there is a 6 hour difference.
 - To make this a bit simpler, evening/night belongs to the preceding day.
- The next thing we need to recognize is that when Jews counted their days, any portion of that day was considered a whole day.
 - For example, if it was 5:00PM on a Sunday afternoon, it meant that Monday was only 1 hour away.
 - However, even with 1 hour left to spare on that Sunday, it still is considered a Sunday none the less.
- So, in determining what day Mark is describing here at the start of Mark 14, we must now apply this understanding of Jewish “day” reckoning against the Passion Week, starting with the Triumphal entry.
 - Let’s begin by placing some specific events on our Passion Week Timeline.
- According to John’s gospel Jesus entered Bethany on a Saturday in preparation for His Triumphal entry (Sunday) and stayed with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.
 - John’s gospel also lets us know that the day Jesus entered Bethany that there would be six days before Passover.
 - Therefore, this would agree with John’s time table of it being 6 days before the Passover in John 12:1a as well as Mark 14 regarding the 2 days before Passover.
- The question here becomes: “What is Mark doing here; what is he leading the reader to understand or see?”
- Well with this information in the forefront of our minds knowing it is now “two days” before the feast it puts Chapter 14 as coming upon Wednesday.
 - In one way, we see this timeline in mind pointing to Jesus’ death which will happen on Passover which is a Thursday, not a Friday.
 - Again, to some this detail may not be an earth-shattering conclusion however, it brings up the necessity for bible students to adamantly read the scriptures for understanding and not just take “tradition” or the Pastor’s word for it.
 - Clearly, the setup is death is coming and Jesus is preparing to die. However, Mark is going to provide us background as to the setup as Jesus’ death quickly approaches.
- It’s in verse 1b and verse 2 that we find the inner workings of a plan to capture the Lord Jesus in and around this time period.
 - Within all 3 synoptic gospels, we see this gathering of religious leaders.
 - And this assembly was more than just the chief priest and scribes, but rather the entire Sanhedrin council.
- These men were secretly meeting to devise a plan to “stealthily” seize Jesus and

kill Him.

- One thing to note is the words “were seeking” in Mark 14:1.
- This is an imperfect active indicative, which means that this planning of killing Jesus had been going on for some time.
- However, this assembled group had to keep in mind the events that were on the horizon because they did not want a riot from the people.
- This concern was quite valid in the fact that during the Passover, there was much nationalistic feeling surrounding this time.
 - On top of that, with so many people in Jerusalem for Passover, the number potentially exceeding 3 million, would have caused massive riots if Jesus, the one who garnered much attention and following, was captured.
 - Especially those who deemed Jesus to be their Jewish Messiah promised long ages ago.
- Therefore, the religious leaders planned to postpone His capture until after the festivities had ended to preserve themselves and keep from risking their dependence upon Rome.
 - However, this delay of capture, due to fear of rioting, would simply occur at God’s appointed time.
- Clearly, we are beginning to see how God can sovereignly use the wickedness and schemes of man to bring about His good pleasure.
 - Notice now that the scene will make an abrupt shift in verses 3-9. Check out the text.

Mark 14:3 While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the Leper, He was reclining at the table, and a woman came with an alabaster vial of very expensive perfume of pure nard. She broke the vial and poured the perfume over His head.

Mark 14:4 But there were some indignantly remarking to one another, “Why has this perfume been wasted?”

Mark 14:5 For this perfume could have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.” And they were scolding her.

Mark 14:6 But Jesus said, “Leave her alone! Why are you bothering her? She has done a good deed for Me.

Mark 14:7 For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me.

Mark 14:8 She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.

Mark 14:9 Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the entire world, what this woman has done will also be told in memory of her.”

- After Mark provides a timeline context regarding this coming capture of Jesus by means of cooperation amongst the religious leaders, he shifts scenes to a dinner invitation made by a man named Simon the Leper in Bethany.

- This event is where Jesus will be anointed, according to Mark's gospel, by an "unnamed" woman.
- This section of the text is often a topic of great debate and confusion for some.
 - However, if we remember the structuring of the Markan sandwich and how it works, we will see verses 3-9 are simply Mark going back to a previous event.
 - It is as if Mark goes back in time a few days prior to set up the discussion of this movement towards the capturing of Jesus.
- Therefore, when we recognize what Mark is doing speaking about this dinner hosted at Simon the Leper's home, it begins to make more sense.
 - We come to realize that this dinner at Simon the Leper's home is not happening on a Wednesday, but rather it happened prior to Jesus' Triumphal entry in John 12:1-2.
 - Check out what the text reads:

John 12:1 Therefore, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

John 12:2 So they made Him a dinner there, and Martha was serving; and Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him.

John 12:3 Mary then took a pound of very expensive perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

- ○ The question becomes how are we able to corroborate these events especially with them occurring at different points chronologically?
 - For a better understanding, here is a graph that shows the actions of each woman anointing Jesus with the oil. (Mary the prostitute anoints His feet, "unnamed" woman anoints His head)
- The next question becomes: How are we, as bible students, suppose to reconcile these similar events that take place at separate points in the Passion Chronology? (John 12 versus Mark 14/Matthew 26)
 - The quick answer is we must search the context to understand the author's intent.
 - And when we do, we see that both John's gospel as well as Matthew and Mark are centered on two common points:
 - 1. The growing plot to seize and kill Jesus. (John 11:55-57) (Mark 14:1-2)
 - 2. The purpose of the anointing for the preparation of Jesus' coming death and burial. (John 12:7) (Mark 14:8-9)
 - Again, we must keep in mind that trying to reconcile Luke 7:36-50 cannot be done because the first anointing from Mary, the prostitute, occurred nearly a year or so prior.
 - Therefore, what we can conclude at this point is that Mark 14 is speaking to the events regarding John's record of a dinner in Bethany.
- Again, the text tells us that the host of this dinner is a man named Simon who was

a Leper

- Now this becomes yet another interesting detail in the midst because not much is known about Simon the Leper within scripture.
- It could also be assumed that perhaps Jesus has healed this man of leprosy some time ago.
- I mention this because no leper could have hosted a social event in that condition according to Levitical Law.
 - So, I believe it's fair to say that Jesus had previously healed this man. Simon the Leper then invites Jesus over knowing He too was residing in Bethany for the Passover and wanted to host an event in Jesus' honor at his home and Mary, Martha, and Lazarus are invited.
- Well, we then find in verse 3b that while Jesus was reclining at the table that "a woman" who is not named or identified came into Simon's home with an Alabaster vial of great price and pours it over Jesus' head.
 - Again, the text in both Matthew and Mark's gospel doesn't disclose the name of this woman, but it is mentioned that she brought with her an alabaster vial of costly perfume of "pure nard".
 - And as we discovered earlier, by deduction, (Markan Sandwich) this unknown woman is none other than Mary, Lazarus' sister. (John 12:3)
- This alabaster jar was a small stone flask with a long slender neck and Mark is the only gospel writer that mentions that Mary broke the vial.
 - The word for "broke" in Greek is *syntribo* which means to shatter or crush.
 - So not only was this nard of genuine ingredients, but Mary found it worthy enough to crush the vial to the point that her most precious possession could be laid upon the head of the Lord Jesus.
- Unfortunately, however, it seems as though there were some amongst the disciples (according to Matthew's gospel) who found issue with what Mary had done.
 - And if we examine the Gospel records, we could potentially say that the leader of this indignant uprising from the disciples was led by none other than Judas Iscariot, himself.
 - I mention this because of what John 12:4-8 tells us in his account on the day prior to the Triumphal entry.

John 12:4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, the one who intended to betray Him, *said,

John 12:5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the proceeds given to poor people?"

John 12:6 Now he said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he kept the money box, he used to steal from what was put into it.

John 12:7 Therefore Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial.

John 12:8 For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have

Me.”

- The response from the disciples are speaking to this extravagant sacrifice that Mary has made.
 - The reasoning behind their indignation was that, to them, her waste of nard could have potentially taken care of many poor individuals.
 - They estimate that the vial of oil could have been sold for “more than 300 denari”.
 - Just to provide some context here, one denarii was equivalent to a day’s wage.
 - Therefore, this alabaster vial was the equivalent to nearly a year’s worth of wages for one person during that day.
 - What I find most fascinating is the fact that this type of alabaster vial was very difficult to break open as it was designed to only be opened once.
 - An object of this worth, in the 1st century, would be used for things such as a celebratory feast, wedding night as a type of dowry for the husband displaying her commitment to him, or burial purposes.
 - Friends, I think the text is calling for us to see that a great and costly sacrifice was made by this woman but beyond that her love for Jesus.
 - She is making a statement that the disciples seem to be missing.
 - This is an act to express her love for Him knowing what was to come for Him in a matter of hours – His death.
 - Here we see that Mary, Lazarus’ sister has emptied her life’s savings, her greatest thing of value, upon the head of Jesus.
 - He was worth the cost. He was worth it all and she wanted Him to know.
 - The question I believe the text is asking us by the Spirit is: Are you willing to sacrifice what is of much value to you for the sake of giving glory and honor to the Lord Jesus?
 - It will be costly, but it is worth it because Jesus is worthy of it all.
 - The disciples should have understood what she was doing and participated in this act of love and worship rather than being indignant bystanders.
 - This further validates why I believe this “unnamed woman” in Mark and Matthew’s gospel is Mary.
 - Why? Because an act of great sacrifice and love means that this woman has listened to Jesus for some time, she has watched Him do some miraculous things.
 - But above all she has heard His words regarding His coming death and is preparing Him for that coming moment.
- This is why Jesus, in verses 6-9 tells these men that what this woman has done is not a hindrance but is of great help to Him.
 - Jesus comes to Mary’s defense by letting the disciples know that the poor will always be assisted by them, in more ways than not, because they will be there to meet those present needs.
 - However, Jesus pushes the envelope with a contrast regarding His physical presence with them moving forward.

- Jesus lets them know that He would not be with them too much longer in the sense that His death in which He has spoken to them about 3 times is now upon them.
 - The appointed time the Father had set was before Him, in a matter of days, and here it is that Mary, by the Spirit's illumination, responds in a worthy way.
 - She has prepared Jesus for His burial! What a worthy service she gave to the Lord Jesus!?
- Jesus tells the disciples in verse 8 that "She has anointed My body beforehand for the burial."
 - Oh how we often forget! The disciples have been told time and again about His coming death, but the disciples seem to not understand.
 - But yet here is a woman, who would be deemed the least in society in that day, who sees ever so clearly what is coming for Jesus.
- That where the disciples having been pressured by Judas Iscariot to speak indignantly towards this woman's actions have been told that this was a great act of service.
 - Jesus speaks so highly of this moment, that He says because of her obedience and service to Jesus that wherever the gospel is preached, this woman will also be spoken of in memory of her.
 - What an honor!?
- Do you realize that as we are covering this very text, that Mary's service to Jesus is being made known and her memory is being mentioned regarding how she prepared Jesus for His burial.
 - So, with that great sacrifice from this woman came a great honor and reward from the Lord because of her obedience and submission to give all she had in that moment.
- Understand that what seemed to be a great sacrifice and loss, in the disciples' minds, was simply a response of obedience that led to a memory of this woman forever in scripture.
 - One can only imagine the rewards that have been prepared for this woman in the Kingdom.
 - Great sacrifice now leads to great reward in the future. The only question is: Are you sensitive to the Spirit of God leading you to what He is asking you to give up for His glory and your good?
 - We now move to our last 2 verses that will provide us with a heavy contrast regarding what I call a "worthless waste".

Mark 14:10 Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests in order to betray Him to them.

Mark 14:11 They were delighted when they heard this, and promised to give him money. And he began seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.

- So it is after the disciples having missed the woman's motivation of giving her most valued possession to pour out upon the Lord Jesus, that we find the underlying

motivation of objection to her gift.

- Secondly, we find the closing section of the Markan Sandwich.
- As I mentioned earlier, Judas Iscariot's heart was more fixated on the financial gain than the worth of this woman's sacrifice.
 - I mention that because looking past Judas' false sincerity was him seeking opportunity to profit now.
- Scripture tells us that Judas managed the money box for Jesus' disciples.
 - He collected donations as they came and used the money for everyone's accommodations.
 - However, underneath those pleasantries, Judas was pilfering funds for his personal benefit and advantage (John 12:6)
- Understanding this point of the narrative gives us a greater understanding of Judas' role and heart in the betrayal and arrest of Jesus.
 - Jesus intentionally picked an unbeliever to be included in the group of the twelve for this very purpose and as we see, yet again, God's sovereignty is always at work.
 - That where the chief priest and leaders were looking for an opportune moment, God in His wisdom provided an inner thread by which would draw the drama to a head.
- Really quickly, notice what the exchange of giving Jesus up for was – money. The very thing that his heart was set on.
 - Judas has been following the Lord Jesus for 3 years. He has listened to His teaching, seen Him do many miracles and signs, yet Judas' heart was left unchanged.
- This is Mark's point in these 11 verses. He is providing the building drama as to how Jesus will be betrayed and by whom.
 - God can use whomever He so chooses to accomplish His sole purposes even if that includes an unbeliever in their midst.
- If there were a picture that perfectly explains the heart of the unbeliever, it is this one here.
 - Friends, there is no true heart change within a man or woman unless their eyes have been opened to the truth of Christ.
 - Judas didn't understand the woman's rationale in using her expensive ointment to anoint Jesus' head – it made no sense to Judas.
 - To him, It was a waste of time and effort.
- What we see in these 11 verses is a huge contrast between the loving sacrifice of this unnamed woman who saw Jesus' worth and purpose regarding His heading to the cross to die versus Judas' having walked with Jesus but not having his eyes open to see who He was.
 - Whether Judas was still in the mindset of seeking for Jesus to establish a political kingdom in hopes for material gain or not, the reality was Judas' desires for power and possessions outweighed His reliance and dependence upon the Person of Christ.

- This is why the Apostle Paul says what he says about unbelievers in 1 Corinthians 2:14:

1 Corinthians 2:14 But a natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

- At the end of the day, what you think about Jesus and believe about Jesus will boil over in the end.
 - Jesus' death, burial and resurrection will either drive you to your knees in trusting Him or will cause you to scoff and laugh as you walk away from Him.
 - The response will be one or the other and as we know, according to scripture, Judas' rejection of Messiah led to a terrible end.
 - I pray that those who have not trusted in the Lord Jesus, that your eyes may be open to see the beauty of our Great God.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 14B

Chapter 14:12-21

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- Tonight, we will pick up in our continued study of the Passion Chronology within Mark's account.
 - And as we do so, we are seeing the anticipation of Jesus' Passion and suffering on the cross is soon to commence.
 - Last week, we discussed that Mark recalled a moment in which Jesus was anointed for His burial by a woman in whom we discovered, according to John's Gospel, was Mary, Lazarus' sister.
 - It was at the home of Simon the Leper where Mary completely emptied the contents of her Alabaster vial upon the head of Jesus.
 - This having been done in preparation for His coming burial, something in which the Spirit informed her was coming for Him in a matter of days.
 - This tremendous sacrifice spoke not only of her love for Jesus, but it solidified the reality that Jesus' death was approaching and where many of the disciples had missed this point, by illumination, Mary has been sovereignly set up for this purpose.
 - Mary's great demonstration of her love and faith in Messiah could be seen as having been progressively moved from one level to the next, beginning with Jesus having resuscitated her brother not too long before.
 - As I mentioned last week, this is how the Lord illumines the hearts and minds of men and women.
 - For some it happens in an instance, whereas others it requires a progressive chain of events that lead to eventual understanding.
 - What became such an eye opener from last week was how the demonstration of Mary and her love for Jesus was juxtaposed to that of Judas and his gradual preparation to betray the Lord Jesus for a mere 30 pieces of silver.
 - That where Mary deemed the giving away of her greatest wealth to the Lord in preparation for His burial, Judas saw that sacrifice as a great waste.
 - This was the case because as we discovered, for the non-believer, the minds of the unbeliever does not and cannot rationalize spiritual matters for it is foolishness to them.
 - This ultimately led to the indignant response that Judas led the disciples into regarding their rebuke of Mary and her supposed waste of goods.
 - However, it took Jesus to defend her sacrifice and point to the heart of the matter and that was that her heart was right where it needed to be – with Him.
 - The reality was, there was coming a time in which the disciples would not have Jesus physically present with them.
 - Here we find a heart check question: What are the motivators that cause you to do what you do?
 - Is it based upon one's submission to the will of God and His planning or is it more self-focused for the sake of sordid gain?
 - Here is where the line in the sand is drawn between those who believe and those who do not. Question is: Has one's eyes been open to spiritual truth or not?
 - The beautiful thing is that as long as we have breath in our bodies, there is still opportunity for one to place faith in the Lord Jesus and that timetable is up to

the Lord.

- So, as we witnessed last week, Judas' heart was more focused on a physical kingdom right then and there, in which he sought to be the priority – completely negating the purpose and plan Christ came for, which Jesus put forth in Mark 10:
 - “The Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost”
 - Therefore, the response in which Judas renders himself unto is to seek financial gain for himself through his own doing.
 - Ultimately, Judas' choices played into God's Sovereign plan which was Judas being used as the instrument by which the Lord Jesus would be betrayed.
- Tonight, we continue in this timeline to the cross and will see the following things:
 - 1. Timeline Chronology continues (v.12)
 - 2. Preparation for the Passover (v.13-17)
 - 3. A Meal, a bowl, a Betrayal (v.18-21)
- If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would be: “Nothing Gets Past God”
 - With this outline in mind, let's begin by reading verses 12-21 and we will pick up at the start of verse 12.

Mark 14:12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed, His disciples *said to Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?”

Mark 14:13 And He *sent two of His disciples and *said to them, “Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him;

Mark 14:14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?”’

Mark 14:15 And he himself will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; prepare for us there.”

Mark 14:16 The disciples went out and came to the city, and found it just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

Mark 14:17 When it was evening He *came with the twelve.

Mark 14:18 As they were reclining at the table and eating, Jesus said, “Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me—one who is eating with Me.”

Mark 14:19 They began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, “Surely not I?”

Mark 14:20 And He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who dips with Me in the bowl.

Mark 14:21 For the Son of Man is to go just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”

Mark 14:12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?”

- Before entering the Last Supper moment with Jesus and His disciples, we find that Mark provides us with yet another timeframe indication as to the day within the Passion Chronology.
 - Mark sets the scene by stating what day it was, plainly yet strangely, regarding the disciples seeking to prepare a place for their Passover feast with Jesus.
 - He begins by mentioning that this day is on the first day of Unleavened Bread in which the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed.
 - If you recall from last week's teaching, I mentioned that the way in which the Jewish Feast was celebrated on the calendar was based upon two significant events happening back-to-back.
 - The first event was the feast of Passover which was celebrated on the 14th of Nisan which was immediately followed by the feast of unleavened bread which happened on the 15th of Nisan.
 - However, by this time, they lumped both feasts together as the Feast of Unleavened bread.
 - As we discovered in our review of the Jewish Day reckoning, a Jewish "day" began with a 12-hour portion of night which moved into a 12 hour portion of day, rendering a 24-hour period.
 - And as we mentioned in last week's teaching the day in which Mark goes back to tell the story of Simon the Leper took place on a Wednesday which was the 13th of Nisan.
 - Therefore, the timeline has now shifted from a Wednesday evening to a Thursday night.
 - Mark's account furthermore confirms it is Passover "day" (Thursday) when he explains it was the "first day of Unleavened bread".
 - This now is consistent with the day in which the Passover lamb was being sacrificed" – which is the 14th of Nisan.
 - So, it is Wednesday night, after sundown, which is the start of Thursday, the 14th of Nisan (the night belongs to the preceding day).
 - And the disciples are asking Jesus in verse 12b "Where do you want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?"
 - It is through the disciples' questioning that we find yet another time frame indicator as to our transition into the feast of Passover and preparation for the Passover feast.
 - As I mentioned earlier, and as the graphic shows, the matters of Mark 14:1-11 in the Chronological timeline fall on that Wednesday, which means that Judas going to the religious leaders for his 30 pieces of silver occurred on Wednesday as well.
 - So, what began as a discussion with the religious leaders in private to betray Jesus turned into their surprising and unexpected meet up with Judas on Wednesday.
 - So, with this in mind as well as the Passover a few hours away, knowing that a meal and a lamb would have to be prepared according to Exodus 12, it begs the question: When did this preparation need to happen and who was set to do it?
 - We will address the first half of that question now and the second half will be

addressed in the following verses.

- To better understand the preparation for the Passover which included sacrificing the Lamb etc., we will need to examine the Hebrew bible to know how the preparation period occurred – so what better place to find that than the book of Exodus.
 - It is in Exodus 12 in which we find God’s instructions dealing with matters regarding the Passover itself and how each household was to slaughter a lamb at twilight for the Passover.
 - Check out Exodus 12:5-10 quickly.

Exodus 12:5 Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

Exodus 12:6 You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.

Exodus 12:7 Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

Exodus 12:8 They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

Exodus 12:9 Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs along with its entrails.

Exodus 12:10 And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire.

- So, with this particular instruction it was custom for each family or household to have a lamb inspected, for it to be found without blemish, and slaughtered for the sins of the family for the Passover feast.
 - This Passover lamb must first be purchased, then be slaughtered at twilight, which refers to the time between the two evenings, or where two stars were visible in the night sky after sundown, and then eaten for the Passover Seder.
 - So, this was the meal in which the disciples are asking Jesus about – it would be this meal, also known as the Seder, which according to the gospel accounts is what is shown as the Last Supper.
 - However, it is worth noting that by Jesus’ day, the Torah Teachers concluded that the Passover lamb would need to be sacrificed at the Temple under the supervision of the priest.
 - These progressive changes were done under the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah in an effort to ensure that all households were able to participate in Passover and were not easily fooled by Baalisim and other pagan influences.
 - You can find these reforms in both 2 Chronicles 30 and 2 Chronicles 35 respectively regarding the shift from household observance to National observance.
 - Therefore, these very reforms, although with the greatest intent, became mixed with God’s original instruction which gave the rabbis freedom to choose, eventually causing this mixture to be on full display in the 1st century and ultimately having the household lambs slaughtered on the 13th of Nisan during

the day.

- By default, this means that none of the Passover Lambs were truly killed on the 14th of Nisan according to God's Law .
- So, to ensure that there was at least one Lamb killed on Passover, the rabbis sacrificed a symbolic lamb during the daytime on the 14th of Nisan.
- That lamb would be brought into the temple courts on the morning of the 14th and sacrificed at 9AM.
 - It would be this lamb that satisfied the Passover requirements for a lamb to be sacrificed on the actual day of Passover.
 - This is why Jesus being brought to the cross Thursday morning would allow Him to serve as Israel's National Passover Lamb.
 - Most importantly, through Judas betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, it became the temple's purchase of the Lamb of God on Israel's behalf.
- So with this context in mind, we now understand the disciples asking the question for the Passover Preparation.
 - However, the way in which Jesus would provide those instructions would be a bit secretive and for good reason.
 - Check out verses 13-17.

Mark 14:13 And He *sent two of His disciples and *said to them, “Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him; **Mark 14:14** and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?”’”

Mark 14:15 And he himself will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; prepare for us there.”

Mark 14:16 The disciples went out and came to the city, and found it just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

Mark 14:17 When it was evening He *came with the twelve.

- Mark tells us that Jesus sent two of His disciples into Jerusalem and provided them with instructions to look for a certain man “carrying a pitcher of water” and to follow him.
 - One question that comes to mind from reading Mark's account is: Who were the two disciples selected to follow these set of instructions?
 - Well, we need look no further than Luke's gospel in Luke 22:8 where Jesus specifically tells Peter and John to go and prepare the Passover meal.
 - Along with that detail, we come to find yet another strange detail that Jesus includes in his descriptive series of events for where the Passover feast will be celebrated.
 - He mentions that there will be a man “carrying a pitcher of water.”
 - Herein lies a noteworthy detail that in the Middle East, only women would carry the water.

- So, to see a man carrying water and not wineskins was quite unusual and therefore a sign.
- This is why it is suggested by some scholars that this eye-catching sight was a pre-arranged signal and potentially an arrangement made by Jesus, Himself.
- I believe this is the case because as we walk through the detailed instructions of this account, it is evident that this man and these arrangements regarding the Passover preparations is something that required agreed consent, but most importantly great familiarity with Jesus.
- I say that because notice the definite article regarding “Teacher” in verse 14.
- Jesus tells Peter and John once they arrive to the owner’s home that “The” Teacher says, “Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples”.
 - The use of that article indicates that this owner who remains unnamed in this account is someone who has high regard for Jesus as being a proclaimer and teacher of Divine Truth.
 - If that isn’t proof enough, Matthew’s gospel in Matthew 26:18 shows us yet another probing detail where Jesus tells the two disciples to say to the owner, “My time is near, I am to keep the Passover at your home with My disciples.”
- With the coming arrival of the death of Christ, it becomes clear that the “time drawing near” in which Jesus is talking about is in relation to His impending death, which means that this owner, is in fact a follower of Messiah.
 - From there, Jesus lets Peter and John know that the owner would lead them to an upper room prepared and set for the Passover meal.
 - And with that in mind, it could be that a table and pillows for reclining were already provided for Jesus and His disciples and perhaps what was left was remaining food items to be prepared.
- It is in verses 16-17 that we see that every detail that Jesus had given Peter and John were followed to a “t” to prepare the room and the meal for their evening Passover Seder on this 14th of Nisan.
 - And I believe one thing that is worth mentioning is Peter and John’s ability to follow the very words of Jesus in every step.
 - Lastly this brings about a very important question which will lead to the hostility that will be in view in the upper room and that is: “Why the need for the many directives for getting to the location?”
- As we will see, with the betrayer amid the twelve, the timing of Jesus’ capture would need to be at the right moment and right time.
 - Therefore, to interrupt the things that Jesus would need to communicate to these men, especially with the establishment of the New Covenant, Jesus’ “turning over” would have to happen at the right moment and the Seder meal was not that moment.
 - So, to prevent premature interruption, Jesus provides these details to these two disciples so that there would be a location in place without any distractions and interruptions to accomplish God’s plan for His purposes.
- It is at this point that Mark leaves us yet another time indicator as to the time of day in verse 17. He states, “When it was evening, He came with the twelve.”

- This means we are officially in the night portion of the 14th of Nisan into the later point of the evening around dinner time.
- Check out with me our last few verses, verses 18-21.

Mark 14:18 As they were reclining at the table and eating, Jesus said, “Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me—one who is eating with Me.”

Mark 14:19 They began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, “Surely not I?”

Mark 14:20 And He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who dips with Me in the bowl.

Mark 14:21 For the Son of Man is to go just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”

- So, the scene now transitions to being in the upper room for the Passover Seder meal.
 - The Disciples and Jesus are reclining at the table as is custom for dinner and feasts amongst communal groups.
 - One could imagine, the dinner is moving in a positive direction, conversation is happening, but those conversations come to an immediate halt with the next few words uttered from the lips of our Lord Jesus.
 - Mark tells us that Jesus says, while reclining and eating amongst His disciples, that *one of them among the group would betray Him*.
 - Again, that Greek word for “betray” is *paradidomi* which means to be handed over or delivered over.
 - It is here within Mark’s gospel that the disciples detect their first sense of treachery and treason amongst their group.
 - You can imagine that much confusion was amongst the twelve.
 - Here is where having a grasp of all four Gospel accounts comes in handy as we work through what Mark provides as an abbreviated experience.
 - Verse 19, it seems as if the very hearts of these men are gripped in grief as the text tells us that they all began to say aloud to Jesus, “Surely not I”
 - I can only imagine it is at this point where perhaps even Judas is engaged in a false sense of grief to mask his true intentions of betraying the Lord Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
 - We find in John’s gospel (John 13:22-25) that Peter, in a perplexed state, gestures to John who was sitting reclining next to Jesus to ask the Lord, “Who is the one in whom He spoke of.”
 - To which when we jump back to Mark’s gospel, Jesus answers that question by saying: “It is one of the twelve, one who dips with Me in the bowl.”
 - Well, this begs a question regarding the seating arrangement that has been put in place for the Seder meal.
 - That question is: “Who is the one beside Jesus that will dip with Him in the bowl?”

- Who is sitting to the left and the right of Jesus, and for that matter how is the table arranged and organized for the Passover Seder?
- The table according to John's gospel seems to be arranged in a Roman triclinium arrangement which supposes a "u" shaped arrangement.
- Along with this arrangement comes a set timetable of this unfolding news of deceit, which begs another question regarding timing.
 - And to pinpoint a particular time, one could use the outline of the Passover Seder to determine when in the meal did Jesus make this announcement and perhaps at what point did Judas leave the table.
 - So, let's begin with a summary of the Jewish Passover Seder meal.
- For those who have participated in a Jewish Seder Meal, you know that it follows a script for Passover called Haggadah (Hag-ah-dah) which means a "telling".
 - The meal is arranged around three activities which include: 1) Drinking wine, 2) eating various food items, and 3) reciting liturgy.
- These three activities are spread throughout the course of the meal itself and are done in the following order:
 - 1. The 1st cup of wine, a washing, vegetables are eaten, a third of the bread is broken and hidden.
 - 2. 2nd cup of wine is given, washing, prayer, and bread and bitter herbs are eaten.
 - 3. 3rd cup of wine followed by the grace recited
 - 4. 4th cup of wine is given as a door is opened for Elijah's return.
- Each of these activities speaks significantly and symbolically of the Exodus and God delivering the Hebrew people out of Captivity.
 - So, where the Passover Seder meal remembers God delivering the people from Egyptian captivity, it also points to the coming sacrifice of Messiah for the sins of Israel.
- At this point in Mark's gospel Jesus mentions a very important detail which is found in verse 20 which states, "It is one of the twelve, one who dips with me in the bowl."
 - So, based upon our outline summary of the Passover Seder, at what point has the question been asked?
 - Well, it would seem somewhere between the 2nd and 3rd serving of wine.
- This section of the ceremony, called Karpas, follows the washing of hands.
 - The Hebrew term comes from the Greek *karpōs* which refers to a fresh, raw vegetable.
 - This is the section of the Seder where everyone dips a piece of green vegetable into salt water and then eats it.
 - Therefore, the individual who would dip their parsley or celery into the salt water after Jesus was in fact the betrayer.
- It seems that the disciples completely missed this clue due to several reasons – the primary one being they are more than likely trying to figure out amongst themselves who it is and wanting to verify if it is potentially them.

- However, Judas knew who Jesus was referring to because he had already made the deal with the religious leaders.
- On top of that, Judas, in all of this commotion according to Matthew's gospel (Matthew 26:25) asks, "Is it I, Rabbi?"
- To which Jesus replies, "You have said it yourself".
- And that Hebrew phrase when translated is actually is a Greek idiom which means, "Yes Indeed".
- As you can image the tension in the room is high which is further extended when Jesus mentions, in verse 21, the one in whom will betray Him. Check out the text again:

Mark 14:21 For the Son of Man is to go just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

- The reality was, although this betrayal was devastating news to the disciples, it was not a surprise to Jesus.
 - It was expected, yet at the same time the provision for His victory was already made.
 - Here again is yet another proof text of the Sovereignty of God at play amidst adversity and calamity in the world despite the circumstances of man.
 - The reality was Judas, through the volition of his own personal choices, was in fact held responsible for his sin against the Messiah.
 - That although this was destined long ago by God's plan, Judas' sin played into the very means by which scripture outlined that there would be one in whom would betray Messiah at an appointed time.
 - This was Jesus' point in verse 21a: "The Son of Man will die according to what has been written of Him."
 - It would now be that with Judas being to blame for betraying Jesus in hindsight, that at the table before all the disciples, Jesus pronounces a woe on "the man" who has betrayed Him.
 - A Woe is a biblical term that speaks to eternal judgement indicating that this individual is being condemned at this very moment.
 - As mentioned earlier, Judas has played into this active conspiracy of betraying the Son of Man knowing good and well that Jesus was completely innocent.
 - Therefore, this pronouncement served as a notice to Judas that what you thought you have gotten away with has greater ramifications than what you may think at the moment.
 - Judas will be held accountable for his sin against a Holy and Just God.
 - And at the same time, our Holy God can use the unholy means of men to accomplish His Holy and Just purposes.
 - So, Jesus lets it be known that the betrayer's punishment would make him wish he were never born.

- It's like when your mom used to say, "I brought you into this world and I can take you out". But this woe from Jesus is much worse.
- In other words, the very one in whom created Judas is the very one that will judge him righteously.
- Judas' punishment my friends is going to be one of great severity, in which Jesus mentions will make one wish they had never existed in the first place.
 - What we see from this reality is that there seems to be various levels of severity of punishment even in hell for unbelievers.
 - That just as there are rewards for the believer in Christ based upon our service to the Lord, in the same way, there are various distinctions of punishment for unbelievers due to the nature of sin.
- If there is one thing that we can take away and apply from the text tonight, it is that individuals have the opportunity to respond to the truth of who Jesus is by way of the Spirit's illumination or to reject Him and seek the consequences we are rightfully due.
 - As one Pastor once said, "You can choose the means and methods of how you want to sin, but you don't have the freedom to choose your consequences. That alone belongs to the Lord."
 - Our choices matter friends, and the greatest choice that one can make is by placing faith upon the Lord Jesus based upon the truth having been made known through the proclamation of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit drawing one to Jesus.
- I believe what we see here tonight responds to the greatest questions that individuals have regarding the Sovereignty of God and Human Responsibility.
 - And what we see ever so clearly is, through the response of Judas' actions, that the punishment he will forever face will be a clear memory.
 - His action and participation in the betrayal of his very Creator will ever be etched in his mind.
 - His opportunity for repentance had passed and the judgement of his eternal state was upon him.
- I end with the words of Moses' successor, Joshua, as he spoke to the Hebrew people, "Choose this day whom you will serve."
 - Let's Pray.

Citations:

- *What the Bible Says about Passover Kept at the Temple*, www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Topical.show/RTD/cgg/ID/19883/Passover-Kept-at-Temple.htm. Accessed 1 June 2023.

"However, these well-meaning reforms also contained a subtle change: Under both Hezekiah and Josiah—at the king's command rather than God's—the people observed the Passover at the Temple rather than in individual homes (II Chronicles 30 and 35). The kings may have done this to ensure that the people actually kept the Passover, and did so without mixing in the Baalism that was so prevalent in the land. These kings' examples introduced a second way of observing the Passover. Now the Jews had both God's original Passover instructions as well as the kings' reforms to draw on

when determining how to observe the festival”

- J. Jeremias, *Words*, 48–49. The Fourth Gospel’s description of the Beloved Disciple ἀνακείμενος ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ/ἀναπεσὼν ἐπὶ τὸ στήθος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Jn. 13:23, 25; 21:20) presupposes this arrangement.
R. T. France, [*The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002), 565–566



Mark - Lesson 14C

Chapter 14:22-31

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- Last time we were together, we ended our time in the Upper Room where the Passover Seder took place and emotions ran high as Jesus disclosed to the disciples that a traitor was among them.
 - What should have been a time of fellowship and remembering the faithfulness of God towards the Hebrew people became a moment of great confusion and questions.
 - It would be the beginning of the night in which the Lord Jesus was going to be handed over or delivered unto the religious leaders by Judas Iscariot.
 - If you recall, it was between the 2nd and 3rd cup of wine in which Judas Iscariot was dismissed from the table in order for him to “do what he needed to, quickly” (John 13:27) regarding his betrayal of the Lord Jesus.
 - Within the beginning scenes of this Passover Seder meal, one thing that we were able to see clearly was the Sovereignty of God at work.
 - That although Judas may have been the individual used to hand Jesus over leading to His coming death, this plan of Passion and suffering was established by the Father and accomplished willingly by the Son.
 - In other words, nothing took place that God did not orchestrate or allow.
 - It was in Judas’ willingness and choice to commit this atrocious sin, that the Lord pronounced woe upon the man in whom betrayed Him.
 - Jesus stated that it would have been better if this person were never born or put differently, it would have been better for this individual to have never existed.
 - The weightiness of this woe spoke to the reality that the severity of the non-believer’s decisions in sin comes with equal or greater severity as it relates to their eternal destination.
 - As I mentioned last week, as one Pastor once said: You can choose the means and methods by which you sin, but you don’t have the freedom to choose your consequences.
 - Well tonight, we pick up in the middle of the Passover Seder where the Lord Jesus prepares for what we know as the “Last Supper” or Holy Communion.
 - This will be the final Passover meal in which Jesus will have shared with these men in the past 3 years or so.
 - And as we will see, this meal will not be shared again until He comes back in the Millennium Kingdom. I’ll explain why this is the case later on tonight.
 - If I were to outline our time in the text tonight, we are going to see the following things:
 - The Institution of the Last Supper – v.22-26
 - Prediction of the Disciples’ desertion – v.27-28
 - Peter’s Protestation – v.29-31
 - If I were to put a tag on our text tonight, it would simply be: The Problem with Self-Reliance
 - With that being said, pick me up at Mark 14:22-31 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Mark 14:22 While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take it; this is My body.”

Mark 14:23 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

Mark 14:24 And He said to them, “This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

Mark 14:25 “Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

Mark 14:26 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mark 14:27 And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away, because it is written, ‘I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.’

Mark 14:28 “But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.”

Mark 14:29 But Peter said to Him, “Even though all may fall away, yet I will not.”

Mark 14:30 And Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times.”

Mark 14:31 But Peter kept saying insistently, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And they all were saying the same thing also.

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- We arrive to the very institution of, what we now call, the Lord’s supper or Communion.
 - And within the very institution of the Last Supper lies an immense amount of symbolism.
 - This Passover meal not only speaks to the faithfulness of God in His deliverance of His people out of Egypt, but the section we’re entering into deals with the great suffering of the Servant who has come – Jesus Christ.
 - The Jewish people would recall God’s faithfulness and deliverance through the ages with the Passover lamb.
 - Yet now, here sits the very lamb of God who has come into the world to take away our sins.
 - It is not by chance, but rather by providence that Judas is no longer seated at the table in participation of the remainder of the Seder meal.
 - This last supper with Jesus would be considered the very fulfillment of the Passover commemoration.

- The very Sacrificial lamb of Israel and the world, in just several hours, will be betrayed, handed over, beaten, and killed.
- This appointed plan of deliverance would be like none that the world has ever witnessed.
- According to our outline of the Passover Seder meal, we know that we are somewhere between the 2nd and 3rd cups of wine.
 - The bread and the herbs have been eaten and the next thing within the Seder script would be the eating of the Passover meal itself which would consist of the lamb and the bread together.
 - However, if you notice within the synoptic accounts, there seems to be no mentioning of Jesus and His disciples eating a lamb or lamb on the table.
- Every element necessary for the Passover Seder meal is mentioned, yet the gospel writers seem to have left out one of the most significant elements of the table for the Seder meal.
 - Within John's gospel we have a sort of leading clue as to potentially the confusion of the disciples at this point of the meal and it seems to be intertwined with Judas' dismissal from the table.
 - I believe this was providentially worked out to keep the disciples from knowing who it was while at the same time setting the table for fellowship of this Holy moment with Jesus.
 - Check out what John says in His gospel account, John 13:27-29.

John 13:27 After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus *said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

John 13:28 Now no one of those reclining at the table knew for what purpose He had said this to him.

John 13:29 For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have need of for the feast"; or else, that he should give something to the poor.

- John's gospel suggests that the disciples are seeking an explanation for the dismissal of Judas from the table.
 - And the answer they seem to land on is that Judas was either dismissed to purchase materials needed for the feast or he needed to give something to the poor.
 - It would seem that the explanation of Judas' dismissal was an innocent response yet immersed in utter confusion.
 - The reality was they were in the middle of their Passover Seder, Peter and John were told to prepare the room for the Passover meal itself, which could presume they would have provided the lamb, yet they did not.
 - So here it is, while Judas is dismissed, halfway through the meal, no lamb has been prepared and no one seems to have noticed its absence or mentioned it.
 - The question in all of this becomes, within this enigmatic dismissal of Judas and the setting up of the Passover meal: "Why was a lamb not prepared at the

dinner table for Jesus' last supper with His Disciples?"

- Well as we move toward the Passion moment it becomes evident that reclining before them was the very lamb to be slain – Jesus Christ.
- So, it is with the 11 disciples at the table and the absence of the roasted lamb, that they continue on with the breaking of the bread along with the herbs and vegetables.
- It's in verse 22 that Jesus, while the rest of the men were eating reached for the unleavened bread to break and distribute among the remaining 11 men.
 - Unleavened bread is like a hard cracker which was absent of leaven, stripped with small, pierced holes through it.
 - This was the bread that Jesus broke, distributed, and said, "Take it, (referring to eat it); this is my body".
- Now before we cry cannibalism, we must understand that Jesus was physically present with these men which means that no one at that table was literally eating the flesh of Christ.
 - Rather, this act of eating the bread served as a symbolic expression, meaning that we are taking Him in (in a spiritual sense).
 - This type of fellowship and symbolism means that no one who has not placed faith in Messiah could participate in this sacred communion.
 - This is why you will often hear Pastors mention to non-believers in a church gathering to allow the tray to pass by them.
 - This act is only for those in whom have believed upon the Lord Jesus Christ and are in fellowship with Him.
- This breaking of the bread would serve as a symbolic act of the literal breaking and piercing of the body of Christ which He would undergo as the Passover Lamb that John mentioned in His Gospel.
 - *"Behold the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sins of the world."* (John 1:29)
 - Jesus' body would soon be crushed by the hands of men but ultimately, poured upon Him would be the wrath of God.
- After the blessing and breaking of the bread, Jesus changes the Seder meal again at the start of the third cup of the meal – the cup of redemption.
 - The cup of redemption was the first cup to be drunk after the meal.
 - This cup traditionally signified the slaying of the Passover lamb that spared the Israelites from the 10th plague of the slaying of the first born by the death angel.
 - This salvific use of blood for the deliverance of Israel's first born, once again, would find its culmination within the shed blood Christ.
- This section of the dinner, although the disciples did not fully understand what was going on, was drenched in a time of looking back to remember the faithfulness of God as well as pointing to the fulfilment of the times.
 - For it would be through Jesus' shed blood in the coming hours which would be poured out for them all for the forgiveness of sins.

- It's in verse 24 and 25 that Jesus uses some powerful and very Old Testament language to draw the disciples to recognize what this last supper was all about.
 - He said, "This is my blood of the (new) covenant, which is poured out for many".
 - Depending upon what translation you have some texts will read "blood of the covenant" whereas some read this is "my blood of the New Covenant".
 - Herein lies a New Contract in which would be initiated through means of shed blood.
- Before any covenant was established by God in the Hebrew scriptures, it was always initiated by blood, like a signature of sorts.
 - Blood became the means of agreement and atonement as we first witness in Genesis 3.
 - When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, it was the killing of an innocent animal by which the very skins covered the nakedness of Adam and Eve.
 - The same for the Noahic Covenant, Abrahamic Covenant, Sinaitic Covenant – all began with the shedding of innocent animal blood.
 - So, the establishment of this "New Covenant" would not be any different, the only thing that would change is "Who's blood would be shed?"
- It would have to be: One of innocent blood, one who was without blemish, and one without sin.
 - Another question to ask was: "Where in the Hebrew scriptures was this Covenant in which Jesus was talking about found?"
 - There would have to have been some mentioning of this promise of what God would do regarding this new contract.
 - Well, we find the mentioning of this "new contract" that Yahweh would initiate in the future in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jeremiah 31:31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

Jeremiah 31:32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 31:33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Jeremiah 31:34 They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

- Verse 34 is powerful because the sins of the people would not only be forgiven but the text mentions that they would be remembered "no more".

- The Hebrew word there is *hat-ta* which deals with the means of expiation.
- Expiation has to do with the blotting out of sin and is in association with God's atoning work.
- So, with Jesus saying that the cup of wine represented His blood as being the blood of the new covenant to be poured out for the many, it shows that His death would initiate the contract for a new people who would now have the very law of God upon their hearts, indwelt in them.
 - Jesus was going to be the substitute by which the means of God's Holy wrath would have to be poured out, as the innocent party, on behalf of the guilty party, (you and me), so that this new thing would commence to the Glory of God!
- Jesus mentions, afterwards in verse 25, that this third cup would be the last time He would drink of "the fruit of the vine" until He drinks it new in the Kingdom.
 - The word "new" here is the Greek word *kainos* (ken-nos) which means new or in a different way.
 - This type of meal and drink in which the Lord Jesus would share in a future day would not be that of shedding His blood but of consummation and praise. (Reinstating the Godly-order)
 - Jesus explains what He means when He says I will not drink with you again until He reigns in the Millennium Kingdom.
 - This is why the Lord Jesus did not share in the 4th cup of wine known as the cup of praise or consummation.
 - Once the regathering of Israel in the Millennium Kingdom has taken place there will be a consummation of the Kingdom and great rejoicing of Israel and the Church together, both Jew and Gentile.
- Therefore, because Christ is not yet reigning on the throne of David in Jerusalem, there can be no initiation of the fourth cup, so in the meantime as we await the coming King and the consummation of the Kingdom, we are to remember what the Servant of the Lord (Messiah) has done for us in preparation for that great day.
 - It is after the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup that Mark says, in verse 26, that Jesus and the disciples sang hymns.
- Being that these hymns were being sung at the conclusion of the meal, it was typical to sing the hymns of Hallel (or praise).
 - These hymns consisted of (Psalm 115-118) which would ultimately speak to the very last hours of Jesus' life pointing to His confidence in the Father.
 - For it would be through the crushing of the Son of God which would lead to the eternal security and salvation found only in Christ, alone.
- After the singing of hymns and ending prayer, Jesus and His disciples would leave the upper room and the city, cross over the Kidron valley, towards the western slopes of the Mount of Olives.
 - It was here at the Mount of Olives, not too far from the Garden of Gethsemane, in which the Lord would give a prediction of the disciples' desertion. Check out verses 27-28.

Mark 14:27 And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away, because it is written, ‘I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.’”

Mark 14:28 “But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.”

- It was only a few moments ago in which these 11 men and Jesus were fellowshiping together, reclining in close communion with one another, that just hours later Jesus drops this bombshell news on them.
 - This news had to be devastating at best! Here are 11 men who have done ministry alongside Jesus, witnessed the religious leaders question Him over and over again, but here Jesus tells them after all of that, they will desert him and “fall away”.
 - This word “fall away” in Greek is *skandalizo*. It means to take offense at someone or something and thereby turn away and fall into sin.
 - Here, Jesus predicted that these 11 men, when the fire got turned up and Jesus’ suffering and death commenced, that they would attempt to flee and avoid the same treatment as their Messiah would endure.
 - Not only would they avoid the offense of His suffering, but they would completely disassociate from Him and desert Him as if they never knew Him. It would be as if “their loyalty would temporarily collapse.”
 - It’s that question folks often get asked in their greatest moment of distress, such as a gun pointed to their heads with the question: “Do you believe in Jesus? If yes I’ll pull the trigger!”
 - The question becomes, “What would your response be?” Would it be an unapologetic “Yes” with the peace of what will follow, or would there be hesitation in your response pointing to a collapse of confidence due to eternal circumstances?
 - This becomes the foundational premise by which Peter responds in foolish confidence.
 - But before we get there, I want us to see how, yet again, we see the Sovereign Work of God in these very pressing yet coming circumstances.
 - Jesus makes this “scattering statement” because He is applying what the Lord gave to Zechariah in Zechariah 13:7.
 - He mentions there would be “a scattering of the sheep because of the striking of the shepherd.”
 - What becomes such a key detail in this statement of scripture is to recognize “who is doing the striking and who is receiving the strike itself.”
 - Let’s look at Zechariah 13:7 together:

Zechariah 13:7 “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,
And against the man, My Associate,”
Declares the Lord of hosts.

“Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered;
And I will turn My hand against the little ones.

Zechariah 13:8 “It will come about in all the land,”
Declares the Lord,

**“That two parts in it will be cut off and perish;
But the third will be left in it.**

**Zechariah 13:9 “And I will bring the third part through the fire,
Refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.
They will call on My name,
And I will answer them;
I will say, ‘They are My people,’
And they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”**

- Notice that the one striking the Shepherd is none other than the Father Himself, therefore the Shepherd is none other than Messiah Himself.
 - Yet again, this is more descriptive language of the coming suffering and death of Christ!
 - This crushing of the Son of God speaks to the Sovereign plan of God at work accomplishing His will (Isaiah 53:10)
 - It would be through this scattering and ultimate regathering that the Lord would refine a remnant for Himself.
 - We see a glimpse of this regathering after Jesus transitions from this devastating news of His death to meeting the disciples at a particular destination after His resurrection.
 - He provides a statement of promise saying “After I have been raised” I will go ahead of you to Galilee.
 - One would assume, after all this discussion of death and suffering, that the disciples would have begun to understand what Jesus was about to do, and if anything, the Last Supper would have been the alarm bell to this coming reality.
 - Yet the disciples do not understand the words of Jesus regarding His coming death or their coming desertion.
 - And we see this lack of understanding in the very self-confident and self-reliant response from none other than Peter.
 - What we should find most comforting in the reality of Jesus’ promise to meet them again at the Galilee, is the fact that even in our failures Christ never fails us.
 - That where the Lord Jesus called these men and gathered them to Himself for His call for them, would be the same place in which He would meet them again to re-establish them and affirm in them what He has called them to do.
 - We must be confident in knowing that God’s calling of His own is not divorced from His direction of our lives.
 - We may think we have it all down pack and together, but sometimes it takes the Lord to remind us that we are His and there is no escaping that.
 - Check out verses 29-31.

Mark 14:29 But Peter said to Him, “Even though all may fall away, yet I will not.”

Mark 14:30 And Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times.”

Mark 14:31 But Peter kept saying insistently, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And they all were saying the same thing also.

- After Peter hears these disappointing words from Jesus regarding the desertion from the disciples, Peter speaks up in a rather pompous and self-confident way.
 - Peter declares his undying and committed support of Jesus no matter what and says that the other 10 may fall away but not him.
 - I’m pretty sure some non-verbal exchanges were made in hearing Peter speak for himself as if somehow, he was not prone to what in fact the Lord said all of His disciples would be susceptible to.
 - Peter let Jesus know, in few short words, no amount of external circumstances would change his allegiance and commitment to Jesus.
 - Now before we fix our mouths to laugh at Peter or call Him a brown-noser, we must understand where he is coming from. He has, probably, the purest of intentions to remain steadfastly committed to Jesus despite the coming storm and “*skandilizo*”.
 - This would be a true and sincere statement especially knowing the great concern that the 11 disciples just had in the Upper Room concerning the betrayal that would take place regarding their Lord.
 - It’s like when I promise my kids that I will do something that they have asked me for, yet due to certain circumstances the plans change.
 - It doesn’t change my position with my kids nor their love for me for they understand things outside of my control have happened.
 - In Peter’s case, he has great intentions and makes a promise that he ultimately couldn’t keep.
 - In other words, Peter overpromises and completely under-delivered. And isn’t that the story of our lives as believers in Christ.
 - We tell the Lord we will do better or make promises to the Lord that we won’t do such and such again, only to realize that we continue to miss the mark in one way or the other.
 - Our faith in Christ does not rest upon our failure in Him, but rather His faithfulness to Himself. We are saved not by our works or deeds but by His completed work on the cross.
 - If Christianity were based upon our faithfulness to Jesus, we would be on a constant rollercoaster ride of uncertainty!
 - Thank God that our faith hinges upon the faithfulness of Christ and what He has faithfully completed to the Glory of God and not the frailty of men!
 - So here we see Peter responds out of his own strength and ability and sense of self-reliance.
 - So, like a loving and compassionate shepherd, Jesus has to provide Peter with a dose of reality and humility so that He may understand that it is not upon Peter’s words that He is building His Church, but rather upon Jesus and His

words and faithfulness in which the Church will be built.

- Jesus tells Peter, that most assuredly, before the rooster crows twice, that Peter would deny Him three times. (The mentioning of the cock crowing speaks to the clear recollection of Peter's first hand experience)
 - It is to this response that in verse 31, Peter becomes extremely defensive, and pride begins to swell up. (Proverbs 16:18-19)

Proverbs 16:18 **Pride goes before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before stumbling.**

Proverbs 16:19 **It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly
Than to divide the spoil with the proud.**

- ◦ Mark tells us in verse 31, that Peter “kept saying insistently” he would not deny Him.
- The word “insistently” in the Greek is *ekperissos* (ek-per-issos) which means with great emphasis or beyond even extreme degree.
 - Peter did not want to believe nor hear what Jesus was predicting regarding his denial of Jesus.
 - Peter further drives his point by mentioning “even if I have to die with you, I will not deny you” in which all the disciples joined in agreement.
- As I mentioned before, we have a tendency to bite off more than we can chew and speak from self-confidence rather than Christ-reliance and the same goes when we consider our walks in faith.
 - Our flesh at times will attempt to get the best of us providing moments of weakness in our lives that can trip us up, yet our failures are not the dictators of our faith.
 - Rather, it is Christ who is the one in whom holds us up and keeps us together.
 - We must learn in our Christian walk to lean on and trust Jesus in all things.
 - I love what the Apostle Paul said regarding the sufficient grace of God for us all in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Check out the text with me.

2 Corinthians 12:9 **And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.**

2 Corinthians 12:10 **Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.**

- As Luke's gospel tells us in Luke 22:28-34, although Peter's personal weakness were a result of his own doing, they were prompted by the work of Satan.
 - Jesus told Peter in Luke's gospel that Satan demanded permission from God to sift Peter like wheat, yet the faith of Peter would not fail.

- What a powerful demonstration of the Power of God, in that although the circumstantial trials and temptations that life may bring are never a means to destroy us, they do refine us and perfect us.
 - The purpose of the sifting would ultimately be used to remove any and all impurities. Therefore, Satan is used as an instrument to bring about a sanctifying work in the life of Peter.
- That when Jesus meets His disciples in the Galilee, it will be a moment of restoring them and then commissioning them to the work He has called them to.
 - Friends, this is the Power of Christ in which we stand!
 - Where Satan attempts to destroy the Church and cause distraction among the saints, rather than relying upon ourselves, we must rely upon our crucified Christ.
 - It is the Lord in whom has taken upon Himself our weakness and infirmities so that in Him we come out victoriously.
- I want to end our time tonight with a portion of the lyrics of the great Hymn, “In Christ Alone”. The words read:
 - **No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand**
- Friends, we are completely complete in Christ! May we continue to lean upon Him for all things as He shapes us more and more into the image of Christ.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 14D

Chapter 14:32-42

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- Last week, we discussed the sneaky deception of self-reliance and how we tend to rely on our self-confidence rather than resting upon the sufficiency and supremacy of Christ and His word.
 - If you recall, Jesus and His disciples had completed the Passover Seder and the commencement of the Lord's supper, where Jesus expressed the weightiness of the breaking of bread and the drinking of the wine.
 - Upon the conclusion of this time of fellowship for the Passover meal and commemoration, Jesus and the disciples made their way to the Mount of Olives.
 - And accompanied with their departure would be the liturgical tapestry of the Hallel hymns and they sang praises unto the Lord.
 - It would be after this moment of commemoration and praise that Jesus dropped a bomb-shell announcement on the disciples – they would all abandon Him.
 - Upon receiving this news, Peter denied and dismissed this statement from Jesus out of a sense of self-assurance that He would never abandon Him.
 - Although sincere in thought, it would not take long before Peter's very words of assurance became a means of stumbling and failure for him and the disciples.
 - That as the time appointed for Jesus and His suffering was quickly approaching, the impending circumstances of Jesus' reality would unveil:
 - the fickle actions of man and the perfect humanity and Holy Divinity of Jesus (Hypostatic Union)
 - The difficulty of tonight's text will help us balance our understanding of Jesus' humanity in the sense of the great distress He would undergo while at the same time, come to understand the great theological complexity of God Himself having to suffer and die.
 - Without wandering into Theological error, we are going to examine the text thoroughly to understand the complexity of this great moment at the Garden of Gethsemane.
 - And it is my prayer that we will see, very clearly, the greatness of God and His salvific plan executed within human history.
 - If I were to outline our flow of thought for tonight, it would be the following:
 - 1. A Distress (v.32-34)
 - 2. A Discourse (v.35-38)
 - 3. A Disappointment (v.39-42)
 - With that being said, I invite you to open up a copy of the text and meet me in Mark 14:32-42.

Mark 14:32 They *came to a place named Gethsemane; and He *said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed."

Mark 14:33 And He *took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled.

Mark 14:34 And He *said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of

death; remain here and keep watch.”

Mark 14:35 And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by.

Mark 14:36 And He was saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.”

Mark 14:37 And He *came and *found them sleeping, and *said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?

Mark 14:38 Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Mark 14:39 Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words.

Mark 14:40 And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

Mark 14:41 And He *came the third time, and *said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Mark 14:42 Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!”

Mark 14:32 They *came to a place named Gethsemane; and He *said to His disciples, “Sit here until I have prayed.”

Mark 14:33 And He *took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled.

Mark 14:34 And He *said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch.”

- We begin tonight by picking up on this late Wednesday night after Jesus and His disciples have finished their Passover Seder, Communion, sang hymns, crossed over the Kidron Valley and made their way to the Mount of Olives.
 - From there they are moving towards a particular area near the foot of the Mount of Olives known as the Garden of Gethsemane.
 - The name “Gethsemane” can easily be translated “press of oils”, literally “a press for crushing oil out of olives.”
 - This was where gathered olives from the garden would be brought in an effort to be crushed to produce oil.
 - This location was a familiar place to the disciples as they would often gather here as their favorite meeting place. (Luke 22:39, John 18:2)
 - And being that this was a rather frequented spot by Jesus and the disciples, meant that Judas was aware of this location as well.
 - The text lets us know that upon arrival to Gethsemane, Jesus instructs His disciples to sit near the entrance of the garden while He goes to pray.
 - From there He takes with Him three familiar faces, Peter, James, and John, to go further to pray.
 - This would leave 8 of His disciples at the entrance while the remaining 3 would accompany Jesus further.

- This inclusion of the “inner circle” is a very important detail to note because these are the same three disciples that accompanied Jesus in separate events in which they witnessed Jesus demonstrate Great Power.
- The first is found in Mark 5:37 where they accompanied Jesus to Jairus’ home to heal his daughter who had died, but was soon resuscitated by the Lord Jesus.
 - The second time was on the Mount of Transfiguration in Mark 9:2 where Jesus showed these three His Shekinah Glory.
- It would seem as if these three men were going to get another glimpse of something, yet again, in which Jesus wanted them to see.
 - And indeed, this is the case because there seems to be transitional language used in verse 33b.
- The text mentions that after Jesus took the 3 with Him, He “began to be very distressed and troubled.”
 - There’s a sense here in the text that there is something “visibly noticeable” regarding Jesus’ demeanor or behavior.
- The word “began” is the Greek word *archo* which means the state of initiating an action or process.
 - And in conjunction with the following two verbs “distressed” and “troubled”, it conveyed an increase of terror.
 - In other words, there was a change of emotions in which becomes gradually unavoidable and noticeable.
- There are two rare words we need to examine in the Greek to better handle this change of emotion: The first word is distressed and the second is troubled.
 - The Greek word for “distressed” is *ekthambeo* (ek-tham-beo) which means to be deeply troubled or greatly overwhelmed with emotion.
 - And the Greek word for “troubled” is *ademoneo* (ad-e-moneo) which is when one becomes subject to extreme mental or spiritual anguish and distress to the point of losing composure.
- Mark further expresses the weightiness of what Jesus is experiencing internally by saying in verse 34: “My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death...”.
 - In other words, what Jesus was wrestling with internally regarding the reality of the Father’s plan was that this appointed time of death was quickly approaching.
 - That what He would accomplish on the cross was so heavy that He could almost feel it before it was going to even happen.
 - It’s like walking around the park in 104-degree weather and saying “I feel like I’m dying”.
 - The reality is you’re not actually dying, but that the heat is so intense that it feels as though it would be better to die than to endure the heat.
- Well in Jesus’ case, He is so weighed by the reality of the coming cross and the judgement of God poured on Him for the sins of the world, that He felt as if in that very present moment he was dying.
 - It’s that feeling you have when you receive news of a loved one you lost. It’s as if the wind is sucked right out of you.

- This immense pressure and distress is upon Jesus in a grave way.
- However, notice Jesus' reaction to these coming circumstances that He knows there is no escaping from.
- Verse 34b, Jesus tells His disciples to remain there and watch as He goes “a stones’ throw away” to pray.
 - What a joy it is to know that even in Jesus’ greatest moment of grief, that He finds necessity and comfort in prayer.
 - I believe this is a takeaway for us today as well!
 - The reality is we will never know the pressure and pain that Jesus felt in that moment of distress, but we do know that through it all He knew He needed to rely upon the Father.
- One question that could be asked is: “What was the agony or distress in which Jesus was about to encounter that has moved Him so deeply?”
 - Was it the Physical pain in which He was about to commence or was it something else?
- Although the physical suffering upon the cross would be overwhelming at best, Jesus was about to depart from the three knowing He was about to endure this coming suffering alone.
 - Really quickly, as we assess the distress that Jesus is experiencing in the garden, we must keep in mind that the acknowledgment of His coming death did not escape Him.
 - He had mentioned this to the disciples three times in their time spent together.
 - Mark 10:45 makes mention that “the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.”
 - The question would become: “What did this reality look like for Jesus and how would He become that ransom?”
- To put it plainly, knowing that physical suffering was coming was not the issue, but rather the weight of what it meant to be a ransom for the many was.
 - Becoming a substitute for the sins of the many meant the realization of being forsaken by the Father!
 - That although death would be the means of accomplishing the atoning work of Christ (bloodshed), Jesus becoming a curse and taking on the sins of the many meant that God’s righteous Judgement had to be poured out on Him to accomplish this means of reconciliation by becoming our propitiation.
 - Check out what Paul said in Galatians 3:13 and 1 Timothy 2:6.

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—

1 Timothy 2:6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

- Therefore, what Christ would enter by Himself required seclusion with the Father, so in the meantime, He gave instructions to the inner circle to remain there and keep watch.
 - One might ask here: “What are they to keep watch of or for?”
 - We will see later on in verse 38. In the meantime, let’s look at verses 35-38.

Mark 14:35 And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by.

Mark 14:36 And He was saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.”

Mark 14:37 And He *came and *found them sleeping, and *said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?

Mark 14:38 Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

- As the pressure of Jesus’ impending suffering increases, verse 35 mentions that He “fell to the ground” to pray.
 - Matthew’s gospel provides us a bit more clarity as to what Mark records as Jesus “falling to the ground”.
 - The word “fell” in Greek here speaks to that of someone laying prostrate on the floor as a means of devotion in prayer.
 - This type of prayer was beyond kneeling, but a dire seeking from the Lord.
 - The verb form of the word “prayer” in verse 35 speaks to the fact that Jesus was constantly praying this prayer while in the garden seeking to find if the weight of what was to come could pass from Him.
 - According to verse 37b, the request in which Jesus is petitioning before the Father lasted at least an hour.
- Notice, what Jesus is requesting from the Father in the indirect discourse from Mark in verse 35. Jesus is asking “If it is possible, the hour might pass Him by.”
 - What we first must recognize in this statement is that it is in the first-class condition in Greek. Meaning that this question does not speak to Jesus’ doubt of the Father’s plan in which He knows is before Him.
 - The premise of this posed request speaks the reality that within the bounds of God’s omniscience, He can do anything He so desires.
 - Therefore, Jesus is not speaking to the doubting of the Father’s plan, rather it was Jesus, within His perfect humanity seeking from the Father “if there was another means by which to accomplish His plan”.
 - And He asks this by seeking if “the hour might pass”.
 - Mark provides clarity for the reader as to the request that Jesus is petitioning before the Father by providing a direct statement of the discourse in verse 36. Here’s what Jesus prayed.

Mark 14:36 And He was saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You;

remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.”

- So, Jesus’ request regarding this coming hour of suffering, which refers to Jesus’ coming death, is that “the cup be removed from Him”.
 - Recognize the two terms here in which Jesus uses which correspond to one another: He makes mention of “the hour to pass and the cup to pass”.
 - Both are referring to the same devastating event.
 - These terms do not only speak to the coming physical harm of Jesus, but it speaks to the very wrath of God that would be poured out upon Him.
 - In other words, Jesus, the God-man would endure the tragedy of “being made sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - This concept, theologically, for many people becomes quite difficult to comprehend, yet it only becomes difficult when we fail to understand the hypostatic union.
 - In other words, when the 2nd Person of the Trinity put on flesh, “He didn’t relinquish His deity, but simply added to it!
 - Herein lies the great Mystery of the Incarnation!
 - Both the fulness of His divine nature and human nature dwelled together in bodily form yet did not mix – distinctly separate yet wholly dwelt in one person.
 - The mystery of this union can best be expressed in Philippians 2:5-5, where Paul mentions that Jesus “emptied” Himself. That Greek word is *Kenosis*.
 - Jesus emptied Himself by not abdicating or relinquishing His deity, but He willingly added to it the limitations of Humanity, yet He never used His divine attributes to relieve Himself of the limitations of being human.
 - For example, we know that Jesus’ question to the Father, praying that “this cup/this hour” would pass, was something that the Godhead planned in eternity’s past – meaning that this plan, this way of death, was always to be done.
 - Jesus told of His death centuries ago regarding the way in which He would become the suffering servant for Israel and a ransom for all.
 - Check out what the word says about Jesus’ passion in Isaiah 53:4-5.

Isaiah 53:4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore,

And our sorrows He carried;

Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,

Smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isaiah 53:5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions,

He was crushed for our iniquities;

The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,

And by His scourging we are healed.

- And prior to that in the Pentateuch, Moses records how one who would be deemed cursed by God and shown as a public example of His Divine punishment, would be hung upon a tree in Deuteronomy 21:23.

- But here, we have Jesus crying out to the Father, and for the first time in the New Testament calling the Father, “Abba” or “My Father”, and He is seeking to find another way? Herein lies the theological conundrum for some!
 - Was Jesus trying to pray to change the eternal plan of God as an effort to escape what would cause Him to be forsaken by the Father? How are we to best describe this moment?
 - Friends, this moment of prayer in Gethsemane demonstrates for the believer and reader, with much clarity, the reality of the humanity of Jesus as well!
- From a human standpoint, what Jesus was about to endure was beyond simple physical pain, gruesome as it would be, but above all, Jesus would experience the immense crushing of human sin upon Himself!
 - Here is where, in Jesus’ greatest moment of distress and grief, He left us with the most beautiful gift in that moment – the gift of prayer!
 - That when we face the greatest moments of difficult through various circumstances in our lives, we too can seek the Father in our time of need.
 - Yet at the very same time, it is within those prayers that we come to learn, as Jesus teaches, that within our prayers we too must seek the Father’s will in it all.
 - Jesus states at the end of verse 36, “yet not what I will but You will”.
 - In it all, He willingly submits Himself to the plan of the Father and demonstrates that He will submit to the plan as the Suffering servant.
 - What could our prayer lives look like if we had the same mentality, to submit despite the circumstances to the will of the Father in all things? How much more would we be shaped into the image of Christ?
- Well Mark continues and at least an hour has passed, yet the inner circle that Jesus has brought with Him to keep watch have fallen asleep.
 - Mark switches back from Jesus’ prayer in the Garden to the disciples’ failure in the garden.
- In verse 37, Jesus calls out Peter, who at this point represents the whole of the bunch with Him.
 - And the text makes it plain that these men were found asleep, not once, not twice, but three times according to the Gospel record.
 - I mentioned earlier that they were supposed to be “keeping watch” and the question that some might have asked was: “What were they keeping watch for?” Well, here we have it at verse 38.

Mark 14:38 Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

- They were to keep watch and pray that they may not come into temptation!
 - They were to be spiritually awake to seek dependence upon the Father just as Jesus was depending upon the Father for His very needs and strength.
 - This opportunity to witness Jesus in His greatest distress would have been a beautiful picture for the disciples as to what suffering well under pressure

looks like when you lean upon the Lord!

- What an example this would have been...but they were asleep!
- Now, what about them falling into temptation? What was the temptation?
 - There are some that think this is speaking to the disciples being tempted to deny Jesus or “fall away” as Jesus had predicted earlier. This may very well be true.
 - However, I believe the immediate context renders that the temptation was speaking of them falling asleep and folding under this current pressure of weariness. For if they are asleep, how can they watch and pray?
- Jesus then follows up by telling them that the “spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”.
 - In other words, their dependence and reliance upon the Father as their source of strength was greater than their human frailty.
- What great strength do we find when we rely and rest upon the Lord for our needs, even in our greatest moments of weakness?
 - Jesus, after giving them instructions again to remain awake and in prayer, goes back for yet another hour of prayer. Check out verses 39-42.

Mark 14:39 Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words.

Mark 14:40 And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

Mark 14:41 And He *came the third time, and *said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Mark 14:42 Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!”

- Mark tells us that this back and forth with the disciples and the intense prayer between Jesus and the Father was an all-night kind of ordeal.
 - They arrived at the Garden probably around 10/11PM and if prayer consisted at minimum of 1 hour spurts 3 times, that means that this event at Gethsemane lasted till probably 1AM.
 - So here it is, the disciples are terribly exhausted and at the end of their physical strength while Jesus is in the Garden, laying prostrate before the Father seeing if there could be another way.
 - Understand that what Jesus was enduring in this Garden was no small deal.
 - Luke’s gospel tells us that this moment of distress was so great that Jesus’ sweat “became like heavy drops of blood”.
 - In today’s medical description of this condition, Jesus experienced hematidrosis (hee-muh-ti-drow-suhs).
 - This is where individuals who experience extremely high stress levels have subcutaneous (sub-kyoo-tay-neous) capillaries burst, therefore causing blood and sweat to mix, producing a reddish color of perspiration.
 - Luke’s gospel even mentions that during this stressful time that Jesus is praying

an angel appeared to Him to strengthen Him.

- It was through the strengthening from the angel during Jesus' greatest time of anguish in which gave Him the strength to endure – all of this accomplished through the prayers of Jesus.
- What is most interesting is that the same way that the angels ministered to Jesus in His time of fasting in the wilderness after being baptized, we find a similar scene here in the Garden during His greatest moment of anguish.
- What becomes an interesting fact to see within Luke's gospel is that the mentioning of the angel ministering to Jesus was documented.
 - This means someone had to have been informed about this moment or at best, had seen this moment.
 - Most importantly, what a privilege it would have been for the ones in the inner circle to have witnessed such a mighty and Holy moment in the Garden.
 - It goes without saying that through each hour, Jesus returned to the same answer in which He began with regarding the eternal plan of salvation – Father not My will, but Thy will be done.
- It was now this last time (third time) upon Jesus' return to the inner circle, that in finding the disciples asleep and disoriented that He lets them know "their time of resting and sleeping has passed for His time of betrayal had come."
 - Within the text we find 3 times the failure of the disciples to remain awake to be watchful and to pray. And what a timely lesson for us this is.
 - If you were to ask people, on average, how much they pray throughout the day or even the week, prayer is probably the lowest thing on their priority list because of the time folks feel it takes.
 - Prayer is a practice in which requires much persistence and is something that we find, especially in this text, is of great importance.
 - Our prayer lives should not be centered upon the things in which we need alone, but rather how we can align our will to the will of God in all things.
 - When trials and circumstances often increase in our lives, we often default to pray and ask the Lord to take away these things, yet failing to realize that it is through this suffering that we find strength in the Lord. (1 Peter 5:6-10)
 - What if we saw prayer, not as a task, but as an opportunity to engage with the Creator of the universe in His work here on earth.
 - That rather than being seen as a time-waster, we see prayer as an opportunity to fellowship with the Lord and to know His will more.
 - It is in knowing the word of God more that we begin to align our prayers to His word and desired work for our lives.
 - We shouldn't see prayer as an obligation, or just something we do at night, but it is daily communion with the Father that deepens our dependency upon Him.
 - But lastly, we also see the Glory in suffering.
 - Jesus teaches us here that suffering is not to be escaped from, but rather it is to be walked through.
 - We can walk through our suffering well because we know Who is in it with us

and has endured it for us!

- Friends, it is Jesus Christ who suffered the greatest amount of suffering that one could face, and yet through Jesus' dependency upon the Father and the plans set before Him that through His suffering we are now at peace with God.
 - This is why Jesus is our Great High Priest! Check out what the Hebrew writer said in Hebrews 4:14-16.

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 4:16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- Jesus sets the precedent for how one suffers well, in that He willingly allowed Himself to be betrayed, handed over, and now being led like a lamb to the slaughter to become the propitiation of our sins.
 - May we all grow in our prayer lives while learning to endure well through our various trials as our Savior did.
 - Jesus came not to be served, but to serve, and a Suffering Servant He was to the very end.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 14E

Chapter 14:43-52

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- Tonight, we pick back up on the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane right after Jesus' agony in prayer has transpired, regarding taking the cup of the wrath of God.
 - If you recall, Jesus and His disciples have been in the garden for several hours, a familiar place of gathering for them in prior Passover celebrations.
 - And it is here that Jesus was seeking from the Father, "if there would be a way to bypass taking on the hour that was to come."
 - Remember that the term "the hour" and "the cup" are both interchangeable and relate to the pouring out of the wrath of God.
 - We came to understand that the coming physical pain that He would endure, although great, was not the cause of His agony, but rather it would be the separation He would soon experience from the Father.
 - With the Lord in prayer for several hours, we find that He came to the same conclusion every time which was, "Not My will but Your Will, Father".
 - Understand, this is the second member of the Trinity who has always existed with the Father and in perfect unity despite the agony of His humanity.
 - And here again, He responds in submission to the Father's plan they agreed upon before the foundation of the world.
 - What a beautiful moment of truth for us to take away: That our wills must always align with the Father's will regardless of what lies before.
 - God is Sovereign and as His created beings, we are to submit to our Creator!
 - As the appointed moment for Jesus to be handed over was drawing near, where the disciples should have been praying to not give into temptation, Jesus awakens them a third time with the news of His coming betrayal.
 - It was in this third time of prayer, that after having been ministered to by the angel sent to Him, that Jesus has garnered the strength to enter into this appointed time not in agony.
 - It will be in this next scene, that where the disciples anticipated demonstrating great resilience in defending Jesus, that they realize they bit off more than they could chew.
 - If I were to put an outline together for us, we are going to see the following things:
 - 1. A Betrayal (v.43-47)
 - 2. A Question (v.48-50)
 - 3. A Strange Man (v.51-52)
 - If I were to put a tag on our text for tonight, it would be: "Abandoned with a Kiss".
 - With that being said, pick me up at Mark 14:43-52 for our reading tonight.

Mark 14:43 Immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, *came up accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who were from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

Mark 14:44 Now he who was betraying Him had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him and lead Him away under guard."

Mark 14:45 After coming, Judas immediately went to Him, saying, "Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

Mark 14:46 They laid hands on Him and seized Him.

Mark 14:47 But one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the

high priest and cut off his ear.

Mark 14:48 And Jesus said to them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as you would against a robber?”

Mark 14:49 Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures.”

Mark 14:50 And they all left Him and fled.

Mark 14:51 A young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they *seized him.

Mark 14:52 But he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked.

- Mark begins this transitional section in verse 43 with the word “Immediately”.
 - If you recall our intro teaching to this book, I mentioned that the word “immediately” is normative to the writing style of Mark’s style in his gospel.
 - We see Mark moves us from one scene to the next as if it were a comic book storyline.
 - It is here that he leads us to the moment of the betrayal of Jesus as was coordinated prior between the Sanhedrin Council and Judas.
 - It is as if Judas’ arrival on the scene is happening right as Jesus has woken the disciples for a third time from their slumber.
 - The text tells us that while Jesus was still speaking, that Judas arrived to the exact location He was praying in, yet Judas was not alone.
 - That rather than being accompanied alongside the disciples, he is in lockstep with what Mark says was “a crowd with swords and clubs” in whom were sent by the Sanhedrin council.
 - Remember, the council included the chief priest, the scribes, and the elders of the people.
 - Although Mark’s account doesn’t provide us with who this crowd was made up of, John’s gospel provides us a bit more detail as to who was accompanying Judas at Gethsemane.
 - It’s in John 18:3 that we see the Sanhedrin Counsel supplied Judas with a Roman cohort and temple officers.
 - One question that comes to mind at this point is: “How many people were included in a Roman cohort?”
 - A Roman cohort consisted of about 600 men who were armed and ready.
 - The term “cohort” was Roman military terminology which meant that this group of men were preparing as if they were coming against some sort of insurrectionist.
 - On top of that, the text tells us that temple officers were included alongside this 600 number.
 - So, it is estimated that there were close to nearly 1,000 men in the garden at this moment.
 - One detail that I want to mention here is that as the scene has transitioned from Jesus waking the disciples to now Judas arriving with this large group of soldiers, it seems as though a line has been drawn in the sand regarding where Judas’

allegiance fell.

- I mention this because Mark feels the need to remind the reader that Judas is, “one of the twelve”.
- Why even mention this detail at this point if we know throughout the account who Judas was and what he had done?
- This is included to speak to the great severity of betrayal of Judas towards Jesus.
 - Here is the man that has called you, walked with you, loved you despite the condition of your heart and yet Judas chooses to go all the way through with his desire to sell out the Messiah for 30 pieces of silver.
 - It will be some time later where this great betrayal will come back to bite Judas in the behind, as he will try to give back the money to redeem himself after realizing what he had done.
- Judas has arrived to do what he had already planned and that was to betray the Lord Jesus, and in doing so, he has coordinated a signal to help the soldiers know which individual to seize.
 - The sign in which Judas gives the soldiers is a “kiss”.
- A kiss on the cheek to a Rabbi or teacher of that day was nothing obscure. It was a gesture of affection and reverence from the disciple to the teacher.
 - So, why would this be a sign to capture One in whom loved you and cared for you?
- This sign had to be one in which, to Judas’ fellow disciples, would be inconspicuous but to the Roman guard must be obvious.
 - At best, the other disciples would assume Judas has returned from the duties that Jesus dismissed him to do earlier in the Upper Room for the Passover Seder.
- So, these means of an incognito sign would cover Judas’ method of betrayal and keep the disciples from trying to strangle Judas for this act of treachery.
 - This even more goes to show us that the disciples were not following nor understood what Jesus was saying as it related to the “awkward moment” at Supper when Jesus dismissed Judas to do what he must do.
- So, this kiss is the signal by which would trigger the moment for the handing over of Jesus; a transfer from one trusted member of the twelve to the hands of the religious leaders.
 - We will get to the direct discourse of the kiss soon.
 - Now, if we move too fast past verse 44, we will miss the weight of the language because the phrase in 44b is hugely important.
- The term “to seize” is often linked to a person who has committed some sort of illegal activity.
 - Here it is, the innocent Messiah is being approached by close to a thousand men with swords and weapons wielded as if He has committed some sort of heinous crime as if He were a criminal.
 - And as we move along in this gospel account, we will see that this very point becomes “a primary question for Pilate”.
- Pilate seeks to understand, “what crime has Jesus done to be found in this predicament to which he finds “no fault”.
 - In other words, these religious leaders are seeking false allegations to prohibit the ministry of Jesus, yet all the while failing to see that they are going right along

with the Father's plan to accomplish the means of salvation.

- It would be through these false allegations that an innocent man would be sent to a cross, die a death that He didn't deserve, so that we would become the righteousness of God!
 - This becomes yet another demonstration of the beauty of God's Sovereign plan – knowing that what man means for evil, God will turn for good. (Genesis 50:20).
- It's in verse 45-46 that we find the abbreviated version of the exchange between both Judas and Jesus regarding Judas' betrayal and kiss.
 - Mark mentions that upon Judas seeing Jesus a ways ahead of the cohort, that Judas said to Jesus, "Rabbi! and kissed Him".
 - The word "kissed" here in Greek is interesting because this term, *kataphileo*, is an intensive form of the word kiss.
 - The sense of this form speaks to an elaborate or prolonged kiss as if to exaggerate the affection as an earnest gesture.
 - And exaggerated it was so that the guards would know exactly who it was in which these men were to arrest.
- Some thoughts come to mind here which is: "With Jesus having been such as well-known figure, wouldn't these men have known who He was?"
 - The fact that most of these men are probably here in Jerusalem as security measures for the heightened time for the Jewish Festival of Passover, they may not have known what Jesus looked like, necessarily.
 - Therefore, these men would depend heavily upon Judas' sign to know who to arrest and take into custody.
 - And as we see in verse 46, once Judas gave the signal, the guards immediately commenced in seizing Jesus as if He were a criminal.
- What makes this moment such a disheartening time is knowing that in Matthew's gospel, even to the very end, Jesus still called Judas, "Friend". (Matthew 26:50)
 - I am reminded of Proverbs 27:6 in this moment. Here is what the text reads:

**Proverbs 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.**

- ○ ■ How could it be that even with Jesus knowing the betrayal that would come from Judas that He would still call Him friend, is a testament to the love of the Son even to the end. That even for the worse of us, Jesus died.
 - His love knows no bounds. This is the Love of God – that He desires all men to know Him, yet when we reject that Love we reject the very means of true joy and friendship (intimacy) found in a loving Savior.
 - But most importantly, what I see the text provides us with is how mercy can still be provided to our enemies.
- Well, not too soon after the guards go to arrest Jesus, Mark mentions that "one of those who stood near with his sword" struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.
 - Now, Mark's account doesn't identify for us who this individual was, but Matthew's gospel (Matthew 20:31), provides us with a hint that this rambunctious individual was one of the twelve.
 - Furthermore, the beauty of all four gospels is that we can gather data from various viewpoints, and lo and behold we find in John 18:10 that this

rambunctious rebel is none other than our boy, Peter.

John 18:10 Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.

- ○ ■ And it happens that the slave of the high priest Caiaphas, was a man by the name, Malchus.
- Mark doesn't provide the discourse that happens at this moment regarding Jesus' response to Peter's actions or even to the Roman cohort's response to Jesus upon their arrival, but Matthew and John's gospel provides insight on the actions of Peter.
 - At face value we can see this is Peter's attempt to prove not only to Jesus but himself that he was not going to let Jesus be handed over, neither was Peter going to deny him.
 - And so, the best move for Peter, in his mind, was to allow his actions to speak louder than his words.
- It's at this point in Matthew's gospel that he is driving the point home to his audience that Jesus came to fulfil the scriptures, in which we discussed last week.
 - Jesus mentioned that "He must be handed over and from there the sheep would scatter."
- Therefore, Peter's response is to prove to himself that this will not be the case. Again honorable move, yet God's will must be done.
 - It's like a child trying to disprove what the parent has already told the child will be done, yet the child refuses to submit to the parent's lead.
 - And in this case Jesus has spoken, yet Peter does not want to come to the realization of that truth.
 - So, where Peter is trying to do things in his own strength, Jesus is telling Peter, it must be done this way and the way Jesus does so is so powerful!
- Jesus says (paraphrasing) "you are trying to fight a battle that requires a spiritual response!"
 - Jesus tells Peter, put down the sword and continues by saying that He could have appealed to His Heavenly Father who, if He so chose would dispense more than twelve legions of angels.
 - Just to provide us with numerical understanding, one legion equaled 6,000 troops which means twelve legions is the equivalent to 72,000 angels!
 - So 1,000 Roman soldiers compared to 72,000 angels, there is no match!
 - And in this same way, Peter's defense of Jesus, although with great intentions was detracting from the point of the moment.
- Jesus had to be handed over to die so that He could become the ransom for the many. (Mark 10:45)
 - Before we move forward, there is another angle in which John captures that the other gospels do not.
- John's gospel provides us with some detail between Mark 14:47-48, which once again demonstrates both Jesus' Sovereignty over all things, most specifically, Jesus' willingness to be captured and turned over, and Jesus' power over all things.
 - In John 18:4-8, John writes that upon Judas and the army's arrival, that Jesus asked "Whom do you seek?" to which they responded, "Jesus of Nazareth".
 - It is at that point that Jesus says, "I am He", however in the original manuscripts it

reads, “I AM”.

- This very statement from Jesus in John 18:6 causes this group of 1,000 men to “draw back and fall to the ground”.
- It’s as if Jesus’ very words of who He was caused these men to shutter to the floor.
- In other words, Jesus’ mentioning of being the “I AM” caused a Powerful moment that only God could cause.
 - I mention this point because, we should not think that Jesus at any point sought to escape this moment even though He was without fault.
 - Jesus embraced what He came to the earth to fulfil and that was the will of the Father.
- As we move to verses 48-49, we will see that the question in which Jesus asks the commander of the army and the temple officer is not a question of abdication, but rather a question of confirmation.

Mark 14:48 And Jesus said to them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as you would against a robber?”

Mark 14:49 Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures.”

- Jesus, seeing the extent by which the Sanhedrin Council and Judas had gone to capture Him, looked to be a bit on the exaggerated end.
 - From verse 43 and 47 we see that the gathering of close to 1,000 men to capture one person was a bit excessive.
 - This is to say, that there was a sense in which the Sanhedrin council assumed that Jesus and His followers could potentially try to resist this capture.
 - Let’s note that at this point in the account, it’s probably around 1/2AM which means it is still dark outside.
 - Therefore, the method by which the Sanhedrin council were seeking to capture Jesus was at a time when no one would expect it.
 - As we discovered a few weeks ago, the religious leaders did not want to capture Jesus in the daytime because there would have been a great uproar from the people, but at night they would have a better advantage.
 - This also goes to show us that the deeds of evil men always tend to be accomplished at night when no one is watching.
 - So here are the Roman cohort and the temple officers with swords and clubs in hand as if they are coming for a mob, anticipating hostility.
 - Yet, Jesus asks this beautiful question to reveal the heart of the situation at hand, especially the heart of Judas and the religious leaders.
 - Jesus says, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, “as you would against a robber?”
 - He then further expounds this point of secrecy further confirming for us that the officers present on scene were, indeed, Temple officers.
 - He says, “Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has taken place to fulfill the scriptures.”
 - In other words, Jesus makes mention that these men had the opportunity every day during the day to do their deed of arresting Him in the Temple, yet because of their

wicked hearts they waited until no one was around.

- The arrest being at night rather than the daytime showcased the cowardice of the religious leaders and the great betrayal of Judas, himself, yet even in the face of great hostility, Christ exuded great humility to accomplish the will of God.
- This night in the garden would become a mere picture of the hearts of men and would reflect the reality in which Christ would take upon Himself the cross. “For God would soon ignore Him while men despise Him.”
- This present reality was to fulfill one of many of the Messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Bible, more specifically, Psalm 22:6. Check out the text:

**Psalm 22:6 But I am a worm and not a man,
A reproach of men and despised by the people.**

- ○ ■ This was a Psalm written by David speaking to what he felt as God’s abandonment from him, yet towards the end of this psalm there would be an eventual joining in of praises to the Lord in Israel for His glorious salvation.
- This Suffering Servant and soon coming King was, from this point forward, despised as a “subhuman worm” by men yet, through his suffering and being despised, would come great joy for Israel and the world through His victory over death!
- But one notable Old Testament text that would speak even more clearly to this grief and abandonment that Christ would endure is none other than Isaiah 53:3.

**Isa.53:3 He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.**

- ○ From the great suffering that would soon commence, it would seem like the weight of that pressure was growing so much so that it would collapse upon the disciples.
 - The text mentions in verse 50 that after Jesus’ mention of this secretive arrest, which would lead to a faulty trial, that “they all left Him” and fled.
- Once Jesus’ willingness to accept this coming suffering and death was made clear to His disciples, both the disciples’ loyalty and confidence shrieked back and collapsed. (All 11 loyal disciples fled the scene, just as Jesus predicted.)
 - Where Peter was once confident and assured, he became cowardly and ran for cover.
 - Where he once boasted of his unwavering allegiance, he now became weary.
 - Where Peter raised the sword to the defense of Jesus, he now dropped the sword and ran.
 - Where Peter spoke unequivocally about Jesus being the Christ the Son of the Living God, he now abandoned the very one in whom would be his very deliverer.
- This had to have been a heart-breaking reality. I could imagine as Peter leaves the scene in utter fear of what could be potentially coming for Him, that He looked back at the Lord Jesus, now isolated and alone with no one beside him.
 - He had just done what he said he would never do, even if it meant death for him. This had to have weighed heavy on him.
- Herein lies the Christian life for believers even today, that we have these great moments of living for Jesus and doing for Jesus, but often when the pressure is

turned up that confidence seems to fade away.

- Perhaps this is the case because our confidence was more centered on what we can do than what Christ has done?
- Where Christ was once surrounded by His disciples He is now faced with abandonment as He makes His way to the cross, yet Jesus did not lose sight of what was before Him – the cross was His call and purpose.
- We now arrive to our last two verses tonight. Two verses that spark great mystery while yet providing clarity to these preceding verses. Check out verses 51-52.

Mark 14:51 A young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they *seized him.

Mark 14:52 But he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked.

- We find ourselves at a strange section of our text tonight.
 - These 2 verses have brought about much speculation ranging from the credibility of this gospel account to the literary abilities of the writer, John Mark.
 - Along with these speculations arise the question that you might be asking yourself, and that is, “who is this “young man?”
 - This very question is up for debate as the identification of this man is not revealed and has therefore given way to meaningless conjecture.
 - There are some that say that this mystery man is none other than John Mark, himself. This notion comes from a 13th century Coptic manuscript, discovered by Rupert Allen.
 - It is said that in the footnotes of this manuscript in Aramaic were the possible identities of this mystery man. The names were either James, son of Joseph and Mark the Evangelist.
 - However, this later discovery was long refuted through the assertion of Papias, the 2nd century bishop of Hierapolis that stated that Mark, “neither heard the Lord nor followed him’ (Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 3.39.15)
 - The list of possibilities goes on and on!
 - This leads me to believe that despite the identification of the man’s name, yet Mark’s inclusion of these 2 verses, where the other gospel writers excluded this event, that the Holy Spirit deemed these two verses necessary to be included in the canon.
 - The question to that deduction becomes: “What was Mark doing in including these 2 verses?”
 - Clearly the name of the man is unimportant, therefore there has to be some meaning found in the text in a literal sense. (This event happened)
 - Well, in order for us to find that meaning, there are a few terms we need to look at in the text. Those words include:
 - 1. Following, Escaped Naked
 - 2. Linen Sheet
 - Let’s begin with the word “following”.
 - The word “following” in Greek is *synakoloutheo* which means to go or travel along with another or others or to accompany someone.
 - The text makes it clear that this young man, whoever he was, has been “following Jesus” or has been accompanying Jesus along the way.

- To “follow” Jesus was what the disciples had been doing during Jesus’ earthly ministry (the root word: *akoloutheo*) which we see in passages such as (Mark 2:14;8:34;10:21).
- So, what this young man is doing is following along with Jesus as He has been arrested...maybe following behind at some distance of sorts, which means that this young man potentially was another follower/disciple of Christ, just not within the 12.
- At this point it seems that this follower, at first read, seems to be going the extra mile, farther than what the remaining 11 have gone because they have fled.
 - But verse 51b mentions that the young man is seized. The same Greek word used in verse 46 regarding Jesus’ arrest.
 - It’s at this point in which verse 52 mentions that the young man pulled free and escaped.
 - There becomes here a picture of sorts, that where the disciples once followed Jesus, so did this young man, yet at the very same time, where the disciples fled due to pressure, even having gone a step further, so did the young man flee.
- Therefore, this sense of fleeing amid fear demonstrated the disciples’ failure.
 - In other words, where at one point they gave up everything to follow Him, they now left “their everything” to abandon Him.
 - Therefore, this young man’s nakedness speaks to the complete abandonment and shame of the disciples at this point in Mark’s narrative.
- As Donahue and Harrington mention in their commentary of Mark’s gospel, “The disciples had chosen shame over fidelity to Jesus.”
 - Let’s now examine the linen sheet.
- The term “linen cloth” (*sindon*) appears twice in Mark 14:50-51. The next time that this term “linen cloth” comes up is in Mark 15:46 where it is mentioned twice as well.
 - That where this young man, at one point is wearing this garment of clothing, it is soon pulled from him and he runs away naked and ashamed, yet in Mark 15:46, the next mentioning of linen cloths is where Jesus is wrapped in linen cloths for burial.
 - So what could be seen here in the text is the garments used in Mark’s gospel is utilized as a literary device (motif).
- In other words, where the disciples run away in despair and shame from Jesus, it would be Jesus himself who would put upon Himself our shame and grief so that in exchange, we would be made right before God.
 - The beautiful lesson here, regarding discipleship, is that the development of the believer rests in the position in which the believer has been placed and that is in Christ alone.
- When we put the word up to our lives, as a mirror, we see that we too are like this unnamed man (disciples), prone to wonder and fail.
 - Yet, when we look to Jesus, He remains consistent despite the collapse of trust.
 - When we look to Jesus, He remained faithful to the Father’s will – even to the point of death!
- The moment that we think we can go further on our own rather than depending upon the Lord through it all, is the moment we too will fall short.
 - I am reminded of the hymn, “He Will Hold Me Fast”, written by Ada Habershon and Matthew Merker. The lyrics say:

When I fear my faith will fail
Christ will hold me fast
When the tempter would prevail
He will hold me fast
I could never keep my hold
Through life's fearful path
For my love is often cold
He must hold me fast
He will hold me fast
He will hold me fast
For my Saviour loves me so
He will hold me fast
Raised with Him to endless life
He will hold me fast
'Til our faith is turned to sight
When He comes at last!

- Friends, it is Christ who holds us near. His work alone sustains us!
 - His work alone preserves us. His work alone justifies us. And by His Spirit, He alone sanctifies us.
 - Where we are weak, Christ is strong. May we lean upon the arms of Christ for Salvation is found in Him alone.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 14F

Chapter 14:53-65

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- Last time, we witnessed the betrayal of Judas towards Jesus with an elusive kiss in the Garden of Gethsemane.
 - That kiss became the sign by which the Roman cohort and Temple officials would identify the subject in whom they would arrest – the Lord Jesus.
 - This moment, for Peter, would be marked by his ability to either come to the defense of Jesus or to tuck-tail and run.
 - And to be a man of his word, he took the initiative to strike and kill one of the guards, however he misses and chops off the ear of Malchus, the slave of the high priest Caiaphas.
 - After this premature attack, to redirect the moment, Jesus heals the man's ear and pivots to questioning the method of His capture, as if some common criminal.
 - It would be this pivot that gave way for the disciples to flee the imminent danger that lay ahead for Jesus.
 - He has foretold, several times, this path of suffering to His disciples and spoke to their abandonment of Him at this moment.
 - This ultimately left Jesus alone in the garden of Gethsemane with potentially a thousand men now preparing to lead him to, what I deem, an illegitimate trial before the high priest.
 - Lastly, we saw from the last two verses the mention of a strange man who followed behind Jesus in white linen cloths, but upon being caught, he too fled for safety.
 - And what we saw from these two obscure verses was the reality of the full abandonment of Jesus by his disciples and followers at this time.
 - That what He would endure in the next few hours, no one could come to endure with Him.
 - That this sole journey to the cross would be something that only Christ alone could bear and take on as the ransom for the many.
 - Tonight, we are going to witness the beginnings of the religious trial that Jesus will face as the religious leaders seek to indict him on false charges.
 - What will become quite disturbing is the extent to which these religious leaders go out of their way to bend the rules, by any means necessary, to kill Jesus to protect their religious clout.
 - Here is our outline for what we will uncover tonight in our teaching. We will see the following things:
 - 1. Religious Trial before Annas (John 18:12-14) - Background
 - 2. Religious Trial before Caiaphas (Mark 14:53-59)
 - 3. The High Priest puts Jesus under Oath (v.60-62)
 - 4. A Verdict is Rendered (v.63-65)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would be: A Miscarriage of Justice: The Trial of Christ.
 - With that being said, meet me in Mark 14:53-65 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Mark 14:53 They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes *gathered together.

Mark 14:54 Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire.

Mark 14:55 Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, and they were not finding any.

Mark 14:56 For many were giving false testimony against Him, but their testimony was not consistent.

Mark 14:57 Some stood up and began to give false testimony against Him, saying,

Mark 14:58 “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.’”

Mark 14:59 Not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.

Mark 14:60 The high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, “Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?”

Mark 14:61 But He kept silent and did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?”

Mark 14:62 And Jesus said, “I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

Mark 14:63 Tearing his clothes, the high priest *said, “What further need do we have of witnesses?”

Mark 14:64 You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?” And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Mark 14:65 Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, “Prophecy!” And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.

(Re-read v.53-59)

- We come to the section of our text tonight that addresses the trials of Jesus. He will endure several trials as we will discover in the coming weeks.
 - The first round of trials would consist of a religious, Jewish trial while the others consist of a civil Gentile trial, led by the Romans.
 - According to Mark’s gospel, starting in verse 53, he states that Jesus was led away from the garden of Gethsemane to the high priest’s home before the Sanhedrin council.
 - However, as we read further, we notice that Mark’s account begins the trial with Caiaphas leading the proceedings, whereas John’s gospel begins with Annas’ trial.
 - The question becomes: “Chronologically speaking, which high priest does Jesus meet first?” We find this answer in John 18:24.
 - Check out the text:

John 18:24 So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

- ○ Another question that arises is: “Why is Jesus first led to Annas if Caiaphas is the high priest during that year?”
- Annas served as high priest from AD 6/7 to AD14. He was later deposed by Valerius Gratus who was the Roman governor at the time.
 - However, Annas retained control of the priesthood as he was succeeded by his sons, including his son-in-law, Caiaphas.
 - Therefore, the imagery of Annas’ role becomes like that of the Godfather.
 - Not only did Annas have such control of the priesthood, but he was the head of the private money-changing business.
- So, with Jesus having interrupted his business on several occasions, it became clear that Annas had a “personal grudge” against Jesus, therefore he pulls his power card to address Jesus first.
 - This ultimately leads the trial to begin with Annas and then move to Caiaphas within the same compound.
- Despite the trial beginning with Annas, we come to realize through the gospel records that some serious flaws are found in these proceedings.
 - Within Matthew, Mark, and John’s accounts, all three showcase multiple cases of abuse of Jewish Jurisprudence and ignoring of Jewish Law within these trials.
- It’s in the early morning that John’s gospel mentions that Peter had followed Jesus to the high priest’s home to see what was going to happen to Him.
 - An unnamed disciple, potentially the beloved disciple John, helps Peter to get into the courtyard.
 - Most scholars agree the Apostle John and his family had familiar contact to the priesthood through Salome and Elizabeth.
 - This supposed relationship allowed the doorkeeper to permit Peter to accompany John through the gates and into the courtyard.
- Peter is now in the courtyard on a cold, dark early morning around the same men that have arrested Jesus.
 - John 18 mentions that he is standing near the charcoal fire to warm himself.
 - The fact that Peter was not been arrested at this point, yet is “in the light” of the fire, shows us that the officers clearly could not facially recognize him amongst the officers.
 - This allows Peter to gain the inside scoop on this farce of a trial.
 - From this point, Peter’s narration fades to the background as Jesus and the illegalities of this trial rise to the forefront.
- Now because we are walking through Mark’s gospel, I want to stick with our text, however, I believe it is important that we identify a few things from the first trial documented by John. Here is what we should take away:
 - 1. There are several issues that help us identify that these beginning proceedings were illegal in their initiation.

- 2. Secondly, the first half of this religious trial, under Annas, was without the authority of a specific charge.
- Let's begin with the illegalities of this preliminary religious trial – in which these guidelines were set by the Mishnah:
 - 1. First, no trials were to occur before the morning of the sacrifice.
 - 2. All trials were to be public therefore deeming secret trials, such as this one, to be illegal.
 - 3. All Sanhedrin trials were to be held in the Hall of Judgement in the Temple area, not in the High Priest's home.
 - 4. Capital cases required a minimum of twenty-three judges, however, due to the trial being at night, the required number wasn't available.
 - 5. This one speaks volumes in this case: There had to be an assumption of innocence until proven guilty, similar to what we have here in the United States. This was essential within Jewish Jurisprudence.
 - 6. An accused person could not testify against himself, which is why Jesus responds the way He does in John 18:20-21 which leads to the 7th issue.
 - 7. There had to be at least two witnesses in which their testimonies had to be in perfect agreement. (Numbers 5:30, Deuteronomy 17:6;19:15)
- Lastly, we see that this preliminary trial ended with no specific charge. This corroborates Jesus' very words in John 18:23 where He said, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?"
 - In other words, provide me the evidence of my guilt or wrongdoing/saying.
- The reality was, there was no cause for Jesus' arrest except for the fact that He was hated and reviled for who He was and what He came to do.
 - So, with this background in mind, we now pick back up to the second trial held before Caiaphas in verses 53-59 of Mark 14.
- It's after the initial hearing by Annas that he sends Jesus to Caiaphas.
 - At this point Jesus is standing before the Sanhedrin council to be sentenced to death, however, Mark makes mention of several judicial issues that arise even before the council.
 - It can be assumed that at this point, both Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were absent from these proceedings.
- As I mentioned before, one of the things required by Jewish Law was that there had to be two to three witnesses that could attest to the crime committed.
 - Along with those two to three witnesses must be a consistent testimony that had to be corroborated separately to refrain from false testimonies.
- However, as verse 55b tells us, with the council's persistence to find consistent testimony, they failed to find any.
 - It became clear that most witnesses they recruited spewed false testimony and the council let those matters go unchecked.
 - This even more shows the reader that the intent of this council was to distort justice, by any means, in order to attain what they wanted – to kill the Lord Jesus.

- One thing that the text makes evidently known is that the hearts of these men were set upon evil and in turn they completely distorted justice.
 - What makes this proceeding such a farce is that according to the Mishnah, those who provided false testimony were to be legally put to death.
 - Yet here we find the council not condemning but cooperating with these false witnesses to attain the verdict that they have already prepared.
- At this point, these men are simply following legal formalities to get their end result.
 - If there was ever a moment in which justice was abused and the system of law and governance misused, it was here.
 - Yet, it would be the same abused and suffering Christ who would soon die, even for such as these.
- In verses 57-59 Mark tells us that false testimonies continued to come forth and this time, some stood up and provided false testimony in which “they say” Jesus said something He didn’t.
 - The text, in verse 58, says “We heard Him say, I will destroy the temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.”
- In a plain reading through Mark and Matthew’s account, we see these two testimonies are not the same, and Mark emphatically notes it as false (Mark 14:59)
 - Mark’s gospel states that one witness says “I will destroy this temple...”
 - Matthew’s gospel states the other witness says, “I am able to destroy the temple”.
- However, to verify what was said, we need to see how these witnesses distorted Jesus’ words in the first place.
 - It’s in John 2:19 that we have evidence these men have completely taken Jesus’ words out of context.
 - Jesus’ own words were misinterpreted in that He was speaking cryptically.
- He was referring to the temple as “His” body being destroyed yet will be raised in three days.
 - Whereas these men heard about the destruction of the temple and assumed the ornate building of that day was being threatened, which would have been deemed a capital offense.
- So, it becomes clear that the means of garnering a proper witness is backfiring which now moves the high priest to press Jesus further. Check out verses 60-62.

Mark 14:60 The high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, “Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?”

Mark 14:61 But He kept silent and did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?”

Mark 14:62 And Jesus said, “I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

- It is after the failure of the witnesses' lack of agreed testimonies that Caiaphas speaks up and stands forward in an attempt to question Jesus which ultimately leads him to putting Jesus under oath.
 - Caiaphas seeks to rouse a response from Jesus based upon the false accusations that have been spewed by the false witnesses.
 - The natural inclination of the human heart, in moments of injustice, is to cry out loud for justice to be served. However, Jesus recognizes the tactic because He knows the intention.
 - For if Jesus responds, they will simply distort what He says to prove Him wrong.
 - As James Edwards writes, "Whatever Jesus says in self-defense will result in self-incrimination".
 - So, in response to being placed under such unjust scrutiny, Jesus takes the high road of silence.
 - Jesus' silence not only spoke to the reality of the importance of needing not to defend your character amidst false accusations, but it also came with Messianic overtones. We see this from Isaiah 53:7.

**Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.**

- It would be the silence of our Savior that not only spoke evidently of His innocence but mightily of His willingness to suffer on our behalf.
 - Matthew's gospel (Matthew 26:63) records that Jesus' silence towards the high priest's line of question apparently irritated Caiaphas to the point that he placed Jesus under oath.
 - And that statement proceeded with "I adjure you by the living God, that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God."
 - Mark's gospel records that the high priest questioned Jesus in a similar manner, but rather than saying God, he used, "The Blessed One".
 - "Blessed One" was a title found, in this sense, only here in the New Testament which is a Jewish substitute for God. Both these titles pointed to Jesus' claim as being the Messiah.
 - It is from this binding question within this trial that Jesus emphatically and unequivocally answers the question of the high priest.
 - Jesus responds by saying, "I am". That phrase in Greek is "Ego eimi" which confirmed the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.
 - The phrase, "I AM" is the familiar phrase that Jesus used in the Garden.
 - And this is the same phrase that Yahweh used with Moses in the burning bush.
 - Jesus emphatically and declaratively states He is the Son of God and the Messiah sent from God. In plain terms, Jesus declared Himself to be God!

- Here is but a piece of truth that speaks to the clear Christology of Mark's gospel!
- Not only does Jesus make this statement of truth, but He further builds upon it by stating that all will see, in a future day, Jesus sitting at the right hand of Power which, as we saw in Psalm 110:1, is a place of great authority and of high honor.
 - As well as Him coming with the clouds of heaven.
- In other words, it not only speaks to the guarantee of His resurrection, but it affirms His return in His Second Coming which will be in judgment and to rule in power (Daniel 7:13-14)
 - In other words, the suffering servant must first be crucified and raised in power before He comes back to the earth reigning as a victorious King who would unleash total judgment upon all who have committed injustice towards Him!
 - After Jesus responds in this manner, it is as if the high priest boils with anger which leads to him tearing off his robe and rendering a false verdict. Check out verses 63-65.

Mark 14:63 Tearing his clothes, the high priest *said, "What further need do we have of witnesses?

Mark 14:64 You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Mark 14:65 Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.

- In response to Jesus' words, the high priest tore his robe which served as a means of expressing great sorrow or horror.
 - This gesture was a formal judicial act and not simply an act of outrage.
 - This type of response was forbidden as a practice in legal proceedings except for blasphemy uttered before the court.
 - It is likely that the high priest responded in this way because of Jesus' attestation of being the Messiah, the Son of God.
 - However, when we come to understand what blasphemy is, it is the slandering or diminishing of God's name or character. Jesus did neither.
 - Not only is Jesus the response and provision by which God would accomplish His promises through, but He mentions that He will be seated to the right hand of Power by which God will seat Him.
 - However, the religious leaders at this point, are not interested in facts and truth, but simply being as close to "their truth" as possible.
 - Therefore, the high priest uses the tearing of his robe as a means of misdirection.
 - This is why in verse 63b, the high priest pushes further in saying, "What further need do we have of witnesses?"
 - In other words, what we have just heard is enough for me and should be for

you!

- What becomes apparent is when Caiaphas attempts to charge Jesus with Blasphemy, he himself becomes the blasphemer, yet Christ, the innocent one stands before the guilty to redeem humanity.
 - The full weight of injustice had come against the only innocent One to have ever walked the face of the earth.
 - And now He has been convicted of a crime which He did not and could never commit.
 - This becomes the very picture of the hearts and depravity of men and women.
 - We naturally seek to do what is right in our own eyes, even if it is at the expense of others.
 - Check out what Psalm 53:1-3 states.

Ps.53:1 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God,”
They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice;
There is no one who does good.

Ps.53:2 God has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men
To see if there is anyone who understands,
Who seeks after God.

Ps.53:3 Every one of them has turned aside; together they have become corrupt;
There is no one who does good, not even one.

- Our hearts, if not turned to truth, will lead to further internal and spiritual death and destruction.
 - Truth is not found within ourselves, rather it is found in a Sovereign Person and that is Christ alone who has made truth both verbally and visually known.
 - The reality is no one, apart from the Spirit’s illumination, desires to do good or seeks to be righteous but simply seeks to remain in darkness.
 - However, John 3:19-20 says the following from Jesus’ own lips.

John 3:19 This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

John 3:20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

- Spiritually depraved minds will only see what they want to see. Darkness will always cringe in the sight of light and, at whatever cost, will try to suppress it.
 - This is the situation that Jesus is faced with and it paints a picture of why the people of Israel were not able to recognize their own Messiah.
 - From this point, the high priest demands a unanimous guilty verdict which according to the Law was not legal because the verdict had to be decided by all the members of the council.

- Being that only the high priest spoke to this false verdict, means he broke the Law – one of many!
- Likewise, under Jewish Law, this decision could not be pronounced on the same day as the trial verdict but required at least a 24-hour waiting period.
 - Secondly, the reality of all 70/71 Jewish council members arguing in favor of guilt could not be done – they could only argue in favor of acquittal.
 - The basis of this is you are innocent until proven guilty.
 - And the reality is with all the witnesses before the court no testimony held true, even the ones that were “encouraged”.
- It was from that point that the council all agreed that Jesus was to be condemned and deserving of death.
 - Jesus would now be sent before the whole council for a consultation for their verdict to be given to the Roman government (this marking the third Jewish Religious Trial).
- At this point, Jesus is blindfolded, slapped around, beaten with fists, spat on, and is mocked by those whom have arrested Him. (v.65)
 - It was the blindfolding that led the guards to ask Jesus the sarcastic statement, “Prophecy!” in the sense that, “since you are the Messiah, you should know who it is that has hit you.”
 - However, Jesus does not retaliate. He does not respond in anger, but He takes the abuse.
 - He takes the full weight of the blows that are coming His way.
 - These slaps weren't a mere sign of dishonor, but these slaps were power blows to the face.
- These are the blows that Jesus took for us! These are the blows that Jesus fully embraced knowing what would be before Him and that is the joy of the Father and the fruit of His provision.
 - That those whose eyes would be open to Him would come to know Him and be intimately known by Him.
 - Where humility was made with the blow of every hand, would come the honor and the exaltation of the Son of God seated at the right hand of God.
 - Where mocking would be spoken, soon would come mercy extended to those who were far from Him.
 - Where He was blindfolded and beaten, soon would come the beauty found in His brokenness.
- Isaiah provides us with a beautiful yet graphic image of the torture which our Lord Jesus would encounter. Check out Isaiah 50:5-7.

Isaiah 50:5 The Lord God has opened My ear;

And I was not disobedient

Nor did I turn back.

Isaiah 50:6 I gave My back to those who strike Me,

And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard;

I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

Isaiah 50:7 For the Lord God helps Me,
Therefore, I am not disgraced;
Therefore, I have set My face like flint,
And I know that I will not be ashamed.

- ○ Every blow was felt for you and me!
 - All the pain inflicted was embraced for you and me.
 - All the mockery was received for you and me.
 - He took it all upon Himself for you and me.
 - Hebrews 12:2 tells us this:

Hebrews 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- One question that may come from this is: What was the purpose of suffering in the plan of redemption? Could there have been another way and how does being in Christ help us to overcome?
 - As we close, let's consider Peter's very words, the one in whom more than likely saw for Himself the abuse in which Jesus bore for us all:
 - Turn with me to 1 Peter 2:21-24.

1 Peter 2:21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

1 Peter 2:22 who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth;

1 Peter 2:23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

1 Peter 2:24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

- The fact that Jesus rose from the dead and overcame, and that we are "in Him", we too overcome.
 - However, not in our own strength, but rather through the strength of Christ.
 - As Jesus depended upon the Father, we too are to depend upon Christ.
 - This is why the role of the Holy Spirit is so vitally important to the sanctification of believers because He provides us the Power and strength we need in Christ to overcome the power of sin in this world.
 - May we learn to endure well in this walk with the Lord because He has set the pattern/template by which we can see how to overcome and endure in this life.

- That because He overcame, we too can overcome.
- Rather than retreating from the suffering that life brings our way, we can embrace it with a new level of understanding because Christ has endured the greatest suffering known to man.
- Next week, we will walk through Peter's denial and his false sense of strength and confidence to see where and why he failed.
 - And we will juxtapose that with the victory which we see in Peter, standing in Christ, by the Power of the Spirit, in the book of Acts!
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 14G

Chapter 14:66-72

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- Last week, we covered the first two religious trials that took place in the early morning.
 - The first trial was initiated by Annas, the Father-in-Law of Caiaphas.
 - It was this trial that could be seen as a personal vendetta against the Lord Jesus.
 - Within this first trial, we witnessed not only several illegalities in the proceeding but that Annas walked away with no verdict.
 - The second trial was followed by Caiaphas leading the charge forward by seeking to establish frivolous witnesses to testify against Jesus.
 - Not only were the witnesses' testimonies false, but none of them were lining up to present a positive witness to indict Jesus before the council.
 - This reality shed light on the fact that there were no grounds by which the religious leaders could lawfully find Jesus guilty and proved even more how unlawful these proceedings were.
 - Furthermore, we discovered that evil seeks any means to distort true justice and to establish "relative truth" as the foundation of all truth.
 - Lastly, we discussed that Peter had a brief cameo appearance at the scene of the trial in the courtyard (v.54), however after that, it is as if the scene spotlight shifts back to Jesus and the trial at hand.
 - Tonight, we now see that the spotlight shifts back to Peter where Mark gives the reader a peek inside the reality that Jesus spoke to Peter not too long ago.
 - This early morning scene would be where the outspoken, self-confident, and unrelenting Peter would now face the reality of the very words Jesus told him would happen – Peter would deny Jesus, three times.
 - As we will see, these denials although personal to Peter will shed light for every believer of the danger of self-confidence, the pain of denial, and the beauty of the strength and grace found in Christ.
 - Our outline for tonight will be the following:
 - 1. Peter's First Denial (v.66-68)
 - 2. Peter's Second and Third Denial (v.69-71)
 - 3. Peter Weeps (v.72)
 - 4. The Third Religious Trial (Mark 15:1)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be, The Pain of Denial.
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in Mark 14:66 - Mark 15:1.

Mark 14:66 As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest *came,

Mark 14:67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and *said, "You also were with Jesus the Nazarene."

Mark 14:68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out onto the porch.

Mark 14:69 The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them!"

Mark 14:70 But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too."

Mark 14:71 But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking

about!”

Mark 14:72 Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, “Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” And he began to weep.

Mark 15:1 Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate.

(Re-read v.66-68)

- As I mentioned earlier, we now arrive at the section of Mark where verse 54 left off.
 - It is as if the spotlight shifted from the trial of Jesus to the trial and temptation of the Apostle Peter.
 - Where we witnessed Jesus take on the unfair miscarriage of Justice in the courtyard of the high priest, we now find Peter in a trial within himself which will either lead to remaining firm in Christ or fulfilling the very words of Jesus’ statement to him.
 - “All of you will fall away.”
 - The scene in which we are is still in the courtyard of the high priest but now provides a different perspective if you will.
 - As we discovered in last week’s teaching, it was John who was able to assist Peter into the gates to get into the courtyard.
 - It was a familiar face at the gate who knew John and allowed Peter access, and it would seem to be this same servant-girl who would now recognize Peter.
 - The text mentions in verse 67 that this same servant girl looking at Peter warming himself now moved closer to inquire about his previous surroundings.
 - The word “looking” in verse 67a in Greek is *emblepo* which means to look intently as if inquiring without speaking.
 - It is as if this servant girl has seen him before and is verifying within her own recollection of this reality.
 - Well, the text goes on to say that after having looked intently, she speaks her mind and blurts out in an accusatory manner, “You also were with Jesus the Nazarene”
 - The word “also” is pointing out the fact that John too was among the crowd of disciples with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.
 - The very words of this girl are indeed true. And if this was a courtroom and she was a witness, this testimony would be affirming to Peter’s guilt, unlike the false witnesses and testimonies given about Jesus.
 - It is upon hearing these words that Peter, in fear, responds with a denial for the sake of safety.
 - Peter says, “I neither know nor understand what you are talking about”.
 - Peter’s 1st denial was a common Jewish legal expression. It was as if Peter said, “I have no idea what you are saying!”
 - From there, Peter will seek to find the nearest exit in an effort to escape danger.
 - Remember, Peter is in the courtyard in the middle of the High Priest’s home where he is surrounded by the Roman cohort and officers that have arrested Jesus.

- If Peter were to be caught, he would have been arrested and potentially killed having been an associate of Jesus.
- On top of that, being that Peter had cut off Malchus' ear, the assault of an officer would have led to much more serious repercussions.
- The reality is, Peter, should have never been in the courtyard to begin with. So, what do we make of Peter's presence in the courtyard?
 - This is once again, classic Peter!
 - He told Jesus not too long ago he would die for Him than let them take Him, however, Peter spoke too confidently and with much self-assurance and spiritual pride.
 - This appearance is nothing more than Peter attempting to prove to himself that he won't fall victim to denying Jesus as Jesus had previously mentioned to him.
 - Self-confidence and pride have now led Peter into a courtyard of crooks whom he now has to navigate around all in the name of being "right".
- Not only do we witness pride at play with Peter following behind Jesus into the courtyard, but we also witness blatant disobedience from Peter as well.
 - Although not in Mark's account, we find in John's gospel that there are several discussions that transpired between Jesus and the disciples regarding matters related to the Church Age that was soon to come (Upper Room Discourse)
 - It is in John 13:36-38 that we see the immediate context which provides us the background as to why Peter following behind Jesus to the high priest's home, was disobedience. Check out the text:

John 13:36 Simon Peter *said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later."

John 13:37 Peter *said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You."

John 13:38 Jesus *answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times."

- ○ Verse 37-38, John documents that Peter was willing to lay down his life for Jesus, even if the other disciples wouldn't.
 - However, it takes Jesus in verse 38 to let Peter know that despite the big talk, his collapse was not too far away.
- We now fast forward to our text tonight and see in verse 68 that Peter has denied Jesus for the first time and now seeks to find hiding for the sake of his own safety.
 - So, he goes to the porch entryway of Caiaphas' home.
 - Let's keep moving to verses 69-71.

Mark 14:69 The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them!"

Mark 14:70 But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too."

Mark 14:71 But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!"

- Time passes and we now see that the servant-girl has spotted Peter again, as if

determined to rightly accuse Peter as a disciple of Jesus, in hopes to turn up the pressure on him.

- Only this time the servant girl now wrangles together a group of bystanders whom will offer support to call out Peter's means of escaping the scene in which He has led himself in.
 - A few weeks ago, we discussed how pride comes before the fall, and here we have Peter in the thicket of this daunting situation.
- The servant girl emphatically makes known that Peter is one of Jesus' disciples.
 - One interesting detail that we find within John's gospel is there was a slave of the high priest, who was a relative of Malchus, and mentions aloud that they saw Peter in the garden at the moment of Jesus' arrest!
 - Perhaps this is one of the bystanders that the slave girl calls over who can testify, yet again, to Peter and his relation to Jesus.
- At this point, you can imagine the intensity of this scene and Peter's disposition in all of it.
 - He is surrounded by the High Priest's guards, in the enemy's camp on full alert, all because He wanted to show that he wouldn't desert Jesus nor deny Him.
 - Self-confidence is a dangerous thing, especially as disciples of Jesus, and Peter is used as an example, in this case, to show us how this happens.
 - We can become so confident in our walk with Jesus or our knowledge of Jesus that we begin to rely more upon our ability than in Christ's security.
- From John 13 to John 17, Jesus provides keen insight into the reality of who is upholding the work of ministry in which they will embark upon.
 - He goes through comforting the disciples regarding His departure and how He is going to prepare a place for them and how He is the truth.
 - He then speaks to the Oneness that He and the Father have.
 - From there He mentions the role which the Spirit will play after a time after His ascension to the right hand of the Father for His session.
- Chapter 15, Jesus speaks to the fact that He is the vine and the disciples are the branches and how they must abide in Him to be fruitful.
 - From there He speaks to how the disciples should deal with one another and how their relation to the world will look in comparison to their relationship towards each other.
 - It's almost as if these teachings are a fire hydrant that is spewing at over 300 miles per hour.
 - And it would require that the Holy Spirit indwell these men for these teachings to settle firmly in their hearts in understanding.
- However, Jesus has not died at this point and the Holy Spirit has not indwelt the believers yet, therefore, these men would have to trust the very words of Jesus every step of the way.
 - But Peter doesn't seem to quite get that yet even with having been in the very proximity of Jesus and having walked with Him for 3.5 years.
 - This goes to say that as followers of Jesus, we too must rest in Christ and His words as we walk with Him experientially, rather than trusting in ourselves for personal security.
 - Peter is completely vulnerable and, what seems at this point, completely alone,

yet as we will see later, even in the mess that Peter has made, Jesus is in the darkness with Him!

- It's in verse 70 that Peter, due to the circumstantial pressure, folds once again in fear of the outcome of his life.
 - The conflict continues to pile up and the bystanders are beginning to join together in collaboration to call out Peter, who is now feeling the weight of his previous words.
- And isn't this the reality of what pride can do, or temptation can do when we think we are strong enough to take it on ourselves apart from the power of Christ?
 - That where Peter should have trusted Jesus' words, he relied on himself.
 - That where Peter should have gotten the hint after his first denial and hearing the crow of the rooster, it should have activated in his mind to heed the words of Jesus.
- The danger with thinking we have it all under control is that that temptation of self-reliance, if not submitted to the Lord, will cause us to buckle under its full weight as well!
 - It's upon the arrival of the third denial that Peter is called out by the bystanders because they recognize that he is in fact a Galilean.
 - The question arises: "How do they know he is Galilean?"
 - Here is where harmonizing the gospel accounts comes in beautifully.
- We need not look any further than Matthew 26:73 where we find that it is Peter's accent that gives away his cover.
 - Somehow his responses or the way in which he pronounced certain words were a bit different than those in the area.
- At this point, there is no escaping the reality in which Peter has lured himself into and now he is at the point of no return.
 - He will either buckle under the pressure and say he is a disciple of Jesus, or he will fold and deny Jesus.
 - One detail worth noting is the fact that the phrase "again he denied it" is written in the imperfect tense meaning that he continually denied that He knew who Jesus was.
 - It's like when you have caught your child in a lie and have seen them commit the accusation from a distance, yet they insist they did no such thing – this is Peter's current condition.
- Well as we know, Peter folds, however the text provides us with some detail about the reality of this collapse under the weight of Peter's own disobedience and self-reliance.
 - Verse 71 mentions that Peter began to curse and swear.
 - Now, before jumping to our 21st-century understanding of this phrase, we need to note the culture and language of that day.
- This was not Peter cursing in the sense of profanity or anything of that sort, rather Peter placed himself under God's curse as if putting himself under an oath.
 - To put it differently, it is as if to say, "I swear to God, I do not know what you are talking about", or "For God is my witness, I do not know this man."
 - What's most interesting in the text is that Peter does not even mention Jesus' name in his defense.

- He literally says, “I do not know “this man” you are talking about!” – Talk about totally distancing yourself for the sake of preserving one’s life!
- This was complete and total denial on Peter’s part! And what becomes quite sobering is what we find in verse 72. Check out the text.

Mark 14:72 Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, “Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” And he began to weep.

- Once the rooster crowed a second time, Peter recalled Jesus’ words to him in Mark 14:30, that Peter would deny Him three times.
 - It was at that moment that Peter began to weep.
 - Matthew’s gospel mentions that upon the third denial, that Peter wept bitterly.
 - The Greek word for “bitter” is *pikros* which means it was tears of great agony and pain.
 - Peter has done the very thing he told His Lord that he would not do.
 - However, I believe the account that provides the greatest sense of the weightiness of the scene is Luke’s gospel. Check out what Luke says in Luke 22:60-62.

Luke 22:60 But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.

Luke 22:61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, “Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.”

Luke 22:62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

- ○ Luke mentions that while Peter was uttering the very words of his third denial that the Lord turned and looked directly at Peter.
 - What a moment that must have been!
 - I believe it was that visual exchange that caused Peter to weep bitterly.
 - It was the realization of how he had both seemingly failed Jesus and failed himself.
- Here it was, that Peter never anticipated he would be one whom would deny Jesus.
 - He spoke out of pride as if the others would fall away and he would not – how fleeting is the confidence we have of ourselves?!
- But before we run to go and judge Peter for his overly confident remarks, it’s fair to say that we too have found ourselves there more than a time or two.
 - We rely more on our favorite bible teacher and their study than we do on the Holy Spirit to lead us in right relationship with the Lord.
 - Or the temptation of claiming that we know more bible than the next person because we have taken Greek or Hebrew, therefore relying on our confidence and knowledge than in Christ alone.
- I love this quote from Dr. Andy Woods, he said it best: “God has designed the Gospel so that it is the ultimate attack on human pride.”
 - That when we put up the words of scripture to our lives, it will show us who we really are in light of who Jesus truly is! (It’s a mirror)
 - Peter is left with eating his words which leads him to weep in his weakness.
 - Oh, may we never stand in our strength as if it keeps us afloat in this life, but may

we boast in our weakness which is where the strength of the Lord is found. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

- I can't help but imagine that although Peter glares into the eyes of Jesus with much shame and disappointment, Jesus looks at him with much sadness but immense love and grace.
 - That where Peter saw failure, Christ was holding up Peter's faith.
 - That where Peter saw his weakness, Christ would provide him strength.
 - Where Peter was left broken and defeated, Jesus would be beaten to bring about victory.
 - That although Peter failed, in Christ there would be no failure.
- For after Jesus would be flogged, crucified, and died, in three days He would be raised to life and not long after will meet Peter around a similar fire in the Galilee, where He will restore Peter and then commission him for ministry.
 - I think what we find from Peter's greatest failure is a mighty lesson for believers throughout all times and that is, if Peter never had experienced this fall, He would have never looked up to see the immeasurable grace and love of Jesus!
 - The fall of Peter's pride gave way to the humility that would burst forth through his coming ministry.
- The great Puritan Pastor, George Whitefield wrote in his 58th sermon on Peter's denial from Matthew 26:75 the following:

“He is faithful who hath promised not only to make us conquerors, but more than conquerors through his love.” Yet a little while, and our warfare shall be accomplished, death will put an end to all. A wicked world, a wicked heart, a wicked devil shall then cease from troubling us, and our weary souls shall never be so much as tempted to deny our blessed Lord any more.

- ○ The trial in which Peter failed, would be the trial in which Jesus would pass.
 - That through the scourging and pain of the beatings, mistreatment, and the cross, would rise the mighty One in whom would soon sit in His Session, interceding for us as our Great High Priest!
 - And in the future to come, will reign as our conquering King.
- This grace, Peter would soon come to understand when he, in Acts 2, filled with the Holy Spirit, would preach and proclaim the gospel boldly and in his proclamation would come the salvation of 3,000 souls to the glory of God.
 - Failure is never a definer of one's life!
 - For in Christ, our failures are used as instruments of refinement to further develop us into images of Jesus Christ.
 - Let's look at our last verse for tonight: Mark 15:1

Mark 15:1 Early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate

- ○ Lastly, we end in Mark 15:1 where, Jesus, after Peter's third denial, is escorted in the early morning towards the Praetorium where the Sanhedrin council would give their verdict to Pilate which would then begin the Roman Civil Trials.
 - Jesus would make His way through three separate hearings where He, the

innocent Son of God, would be traded in for a common criminal, Barabbas.

- I pray you join us next week in Mark 15.
- Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 15A

Chapter 15:1-5

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- Last week we encountered a shift in the mockery trials. What began as a farce trial against Jesus by the high Priest shifted to an internal and personal trial for Peter.
 - Peter came up against the common enemy of us all and that is the sin of pride.
 - Pride is the path that leads all to total and utter destruction.
 - And that collapse of self-confidence will either lead one to look up and see what truth is, better yet Who truth is, or it will lead to further chaos.
 - We saw that Peter's three denials of the Lord Jesus left him broken, full of shame, and bitterly weeping.
 - Where Peter began in self-reliance and a sense of over-confidence, now ended with him being crushed in heart.
 - However, we were reminded of the hope that is found in "being in Christ" and that despite the greatest failure of Peter's life, Jesus was in the darkest of nights with him.
 - This serves as a great reminder for us all that truth, in every obstacle of life, provides the hope one needs to see truth and respond positively to it.
 - In other words, failure does not define the believer because in Christ there is no failure.
 - Tonight, we pick up where we left off and that is verse one of Chapter 15.
 - After Peter leaves depleted and defeated and Jesus has been beaten and spat on, he now heads into the mockery trial before the Roman Procurator, Pontus Pilate.
 - It will be the beginning of this trial which we will witness the grave misuse and abuse of power and justice.
 - But most especially the darkened brokenness of humanity against the only hope for true life to be experienced found in Christ.
 - The reality is that although Jesus may be sent to trial before Pilate, it will not be Jesus on trial per se, but rather Pilate and humanity at large, on trial.
 - Truth is being questioned and what will be witnessed through it all is that truth needs not to respond to defend itself because truth always prevails.
 - We have no bullet points for tonight's teaching as I believe it will be quite clear what is to be seen here and that is a Farce Trial and Truth on full display.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would simply be: A Miscarriage of Justice: Jesus Delivered to Pilate
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 15:2-5.

Mark 15:2 Pilate questioned Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He *answered him, "It is as you say."

Mark 15:3 The chief priests began to accuse Him harshly.

Mark 15:4 Then Pilate questioned Him again, saying, "Do You not answer? See how many charges they bring against You!"

Mark 15:5 But Jesus made no further answer; so Pilate was amazed.

- There's an interesting song written by Randy Newman from his 2017 album Dark Matter entitled: *It's a Jungle Out There*.
 - I want to read just a few stanzas for us as I feel it is quite relevant to the scene of these trials.
 - The lyrics go as follows:

*It's a jungle out there
 Disorder and confusion everywhere
 No one seems to care
 Well, I do
 Hey, who's in charge here?
 It's a jungle out there
 Poison in the very air we breathe
 You know what's in the water that you drink?
 Well I do, and it's amazing
 People think I'm crazy, 'cause I worry all the time
 If you paid attention, you'd be worried too
 You better pay attention
 Or this world you love so much might just kill you
 I could be wrong now, but I don't think so
 'Cause it's a jungle out there
 It's a jungle out there*

- A Jungle indeed is the world that we live in today.
 - Chaos and disorder are cousins of the evil which exists in our culture and most especially is what persisted in these trials set before Jesus in chains.
 - Jesus has gone through 3 Religious trials by which brought against Him trumped-up charges.
 - Which, according to Jewish Jurisprudence could not, on its own, stand up in a court of law.
 - Jesus is found, surrounded by a group of envious and wicked religious men, convicted of a crime that He did not commit.
 - He is forced to go before Pontus Pilate who is expected to settle the score and provide the concluding verdict.
 - All of this is to be accomplished in favor of the Sanhedrin council and their petty, false charges.
 - What would begin as a charge of blasphemy would now take on another form, all in an attempt to kill Jesus, the only innocent one among all.
 - Last week, toward the end of our time together, I mentioned in Chapter 15:1 that Jesus was to be delivered over to Pontus Pilate for final sentencing.
 - This mockery trial persisted into the wee hours of the morning.
 - No time for deliberation of evidence or proper witnesses for Jesus has been assessed because the High Priest had already made up his mind that Jesus was guilty.

- This verdict was encouraged through means of manipulation of the highest level, being that it was initiated by the tearing of the high priest's robe which could only be done if blasphemy was committed.
- However, this was not the case and was therefore committed only to rouse the council for the purposes of a unanimous decision to bring before Pilate.
- So, Mark, in verse 1 of Chapter 15, tells us the early morning had arrived.
 - This puts us at the light portion of Thursday.
 - The whole council, which likely would have included those who were not there at night proceedings, now gathered to hold a final tally.
- It would be that through the consensus of these 70 men, including that of the High Priest, making it 71 men, that their recommendation of guilt would now be sent to Pilate at the Praetorium for his approval.
 - Notice that Mark's gospel jumps right into Pilate's line of questioning, whereas John's gospel provides us with pertinent details.
 - Mark excludes this due to his focus on brevity and general summary.
- It's in John 18:28 that we see the religious leaders escort Jesus to the Praetorium, however, the text says that "they did not enter into the Praetorium" in order to not defile themselves for the sake of the Passover Feast of Unleavened bread.
 - The Praetorium was the official residence of the Roman Governor during Pilate's visits to Jerusalem, more specifically high holy festivals such as that of the Passover.
 - Normally, Pilate lived in Caesarea.
- So, it's here that we find, yet again, more blatant hypocrisy from the Jewish religious leaders.
 - The religious leaders seem to have more caution for their sense of external ritual cleanliness by not entering a Gentile home.
 - While all in the same breath, aiding and colluding together to find an innocent man guilty.
- Herein lies the reality of the human condition: All are blinded by our own sense of relative justice and truth all the while rejecting and denying absolute truth to His face.
 - Proverbs 1:16 speaks to the reality of this point. Check out the text.

**Proverbs 1:16 For their feet run to evil
And they hasten to shed blood.**

- So as the religious leaders bring Jesus before Pilate, we see that Pilate acquiesced to their request by coming out to them to hear their accusations against Jesus.
 - And Pilate asks the question: "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"
 - This line of questioning was both a form of inquiry and antagonism. We will first respond to the inquiry.
 - The question might arise for some: "What were the means of Pilate's line of questioning regarding the accusations against Jesus?"

- Keep in mind that Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from AD26-36.
 - And the role of the Governor was to uphold the rule in the land, but most especially, in this immediate context, to execute a person convicted of a capital crime.
 - For Pilate was the only person who had the right to execute being that the Jews were under Gentile rule.
- It was the demand of the religious leaders that Jesus be killed based upon their bogus claim of blasphemy, however, their hands were tied.
 - Furthermore, under Jewish Law, the result of blasphemy for Jews was being stoned to death.
 - However, this means of death, according to the Father's plan, was not by stoning but rather by crucifixion as Jesus mentioned in John 12:32.
 - That "If He be lifted up from the earth, He would draw men unto himself".
- This "lifting" indicated the type of death He was going to die, speaking to the crucifixion, but also His resurrection and ascension.
 - In other words, this means of death for Jesus, although being executed by broken and wicked men, required human action, was Sovereignly orchestrated by the Father for the purpose of salvation.
 - We will see later this point made by Jesus to Pilate regarding Jesus' control sovereignly, even though, situationally, the circumstances, physically, looked different.
- Secondly, I mentioned that Pilate's response to the religious leaders was antagonistic.
 - I bring this up because of the reality that the Jews were under Gentile rule and could not, in and of their own volition, put Jesus, or any individual for that matter, to death.
 - Therefore, because the council was legally obligated to submit any civil case before the Roman governor, there was a sense of a Power play that Pilate pulled.
 - And we see that power play at work in the sarcastic tone of the religious leaders' remarks in John 18:30. Check out the text:

John 18:30 They answered and said to him, "If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you."

- So, within the grand scheme of things, the religious leaders are strapped because they don't have the authority to get rid of Jesus themselves by their own law which means that they must establish legal evidence as to why Jesus deserved to die.
 - Secondly, the religious leaders recognized that Pilate did not want to be involved in purely religious crimes, therefore they would have to accuse Jesus of a crime that would somehow compel Pilate to act on their behalf.
 - The reason was that blasphemy as a crime in Rome meant nothing – they had hundreds of gods, so if one wasn't to your liking, you had a plethora to choose from.

- So, according to Luke 23:2, they brought up to Pilate what they knew would stick. Check out this list:

Luke 23:2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.”

- It’s the mentioning of Jesus being “a King”, they put before Pilate to demonstrate why Jesus needed to die.
 - That the thought of any ruler potentially coming up against Caesar was a threat to the security of Rome and their control of Israel.
 - So it is from this point that we now pick up at verses 2-3 of Mark 15.

Mark 15:2 Pilate questioned Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” And He *answered him, “It is as you say.”

Mark 15:3 The chief priests began to accuse Him harshly.

- So, we find that the third accusation from the Sanhedrin Council is the accusation that seemed to have stuck – clearly, the council thought through all means by which they could falsely condemn Jesus to death.
 - It is this statement of Jesus being a King in which Pilate moves from the council’s accusations to the inside of the Praetorium with Jesus for needed confirmation.
 - Pilate asks the question, “Are You the King of the Jews?”
 - To which Jesus responds in a cryptic way by saying “It is as you say.”
 - This statement from Jesus holds much significance because Jesus is neither affirming nor denying Pilate’s statement, but rather, Jesus is providing Pilate with a statement of consideration.
 - In other words, Jesus tells Pilate in a few short words, “These are your words... this is what you have gathered.”
 - The emphasis is put on Pilate as if to say, “Is this what you have come to understand?”
 - This is why I mentioned that Jesus’ response was not a denial of His Deity or Personhood, but rather Pilate’s understanding of His title was different than Jesus’.
 - In other words, Jesus’ response could be seen as such: “Yes, I am King of the Jews, but your concept of king and mine are polar opposites.”
 - This statement from Jesus becomes the reality for all individuals who come across Him: “How do you see Jesus?”
 - Is He simply just a good guy, or maybe just the ruler of some but not all?
 - The reality is, this question will be answered in its fullness at the end of time.
 - All will come to not only see Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but they will also see Jesus as both Judge and Executioner.

- For Jesus' Kingship will not be cornered to just some sections of the earth, but He will reign in dominion over all the earth and its nations. (Genesis 49:10)
- The question on the table is: Who is Jesus to you?
 - My prayer for you is that you know Jesus to be Savior, Lord, and soon coming King!
- Jesus presses Pilate further in John 18:34, based on Pilate's original line of questioning, almost as if Pilate is on trial rather than Jesus himself.
 - He asks Pilate the question: "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about me?"
 - This simply confirms our earlier point. The reality is one day every man and woman will be on trial before a Holy and Just God.
 - And how they respond to who Jesus is will matter!
- Their eternal destiny as to where they will dwell hangs in the balance of this very question. Will they respond to truth or will they reject truth?
 - As I have stated time and again, Truth is found in a Person, and you will either respond positively to the Provision from God or not.
- As we look at the gospel accounts, we see that this open dialogue with Jesus goes back and forth even as Pilate goes back and forth to the Sanhedrin council struggling to find guilt in Him.
 - From the readings of the Gospels, it becomes clear that Pilate saw no threat from Jesus and no possibility of political insurrection given the very condition in which Pilate received Jesus in his home.
 - This furthermore speaks to Jesus' responses to Pilate as it pertained to Pilate's questions regarding Jesus' kingship.
- It's clear that the Jewish leaders are hell-bent on the fact that Jesus is a threat to their religious system.
 - Friends, this trial brought before Pilate is a trial of power and authority! (Worldview question)
 - That where the religious leaders seek to use their religious power and piety to overthrow the Son of God, they fail to realize that it is the meekness and humility of the Son of God that true Power is found.
- How often do we find in our world today power and influence wielded in a way to oppress the lowly and the needy all for the sake of more influence?
 - However here is Jesus, a carpenter from no-man's-land, Nazareth, where it's said nothing good came from, yet He holds the influence of large crowds and presents truth in a way that has never been heard before.
 - He alone demonstrates power in meekness and humility.
 - He alone demonstrates strength in taking on our shame.
 - He alone demonstrates influence, in leading in suffering well for the sake of others.
- This is why Pilate couldn't find fault in Him because, to the world, leadership is completely opposite of what Jesus demonstrated.
 - Pilate, in his very nature, was a violent man and wielded his power in a

negative way for the sake of control.

- I believe the Roman readers of Mark's gospel were able to see a clear contrast between the leadership of Pilate and the Jewish leadership versus that of Jesus' leadership.
- Friends, what we are seeing on display in the first Civil court case is that Truth is on trial.
 - Who defines truth?
 - Who establishes truth?
 - Is truth relative or is it absolute and transcendent? That is what's on the table – even today!
- The religious leaders believed they were the beholders of truth.
 - Pilate in John 18:38 asked the question: "What is Truth?",
 - Yet in John 14, the resolve of who the beholder and definer of truth is was already made known by Jesus in John 14:6.
 - This is where Jesus said "I am the Way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
- In other words, the very authority by which man operates on earth is solely accomplished on borrowed time under the Sovereign hand of God.
 - Plainly put, nothing can occur without God allowing or permitting it to happen.
- It becomes clear from Jesus' correspondence in John's gospel that Pilate is constantly faced with the reality that there is no guilt in Jesus.
 - However, as Luke 23:5 mentions, the religious leaders continually insisted on trying to find fault in Jesus, yet nothing could stick.
 - What becomes such a beautiful witness in this moment of such a miscarriage of justice is that Jesus gives no response to the accusations that the religious leaders continue to herald. He remains silent.
 - Check out verses 4-5 of Mark 15.

Mark 15:4 Then Pilate questioned Him again, saying, "Do You not answer? See how many charges they bring against You!"

Mark 15:5 But Jesus made no further answer; so Pilate was amazed.

- Jesus, after being questioned again and again by Pilate, on behalf of the Sanhedrin council, is questioned one last time by Pilate regarding Jesus' answer to the accusations about Him.
 - At this point, Pilate is expecting a "protestation of innocence" from Jesus.
 - In any situation like the one Jesus finds himself in before Pilate, any one of us would be speaking up in an outcry over the falsities and lies that have been brought against us.
 - Every individual who is innocent in a situation by which others claim them to be guilty would speak out and protest their innocence.

- However, this reality seems to not be the case for the Lord Jesus regarding this “kangaroo trial”.
- Ultimately, it becomes evident to Pilate that the religious leaders have no grounds to kill Jesus.
 - As a matter of fact, Matthew’s gospel (Matthew 27:18) tells us that Pilate identified the true reason behind the religious leader’s accusations of Jesus and why they handed Him over in the first place.
 - The context here is the exchange of Jesus for Barabbas.

Matthew 27:18 For he knew that because of envy they had handed Him over.

- ○ The Jewish leaders were envious of Jesus because his leadership and influence threatened the kingdom they were building in and of themselves, in their own image.
- It’s like when an individual gets into positions of leadership in which their character and integrity can’t handle the responsibility, their true nature begins to show.
 - This is why Jesus’ leadership to the world and worldly leaders makes no sense – it is completely antithetical to what is done in this life.
 - This is why Pilate’s wife tells Pilate later in a message, “Have nothing to do with this righteous man”.
 - In other words, you don’t want this innocent blood on your hands!
- So, what do you do when you have been placed in a position of authority, yet you seek to abdicate your responsibilities rather than stand up righteously for truth?
 - Well, according to Pilate’s leadership, you cowardly shove the responsibility to someone else!
 - And that is exactly what He did to finagle his way out of a decision.
- It wasn’t until the religious leaders had mentioned Jesus’ teaching within Galilee stirring up the people, that Pilate saw a way out.
 - Hearing this accusation occurring in the region of Galilee would soon prompt Pilate to send Jesus next door to the ruler over that jurisdiction which was none other than Herod Antipas.
 - For more information on Herod Antipas, go and check out the Mark 6C teaching where we go into great length on Herod Antipas.
- Lastly, one detail that I would add is that the cowardly confrontation and dismissal of truth is something that both Pilate and Herod Antipas shared.
 - That where Herod respected, and to some extent was moved by what John the Baptist preached, he lacked follow through regarding truth of his affair with Herodias needing to cease.
 - In the same way, we find that Pilate, handing Jesus over to Herod, was yet another weak move of leadership instead of standing for truth despite potential pushback.
- Notice within verses 4-5, Mark does not feel the need to include Herod Antipas’

trial before Jesus. However, the question becomes, *Why?*

- Well, considering the authorship of this book and the significance of Pilates' role in the crucifixion of Jesus, Pilate becomes a character of focus as he wields the power to either execute or exonerate Jesus.
- Additionally, I find it important to mention that even within the many Catechisms and Creeds of Orthodox Christianity, we find the mention of Pontus Pilate in the majority of them.
- Catechisms are a summary of principles within the Christian faith established in the form of questions as means of instruction to the Christian.
 - And Creeds are statements of the orthodox faith in early Christian churches in opposition to heresies.
 - Therefore, the Creeds and Catechisms allow Christians to universally affirm and stand on the truths found in scripture.
- For example, in the Nicene Creed we see the mention of Pontus Pilate:

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven;

***he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.***

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered and was buried.

The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.

He ascended to heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again with glory

to judge the living and the dead.

His kingdom will never end.

- Additionally, the Heidelberg Catechism: Question 38 mentions the following:
 - Why did he suffer “under Pontius Pilate, as judge”?
 - The response is: That he, being innocent, and yet condemned by a temporal judge, might thereby free us from the severe judgement of God to which we were exposed.
 - In other words, establishing Pontus Pilate as a political historical figure in scripture allows the believer to see that the life of Jesus is real history.
 - That our Lord and Savior was not some mystical figure who claimed things yet in an imaginative sense, but rather, the claims of truth from His lips are verifiable, historical, significant, and irrefutable.
 - So here it is, in verse 5, Mark mentions that after Pilate provides a question to Jesus regarding these accusations, Jesus responds with silence.
 - Mark tells us that the silence of Jesus amazed Pilate.
 - The word for “amazed” in Greek is *thaumazo* which means to be astonished or in wonder.
 - Again, the fact that Jesus is not speaking against the accusations is something

that Pilate was not used to.

- He is used to the proclamation of innocence from the accused, yet like a lamb to the slaughter, Jesus was silent (Isaiah 53:7)
- What joy is there in knowing that Truth needs not anyone to speak for it? Why, because Truth stands on its own!
- Friends, this lends us to recognize that Jesus was not helplessly caught in a frivolous trial as if some miserable pawn, No!
 - Jesus willingly placed Himself in this position of vulnerability and captivity for the sake of providing spiritual liberty for humanity.
 - That the greatest of all would become the least of all so that all who would believe in the Lord Jesus could be saved!
- If there were ever a model for true leadership, it is found in the meekness of our Savior.
 - True leadership takes the hit, even when no one around is willing to.
 - Jesus knew the cost and He did it because only He could!
- Friends, at best we walk away seeing the full scope of God's Sovereignty at work despite man's outward workings.
 - To the Jewish leadership, it seemed as if they handed him over forcibly, but in reality, Jesus gave Himself up willingly.
- Next week, we will witness another unfair exchange. And it will be through this exchange that a picture is shown as to the true exchange of what would take place on the cross as Jesus became our substitutionary atonement.
 - I pray you will join us next week.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 15B

Chapter 15:6-15

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- We are now beginning to move towards the final scenes of Jesus' life, which we know as the Passion of Christ.
 - Chapter 15 of Mark's Gospel is dedicated to the backdrop of information leading to the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
 - Before we leave this chapter simply to imagination or visualization of the well-known movie, the Passion of the Christ, I caution us to begin our assessment, not with Hollywood's rendition, but rather with the revelation of God's word.
 - As we fix our eyes upon tonight's text, I encourage us to read the text with fresh eyes and by the leading of the Holy Spirit so that we are led into right understanding.
 - Last week, we began with Jesus' civil trial before Pilate.
 - The religious leader's charge against Jesus which began with blasphemy would soon transition to acts of sedition.
 - We read between the gospel accounts, that there was a back-and-forth between the religious leaders and Pilate's verdict regarding Jesus' innocence.
 - That where the religious leaders lay before Pilate trumped up charges and false allegations, Pilate walks away finding no guilt in Jesus.
 - You may recall, I mentioned that within this trial truth was in question and as we saw in the end, truth remained silent.
 - Jesus uttered no words to the allegations brought against Him as Isaiah prophesied, "...like a lamb being sent to the slaughter He did not utter a word". (Isaiah 53:7)
 - Ultimately, this evil outworking of human engagement was divinely orchestrated by the Father for the purpose of Jesus being the sacrificial lamb for Israel and the world.
 - Jesus would take on the weight of the world's sin upon Himself, willingly, for the joy that was set before Him.
 - In other words, it would be through Christ's humiliation and shame that peace would be made between God and man for all who place faith in Christ alone.
 - Tonight, we are going to see that this trial moves to the third trial before Pilate.
 - As a reminder, Mark's gospel does not include Jesus being brought before Herod Antipas.
 - Mark's emphasis will focus on the injustice committed under the leadership of Rome, by way of Pilate's cowardice.
 - It will be this trial in which we see a picture of what Jesus' actions on the cross would do for all who place faith in Him.
 - That a great exchange of one's life for another would take place.
 - And we will see how powerfully clear God makes this message known.
 - If I were to outline our flow through the text tonight, we will see the following things:
 - 1. An Unfair Request (v.6-11)
 - 2. A Cowardly Cede (v.12-15)

- If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would be: The Savior Scourged: A Passive Appeal for Mercy
 - With that being said, I invite you to open up your bibles and turn with me to Mark 15:6-15.

Mark 15:6 Now at the feast he used to release for them any one prisoner whom they requested.

Mark 15:7 The man named Barabbas had been imprisoned with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the insurrection.

Mark 15:8 The crowd went up and began asking him to do as he had been accustomed to do for them.

Mark 15:9 Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?"

Mark 15:10 For he was aware that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.

Mark 15:11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask him to release Barabbas for them instead.

Mark 15:12 Answering again, Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?"

Mark 15:13 They shouted back, "Crucify Him!"

Mark 15:14 But Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify Him!"

Mark 15:15 Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.

- As Mark opens the scene, he mentions that a tradition had begun during the time of Roman control of Judea which was to release a Jewish Prisoner to the crowd for Passover.
 - This tradition is not mentioned in history outside of the Gospel records; however, it could be understood how this goodwill gesture became Pilate's custom, nonetheless.
 - At best, in an effort to keep peace and refrain from civil unrest during a time of high religious festivities, the release of a Jewish prisoner would serve as a sort of peace offering in order to please the crowd.
 - According to Mark's gospel, it seems that as the trial proceedings progressed, a sizeable crowd began to gather at the palace demanding that Pilate would implement this tradition that they were accustomed to every Passover.
 - It would seem as if this inciting of the crowd was being spurred on by the religious leaders to gain a swift guilty verdict from Pilate to put Jesus to death.
 - So, in an effort to pacify the crowd, and in hopes of releasing Jesus with an innocent verdict, Pilate saw this as an opportunity to get from under the pressure of these religious leaders by playing into the crowd's request.
 - And to ensure Jesus' release, Pilate arranges for an obviously guilty prisoner whom he assumed the crowd would most definitely reject, therefore releasing Jesus.

- Pilate's choice of prisoner this year was the notorious insurrectionist named Barabbas.
 - Mark wastes no details in describing to the reader who Barabbas was as a well-known criminal, but also a murderer.
 - Matthew's gospel mentions Barabbas was a notorious prisoner.
 - And John's gospel mentions Barabbas was a robber.
- So, when you summarize the character and totality of this individual, this is someone that, without question, you would choose for them to remain in prison for good. The choice was clear within Pilate's mind.
 - Most assuredly, the people will choose Jesus to be freed and not this well-known habitual criminal.
 - As best as he could, Pilate tries to make the innocent choice obvious.
- So, Pilate, in response to the crowd's demands says: "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?"
 - The language is obvious in Mark's gospel that Pilate, by way of introducing the innocent prisoner for release in good faith, is wanting to make it plain who the crowd should choose.
 - The contrast between Jesus and Barabbas couldn't be any clearer.
- However, from the crowd chanting and pushback of Jesus standing before them, it became evident that the religious leaders were doing some crowd control of their own.
 - We know this because both verses 9 and 11 are in opposition to one another.
 - Notice that as Pilate sees the religious leaders' envy of Jesus in verse 9, that the religious leaders are stirring up the crowd to request the release of Barabbas instead.
- We have two groups of leaders seeking to use this tradition to their own advantage.
 - Pilate, in a strange way, seeks to stand up for what is right by using this tradition to free Jesus, yet he is confronted with the jealousy and envy that the religious leaders have against Jesus.
 - Remember, throughout the entirety of Jesus' ministry, the religious leaders have all been threatened by His presence because of His influence and teaching.
- The religious leaders, on the other hand, are using this Passover custom to stir up and instigate within the crowds to have Jesus killed in exchange for a notorious and seditious murderer.
 - The word for "stirred" in verse 11 is the Greek word *anaseio* (an-a-see-o) which means to disturb, incite, or instigate a matter to one's own benefit.
- Pilate at least got this right. He saw the religious leaders for who they were, opportunists, and ultimately envious of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - And isn't that the reality of the human heart: That we seek to take advantage of what we can, how we can, if it profits our own bottom line.
 - This is a picture of the human heart.

- It's almost as if there is a tale of two hearts at play here. Both leaders, seemingly moving in different directions or so we think.
- Remember, as I mentioned last week, there is a question that every person has to ask themselves and that question is, "What do we do about Jesus?" Better yet, "Who is Jesus?" How do we see Him?
 - Is He the Savior, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords or is the truth of who He is in conflict with who we are?
 - Let's keep moving, check out verses 12-15.

Mark 15:12 Answering again, Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?"

Mark 15:13 They shouted back, "Crucify Him!"

Mark 15:14 But Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify Him!"

Mark 15:15 Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.

- While all this chaos in the crowd continues, Matthew's account documents that the trial was temporarily interrupted by Pilate's wife who sent him a message.
 - Church tradition tells us that her name was Procla or Claudia Procula
 - And it was a dream in which she was given by which she warned her husband to have nothing to do with this righteous Man – Jesus.
 - It's clear from the text that this dream was quite disturbing because Claudia mentioned that she suffered greatly.
 - It seems to be that this dream was something that she could not shake and required that she speak to her husband about it immediately.
 - However, it becomes clear from this "potential opportunity" of freeing Jesus that it is missed by Pilate, more than likely because of his failure to heed the words of his wife.
 - Furthermore, Mark's account does not seem to be interested in the mentioning of this brief pause of the proceedings with Claudia.
 - Perhaps because the conclusion of Jesus' end is written, therefore Mark is more concerned with the suffering results of the servant.
 - Well, it's after this brief pause that Pilate responds to the instigated response of the religious leaders to the crowd, to free Barabbas.
 - Pilate says: "Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?"
 - In other words: "If you want me to release Barabbas, a man guilty of the crimes he has committed, then what do you want me to do with this Jesus whom is said to be the "King of the Jews?"
 - Pilate is faced with the dilemma of truth confronted by injustice. The question becomes: "What will Pilate do?"
 - Mark's gospel paints a clear picture that the crowd has become fully convinced of

Jesus' false guilty verdict which has been planned by the religious leaders.

- And now, in a unanimous voice, the entire crowd calls to have Jesus crucified.
- Pilate is at his wits end to the point that he states, "Why, what evil has He done?"
- Pilate is seeking to challenge the crowd as to what crime Jesus has been found guilty of.
 - Here it is, that Pilate has placed before them a well-known guilty criminal who has caused much destruction within the region, and yet the crowd is persistently crying out for the Innocent One, Jesus Christ to be put to death.
 - If this shows us anything, it shows us how dark and evil the human heart is, and at the same time it shows us the purity, holiness, and innocence of our Savior.
- The crowd had defaulted to the general response of what the religious leaders said.
 - And as I've mentioned before throughout our teaching of Mark's Gospel, it was common that what the religious leaders said/did, the people did without question.
 - And without fail the people have subjected themselves to it once again, only now of their own volition.
 - But need I remind us of the reality that all of this is being orchestrated Sovereignly by the Lord?
- The reality is that God is in control of every detail of our lives and all things occur, both good and bad, according to His will and for His good pleasure.
 - We see this truth within the Old Testament in Isaiah 45:6-7.

Isaiah 45:6 That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun

That there is no one besides Me.

I am the Lord, and there is no other,

Isaiah 45:7 The One forming light and creating darkness,

Causing well-being and creating calamity;

I am the Lord who does all these.

- As tension rises for the crowd's demand for Jesus to be crucified, Pilate found himself in quite a precarious situation because his opposition to Jesus being crucified was beginning to cause a riot.
 - And according to John's gospel (John 19:12), there were threats to report Pilate to Caesar. Check out the text.

John 19:12 As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar."

- On top of those threats, Pilate's stance with Caesar was not the greatest.

- If word got to Caesar that Pilate allowed a “rival King” to live and stand in opposition to Rome, not only would that be Pilate’s job, but Pilate’s head on a platter.
- On top of that, Pilate and the Jewish people had a difficult relationship to say the least.
- So, Pilate now feels the urgent need to act quickly not for the sake of justice but for the sake of his career and life.
 - In response to that reality, we see in Matthew’s gospel that Pilate washes his hands in front of the crowd, symbolizing his desire to absolve himself from this injustice.
 - And at the same time, as a last attempt, solidifies their request, in a way, in the hopes that they would change their minds.
 - So as a final attempt, Pilate sends Jesus to be scourged. (We will dive deeper into this a bit later tonight and a bit more next week.)
- The reality was no matter how many times Pilate washed his hands, his abdication from this matter did not dissolve him from the injustice that also fell upon him alongside the religious leaders.
 - So here it was that Jesus the Son of God and Barabbas the insurrectionist and murderer are standing before the crowd who is crying out for the release of an unjust man.
- There is a picture here that tells of the reality of what Jesus has done for all who place faith in Him through the Sovereign work and provision of God.
 - On one side of Pilate stood Yeshua (Jesus), the Son of the Living God.
 - That through and in whom all who were dead would be made alive in Him upon the belief that Jesus was who He said He was.
- And on the other side of Pilate stood Barabbas, a murderer and robber.
 - Interestingly enough, Barabbas was not his actual name.
 - Barabbas is a Greek transliteration of the Aramaic words “*bar*” meaning “son of” and “*Abba*”, which means “his father’s name”, ultimately making him the “son of Abba”.
 - Origen, a Christian Theologian and early Church leader, refers to ancient manuscripts that Barabbas’ real name was Yeshua, which was a common Jewish name in that day.
- In other words, before the crowd and Pilate stood two men named Yeshua, son of the Father. Both stood representing their respective spiritual families.
 - It was Barabbas who was the son of his father, the devil, and reflected the very nature and condition of Satan.
 - We see throughout scripture the bible identifies Satan as a thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy.
- On the other hand, we have Jesus, the Son of The Living God, the one in whom there is no darkness or deceit.
 - The one in whom, men and women are born again through belief in Him and in Him alone.

- Check out what John writes in 1 John 1:4-5.

1 John 1:4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

- ○ In the Greek language, there is an emphasis that there is absolutely no darkness found in God.
 - For those who are in Christ are Children of light.
- Both men represented two types of people in this world. Barabbas represents every unbeliever, dead in their sins and trespasses, in constant rebellion against a Holy and Just God, and in whom rightfully deserves death.
 - While Jesus represents all who have been and will be born again, by faith, and justified through the finished work of Christ on the cross.
- Here is the point that I have been making over the past few weeks: Everyone will be faced with the choice or confronted with the question: “Who is Jesus?”
 - Because the only thing that we have left, apart from Christ, is remaining spiritually dead and in sin, doomed for the rightful judgment of God that is inevitably coming!
 - You either accept the only provision that God has made which is belief in His Son who is our Substitute who justified us and made us right with God.
 - Or you reject the provision in an effort to try and appease God in your own failed strength which doesn’t meet the standard.
- The world and the culture will tell you what they deem is acceptable and right and good, but as Paul writes in Romans, all men suppress the truth within their conciseness. (Romans 1:18)

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

- ○ Truth has been revealed both verbally and visually and truth is found in the Person of Christ! Truth is a Person!
- What becomes such a surreal moment in all of this is how Pilate assumed that washing his hands of this situation allowed him to walk away unscathed.
 - Not only did Pilate not escape his guilt of killing an innocent man, but he lost the very thing in which he was seeking to preserve – his job/career.
- According to Josephus, Pilate lost his job a few years later when Vitellius, the Prefect of Syria sent Marcellus to temporarily take over Judaea and sent Pilate to stand before the emperor in Rome to answer the accusations from the Jews.
 - However, nothing is documented about Pilate after his arrival in Rome except for the fact that he was eventually banished to France.
 - Eusebius recorded that Pilate committed suicide after the trial of Jesus,

however there is no evidence to confirm this.

- In any case, we see a similar end with two characters.
 - That the demise of both Judas and Pilate is centered on their betrayal of Jesus at the cost of their own comfort.
 - For Judas it was money and for Pilate, it was his career. (Earthly possessions)
- Both men came to the realization at one point or another that what they had done in their own human volition was wrong.
 - This is the crushing reality of our choices as human beings, and that is all of our choices will lead us somewhere.
 - But the ultimate choice that can be made, by means of the Spirit's illumination, is placing faith in Jesus Christ.
- It's in verse 15 that after several attempts at freeing Jesus, Pilate gives in and hands Jesus over for scourging.
 - To be scourged was to be beaten or flogged with multiple lashes attached to a whip.
- In the case of a Jewish scourging, there were limits as it related to how many times someone would be whipped.
 - For instance, the number of stripes given in a Jewish context would be "forty-save one" according to the Mosaic Law in Deuteronomy 25:3. Check out what the text says.

Deut.25:3 but the judge must not impose more than forty lashes. If the guilty party is flogged more than that, your fellow Israelite will be degraded in your eyes.

- ○ It was against Jewish Law to be lashed more than 40 times.
- However, Jesus' scourging was taking place by Romans which meant there were completely different procedures.
 - According to Roman Law, there were no limits to how many lashes an individual could receive.
- The Roman whip had long leather lashes which could wrap around the entire body and at the end of each lash contained either a piece of metal, nail, glass or a sharp lamb bone.
 - So imagine, after a few slashes of this Roman lashing, not only would large chunks of skin and muscle be pulled away, but muscle would be fully exposed.
 - We must also keep in mind that we do not know the direction of the swing of the whip itself, meaning that part of the lashes impacted Jesus' face.
- The reality is the pictures we see of Jesus on the cross are a complete downplay of how His body and face truly looked after He was scourged.
 - All of this Sovereignly planned to fulfill what the Lord spoke in Isaiah 52:14 by the Spirit.

**Isaiah 52:14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him—
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being
and his form marred beyond human likeness—**

- According to John's gospel, it would have been after this scourging that Jesus was presented to the people one last time, marred beyond recognition, as their choice for death over Barabbas. (John 19:1-15, v.13)
 - After looking upon His beaten face, to the point that He was unrecognizable, the crowd's verdict was in, and Pilate was left with no choice.
 - Jesus was considered guilty and sentenced to death.
 - The beatings which Jesus would take on were for us!
 - We must learn to stop and recognize the reality and weight of what Jesus had to endure to attain for us eternal security in Him.
 - Most especially we see the suffering servant in full picture!
 - We oftentimes take for granted the grace we have in Christ that abounds even more because we fail to truly understand what He had to endure for us.
 - Next week we will pick back up on a few significant aspects of Jesus' Passion leading up to the moment He would hang on the cross.
 - For it will be in these gruesome details that we will see the length that our Savior went to save us.
 - Most especially we will be faced with a question of, Why? Why did Christ have to suffer these many things?
 - And beyond that, what does Jesus' example in His suffering teach us as believers?
 - In the end, we will come to realize that it was not the physical cruelty that caused Jesus the greatest agony, but rather it would be the wrath poured upon Him as He would become sin for us.
 - The wrath that was rightfully aimed at you and I.
 - I pray you join us next week.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 15C

Chapter 15:16-21

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- Last week we were faced with observing the cruel and gruesome event of Jesus being scourged by the Roman soldiers.
 - As we read, this method of scourging was unlike that of the Jewish lashings which was known as “forty save one”.
 - We came to understand that the Roman scourging and flogging had no limits as to how many lashes could be executed.
 - Therefore, the results of those Roman lashings concluded with a physically disfigured and innocent Jesus.
 - From there, as John’s chronology indicates, the scourging event would have occurred before the scene in which we will find Jesus in tonight regarding the royal mocking.
 - In other words, it seems that Mark has chosen to separate the event of mocking by itself to focus on some key aspects of Jesus’ suffering.
 - The trials that Christ has endured, up to this point, have been under the auspice of a kangaroo trial, to say the least.
 - The rules of law had been skewed under the Jewish proceedings for the sake of finding some sort of fault in Him, which they could not.
 - What began as a charge of blasphemy now became acts of sedition, in which both charges fail to be seen in the eyes of Pilate.
 - Unfortunately, through the manipulation and evil of the religious leaders, they have managed to not only stir up the crowd but have pinned Pilate between a rock and a hard place.
 - It is either Jesus’ freedom based on His innocence before the temporary judge and executioner, or Pilate’s job and life in jeopardy before the emperor.
 - For the crowd, it is either choose Jesus or Barabbas – both representing two different eternal ends.
 - Jesus (Yeshua), the Son of the Living God who leads to eternal life or Yeshua, son of his father, Satan, which leads to eternal damnation and hell.
 - So, in an attempt to subdue the riot and please the crowd, Pilate gives in to the demands of the people for the sake of preserving his life.
 - Tonight, we will observe a moment of the suffering and mocking of Jesus.
 - In doing so, we will see how through Jesus’ sufferings and obedience to the will of the Father on the cross, Jesus accomplished this divine purpose:
 - And Jesus will accomplish these things in three ways:
 - 1. Vicariously
 - 2. Voluntarily
 - 3. Victoriously
 - And how this would be accomplished begins with the pattern which Jesus sets for all believers to suffer well for the Glory that will be revealed in the end.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight’s text, it would simply be: A Crown, A Robe, and a Reed: The Parody of a Royal Ceremony.
 - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark

15:16-21.

Mark 15:16 The soldiers took Him away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium), and they *called together the whole Roman cohort.

Mark 15:17 They *dressed Him up in purple, and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him;

Mark 15:18 and they began to acclaim Him, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

Mark 15:19 They kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting on Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him.

Mark 15:20 After they had mocked Him, they took the purple robe off Him and put His own garments on Him. And they *led Him out to crucify Him.

Mark 15:21 They *pressed into service a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His cross.

- As we prepare to dive into tonight’s verses, I believe the best approach is to begin with the reality that the sufferings which Jesus is undertaking are not surprising to Jesus, nor should it be to the readers.
 - In carefully examining these events leading up to Jesus being placed on the cross, we have witnessed the grave mistreatment of our Lord both politically and ethically.
 - That where His innocence and truth have shown to be authentic, it is the hearts of men that have shown to be darkened and spiritually dead.
 - However, this reality has not gotten past Jesus for this is why He has come to suffer and die.
 - For all who would place faith in Him would gain eternal life – moving from spiritual death to spiritual life.
 - For those who were following Jesus, especially His disciples, when discussions of suffering and death were mentioned by Jesus, they did not compute.
 - I have mentioned throughout our Mark study that the only way in which the Kingdom could come would first require that a people respond to their king and be made ready to enter into the Kingdom.
 - However, due to the Jewish leadership blaspheming the Holy Spirit, the offer of the Kingdom was rescinded.
 - It was the rescinding of the offer of the Kingdom that would lead to a postponement of the literal, physical Kingdom on earth in which Jesus would rule as King.
 - To put it plainly, the Messiah had made known through His profound teachings and Messianic deeds that He was the Promised One of old,
 - However, the people struggled to recognize who He was due to failed expectations.
 - They were expecting a military leader to conquer and take over but instead received a compassionate, healing, and forgiving Jesus. (First Coming)
 - Even John the Baptist had to send a few of His disciples to ask if he needed to look for another Messiah.

- Rather than a man from the inconspicuous land of Nazareth, the religious leaders and the people were anticipating a man of noteworthy upbringing and prominence.
 - Time and time again, Jesus had made known, through His teachings and His actions, who He was.
 - However, when expectations don't meet the mark, man seeks to find the solution in their own way rather than submitting to the truth.
- Within both the religious and civil trials, it is Truth that seems to be under the microscope and when man is faced with absolute truth, it is oftentimes rejected, confronted with confrontation, or sought to be eliminated.
- Among failed expectations was the lack of understanding of what Jesus, as Messiah, came to accomplish in His first coming.
 - Three times Jesus had mentioned to His disciples that He would soon die.
 - He mentioned it in Mark 8:31, Mark 9:30-31, and Mark 10:33-34.
 - And each time the weight of Jesus' words was overlooked for the sake of pride by the disciples.
- And it would be Jesus' third time mentioning His death that would be the most unique because not only did He foretell His death, but He would mention the way in which He would die.
 - Let's examine Mark 10:33-34 again.

Mark 10:33 saying, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles.

Mark 10:34 They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.”

- It is here that Jesus mentioned the coming suffering which He would endure but more specifically, in the context of Mark 10:33-34, He is addressing the disciples' misunderstanding of Him as a king.
 - Jesus, speaking to James and John lets them know that His purpose was not to come to be served, *in the sense of royalty*, but rather in the sense of service.
 - And with that service would require great sacrifice.
 - Jesus uses the word “ransom”. The Greek word is *lytron* (loo-tron) which means a price paid or atonement.
 - The Hebrew word for this term is *koper* (ko-fer) which is a ransom.
 - That is what is given in exchange as payment to avoid impending punishment. (covering, pitch)
 - In other words, Jesus' life and death would become the payment paid to prevent the rightful party from taking on the full weight and punishment of the wrath of God.
 - It's this meaning of redemption or release!
 - Substitutionary atonement is in full view here! Jesus would be the Perfect

One to suffer for the many!

- One question that we will discover tonight is, “Why did Christ have to suffer the way He did before taking on the cross?”
 - Prayerfully, we will come to see that Jesus’ suffering for the many would become a sample or template by which all who place faith in Him would come to know how to suffer well to and for the Glory of God.
 - With that being said let’s dive into tonight’s text beginning with verse 16.

Mark 15:16 The soldiers took Him away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium), and they *called together the whole Roman cohort.

- It is after the rioting scene of the crowd demanding Barabbas to be freed, while chanting for the death of Christ, that Mark paints the picture of the behind the scenes event held within the walls of the Praetorium.
 - Pilate has done all that he could to free Jesus, all the while protecting himself.
 - Yet in an effort to preserve his life and career, he gives in to the demands of the crowd and the religious leaders and hands Jesus over to be crucified.
 - The way in which Mark transitions to verse 16 can be a bit misleading because the scourging is taking place between the second and third plea from Pilate as to who will be released.
 - Therefore Mark takes the time to describe for us the events that occur after the scourging, before Jesus is led to be crucified.
 - And the text tells us that “the whole Roman cohort” was called together to Jesus before His final appearance to the crowd. (For the third time)
 - A Roman cohort consisted of approximately 600 men, which was 1/10th of a Roman legion which was 6,000 men.
 - So here we see that Jesus, after a Roman scourging, is led back to the Praetorium a final time, only this time to be mocked and abused.
 - Check out verses 17-20.

Mark 15:17 They *dressed Him up in purple, and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him;

Mark 15:18 and they began to acclaim Him, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

Mark 15:19 They kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting on Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him.

Mark 15:20 After they had mocked Him, they took the purple robe off Him and put His own garments on Him. And they *led Him out to crucify Him.

- Mark mentions that the Roman soldiers have begun to mock Jesus in an absurd imitation of a king.
 - They dressed him in a makeshift regal robe, placed a crown made of thorns on His head, and put a reed in His hand to serve as a mock scepter – all the while shouting in a joking manner, “Hail, King of the Jews”.

- We will take some time to expound upon each item to discuss its significance despite its sham of a demonstration.
- Let's begin with the robe.
- Mark mentions that the Roman soldiers dressed him in a purple robe.
 - John's gospel (John 19:2) mentions the same color of purple whereas Matthew's gospel mentions that the color was scarlet.
- There may be some that read the difference in color from these separate accounts and question the inerrancy of scripture, however, both are true.
 - The reality was that in that environment, the soldiers would not have had access to royal regalia such as a kingly robe, so they would have to make do with what was available.
- At best, they would have on the ready a faded military cloak, which after wear and tear alongside the beating of the sun, would cause a royal color such as scarlet to begin to fade.
 - So, it would be this faded sense of symbolic splendor, suggesting royalty, that these soldiers would use as a mocking prompt to cover Jesus with.
- However, we must keep in mind that putting on these garments meant that they would have to remove Jesus' own garments at the onset (verse 20).
 - If we keep in mind John's chronology, the removal of Jesus' own garments would have taken place after He was scourged.
 - In other words, wounds that had begun to balm a bit and the blood that may have begun to dry in certain areas would now be reopened.
- It's like having a fresh cut on your arm that you have applied a Band-Aid to with no antiseptic, and then a few moments later you take the Band-Aid off becoming fully exposed to the elements.
 - The pain that Jesus had to have experienced in that moment was most certainly painful and given the physical condition of Jesus, He would not have come across as royal in the least bit.
 - This is the point that the Roman soldiers are making, they have no care for Jesus as a king, but more than that no care for the Jewish people.
- After the robe, Mark mentions that the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns as a makeshift royal crown, once again suggesting Jesus as a king.
 - Although the text does not provide us with the plant type, we can surmise that whatever bush this came from, it contained spiky branches that provided some "give" to create a circular shape to place upon Jesus' head.
 - Being that this crown was made of thorny branches, as they are placing it upon his head we know that pressing it down upon His skull would have caused further bleeding and pain.
- From there the soldiers began shouting and chanting in a sarcastic manner, "Hail, King of the Jews".
 - This mocking taunt was being repeated by close to 600 men all at once surrounding Jesus in His condition.
- Lastly, Matthew's gospel provides us with information that Mark and John do not and that is the Roman soldiers gave Jesus a reed in His right hand to hold as if it

were a scepter.

- Obviously, Matthew's gospel is providing a picture for the Jewish reader to see the reality of Jesus' true position as Messiah-King.
- A scepter was an ornate staff carried by a ruler on ceremonial occasions as a symbol of Sovereign authority.
 - What becomes so telling in this mocking event is that although these men are addressing Jesus in a sarcastic manner, they fail to realize that they are proclaiming the truth of who He truly is.
- According to Mark's gospel, it is the same scepter (reed) that Matthew mentions in which the soldiers seem to take out of his hand and begin to beat Him over the head with.
 - The phrase "they kept beating Him" is in the imperfect active indicative which means this is a continual beating, spitting, and false adorning of His Person.
 - So, imagine nearly 600 men taking turns to beat Jesus over the head with this reed.
 - This would ultimately cause the crown of thorns to be further pressed into His skull causing more injury to insult.
- Secondly, spitting was an offense that even in today's context is the ultimate expression of disrespect, and here it is these soldiers casting upon Him the greatest shame in that day.
 - Lastly, they kneel before Jesus as if to pay honor and respect.
 - Yet all of this is done to downplay both the Jewish people and Jesus' claim as the Jewish Messiah.
- Finally, we see in verse 20, after the mocking, beating, and dishonor has taken place, the text mentions that they remove the purple robe off Jesus and place His own garments back on.
 - Again, His body and open wounds must endure more disruption as His garments are removed again.
 - And from there the text says that Jesus was led out to be crucified.
 - We now arrive to verse 21. Check out the text.

Mark 15:21 They *pressed into service a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His cross.

- Jesus is led by the Roman soldiers out from the Praetorium and towards the location of the crucifixion, Golgotha, which is translated Place of a Skull. We will explore this detail further, next week.
 - Mark's account seems to describe the reality of physical distress that Jesus had endured because verse 21 states that the soldiers recruited a passer-by to help carry Jesus' cross to the destination.
 - Normally, every condemned individual would be required to carry their own cross to be crucified, according to Plutarch, a Greek Philosopher.
 - It seems that for a good portion of the journey, Jesus was able to carry it on His

own.

- However, Jesus seems to not be able to bear the weight of this beam on His own up to a certain point.
- And by divine providence, it leads to the soldiers recruiting a man by the name Simon of Cyrene to aid Him.
- Mark becomes incredibly detailed with this Simon character because he takes the time to mention that Simon is the father of Alexander and Rufus.
- Simon was from Cyrene which is located on the north coast of Africa and Simon was indeed a Jew who had traveled back to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.
 - And while on his way to some location, he is stopped and recruited to carry Jesus' cross.
- One detail that comes to mind is: Why does Mark feel the need to mention in parenthesis, "the father of Alexander and Rufus?"
 - Well perhaps because Mark's immediate audience would have known who these two men were.
 - In fact, Romans 16:13 confirms for us that this Rufus is the same Rufus who was a member of the Church in Rome in the mid AD 50s.

Romans 16:13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.

- Therefore, this clarifies for them that Simon, whom you might not know, is the Simon who is the father of Rufus and Alexander in whom you do know.
 - It's like when we try to explain a person that we think someone may know or should know, so we go through an entire directory of people's names by way of association in order for them to know the person you're describing.
 - This is what Mark is doing, in a sense.
 - What becomes a matter of Divine providence is how through Simon of Cyrene's interaction with carrying the cross of Christ, that it would soon translate to his two sons coming to faith in Jesus at a later time.
 - Furthermore, it would be through Mark's description of this event in which would ring true into the hearts of his readers, a striking illustration of what it looks like to identify with the suffering Messiah.
 - That following Jesus comes with a great cost that is to be counted!
 - And that true discipleship is to endure through the sufferings of life knowing that Christ is in the suffering with us!
 - The Apostle Peter addresses this means of Christ as our example in 1 Peter 2:20-23.

1 Peter 2:20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

1 Peter 2:21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

1 Peter 2:22 who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth;
1 Peter 2:23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

- This helps in answering a part of the question I posed earlier which was: Why did Christ have to suffer the way He did before taking on the cross?
 - Because in one way, His suffering and obedience to the Father’s plan served as an example by which each believer today should live.
 - That as followers of Christ our suffering should bring about great Glory to God and in that suffering, we are able to depend upon the Father all the more!
 - To put it plainly, through suffering comes Glory!
 - I don’t mean suffering for the sake of suffering, but biblical suffering in the fact that the Lord has purposefully brought you through trials to see Him gloriously at work in your life.
 - For Jesus, the Glory was not only in being raised from the dead, sitting at the right hand of the Father in His session, but it would include a future day in Jesus’ Second Coming when the Kingdom would be consummated.
 - And in that consummation, there would be a coronation with praise, worship, and adoration of King Jesus!
 - The other half of that question of “Why suffering” is because it was always planned this way according to the Father’s plan to fulfill Prophecy.
 - This would be the primary reason!
 - We have discussed such scriptures as Isaiah 52, 53, and Psalm 22 which was written 200 years before Isaiah 53.
 - These are just a few scriptures that speak to the foretelling of the Messiah’s sufferings.
 - Jesus’ suffering was indeed vicarious meaning that He took our place as our “ransom” (Mark 10:45) .
 - His suffering was voluntary in that He willingly submitted Himself to the will of the Father’s plan and in that willingness, the Father glorified Him through the resurrection and session of Christ. (John 17:1)
 - And lastly, we know that because Christ was raised, there is a promise of a future Coming Kingdom.
 - That through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus comes the victory in which those who are in Christ freely possess.
 - What a gift we have in knowing that Christ has come to fulfill the Father’s plan and all the while set the example for us on how to live well to the Glory of God!
 - Know that discipleship is costly but it is worth it because as we obey the word of God we will witness the fruit that comes from it.
 - This is why Jesus’ upper room discourse in John’s gospel was so essential. (John Chapters 13–17)
 - It provided the framework by which the disciples would work from as they

proclaimed the gospel to the world.

- That they would soon come to understand the full weight of Jesus' need to suffer as well as their future sufferings in which they would join in.
- Check out what John states in John 15:18-26.

John 15:18 “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.

John 15:19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.

John 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

John 15:21 But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

John 15:22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

John 15:23 He who hates Me hates My Father also.

John 15:24 If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.

John 15:25 But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’

John 15:26 “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,

- May we learn that our sufferings in this life help us to truly identify with Christ as we rest in Him.
 - And as we submit ourselves to His teaching, in obedience to His will, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, we too will bear much fruit and become more like Jesus.
 - Let’s Pray.



Mark - Lesson 15D

Chapter 15:22-32

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- Tonight, we arrive to the event of the crucifixion.
 - This event within the Passion chronology is one that is too often clouded with misinformation yet spoken about yearly by major media outlets.
 - The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is an event within history that has been well documented and provides multiple eyewitnesses.
 - However, the most significant purpose of the crucifixion is that our very salvation as believers hinges on this moment.
 - What Jesus accomplished through being nailed to the cross demonstrates how He became the substitute (the ransom) for the many.
 - As we approach Mark's account of the crucifixion, we must approach the text with a few questions in mind:
 - 1. Last week we addressed one of the questions which was: Why did Jesus have to suffer the way that He did?
 - 2. What did Jesus have to endure on our behalf on the cross?
 - 3. What did Jesus accomplish on the cross?
 - We discovered that the methods and means by which Jesus suffered were in fact prophetically revealed to the Prophets centuries ago.
 - Meaning that the means of suffering was already predetermined by the Father for His Glory and ultimately for our good.
 - And that ultimate good is the salvation found in the work Christ accomplished on our behalf on the cross.
 - And with that, last week we discovered that Jesus provided us with a template or an example for believers in how to suffer well.
 - As I have mentioned before, the question that one must wrestle with throughout these events is: Who is Jesus?
 - Is He the One whom the Father has sent in order to become our substitute, therefore making us right with God?
 - Or is He simply a good rabbi, or teacher that has wisdom beyond His years and could do a few miracles?
 - It will be through Mark's outworking of his account, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, that he will lead us to the verdict in which he began this book:
 - That this Jesus, the One who came to Suffer and die for us is The Christ, The Son of the Living God.
 - Tonight, we are going to see the following things:
 - 1. Setting (v.22)
 - 2. Scene(s) of Mockery (v.23,25-31)
 - 3. Suffering (v.24)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would simply be: A Crucified Christ: The Suffering and Mocking Hours
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me at Mark 15:22-32 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Mark 15:22 Then they *brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull.

Mark 15:23 And they tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh; but He did not take it.

Mark 15:24 And they *crucified Him, and *divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them to decide what each man would take.

Mark 15:25 Now it was the third hour when they crucified Him.

Mark 15:26 The inscription of the charge against Him read, “THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

Mark 15:27 And they *crucified two rebels with Him, one on His right and one on His left.

Mark 15:28 [And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And He was numbered with transgressors.”]

Mark 15:29 Those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, shaking their heads and saying, “Ha! You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,

Mark 15:30 save Yourself by coming down from the cross!”

Mark 15:31 In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes, were mocking Him among themselves and saying, “He saved others; He cannot save Himself!

Mark 15:32 Let this Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe!” Those who were crucified with Him were also insulting Him.

*Jesus loves me this I know
For the Bible tells me so
Little ones to Him belong
They are weak but He is strong
Yes Jesus loves me
Yes Jesus loves me
Yes Jesus loves me
For the Bible tells me so*

- This Christian children’s hymn is one known by many who attended Sunday school services.
 - This song expressed the immense and abounding love of Jesus which has been made known throughout the bible.
 - Many skeptics of the scriptures, often wrestle with understanding a God of love found in the writings of the New Testament.
 - Yet when they make their way into the Old Testament, they seem to struggle to see that same loving God and instead more judgment.
 - As I have mentioned before, the New Testament interprets the Old Testament scriptures, which are now fully revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ.

- Therefore, the God of the Bible is One God who must uphold both His Judgement and His Love at the same time.
- It is here in Mark 15:22-41, that we can witness the immense love of Jesus.
 - This great and expansive love finds its fulfillment in the actions demonstrated by Jesus on this cross.
 - However, the selfless actions of Jesus had to be planned by someone in order to come to a culminating point at the cross.
- For if God's Judgment and love must both be upheld at the same time, then we know that His rightful judgment had to be demonstrated in an effort to show His love for humanity.
 - And as we have seen up to this point, it is God demonstrating the greatest service known to man in which He willingly lays down His Son as our propitiation (ransom). (Mark 10:45)
- Mark is now preparing to move us from the setting where the guilty verdict was rendered to where the guilty will hang condemned.
 - This location is found outside the city gates in a place called Golgotha, which Mark properly translates as "Place of the Skull".
- However, if we were to look at a map of Jerusalem today, we might find ourselves a bit confused because over time, from Jesus' day to today, there have been several wall projects and events that have commenced.
 - One of these events was the destruction of the walls by the Romans in AD 70.
 - The construction of this wall (Josephus' third wall) began during the reign of King Agrippa I.
 - And as you can see within the graph, the phases of these buildings show what Josephus has recorded and what history has left for us to witness in Jerusalem today. (Dashed line)
- The Praetorium, from which Jesus is being escorted, is known as the Antonian Fortress which was positioned near the Temple Mount inside the city walls.
 - The distance from the Fortress (Praetorium) to Golgotha was approximately 500 meters which is close to 1/3 of a mile apart.
- So, as we discussed last week, although this would have been no more than a 15 min walk, Jesus being in the physical condition He was in would have been a difficult distance to walk.
 - On top of the distance needed to travel and the physical lacerations on Jesus' body, based upon the rules of Roman crucifixion, the captive had to carry their own horizontal beams to the location.
 - At best, these wooden beams weighed close to 100 lbs.
- Therefore, Jesus' physical struggle prompted the Roman soldiers to have Simon of Cyrene help carry the beam to Golgotha.
 - Some may ask the question: "Why was it just the beam that was carried and not the whole cross?"
- This question comes about because of the many movies regarding the portrayal of Jesus headed to the cross.

- However, we will discover later tonight that most of these renditions fail to present literal historical realities according to the Gospel accounts.
- It's in verse 23 that Mark mentions, as Jesus is making His way to the cross, that as Simon of Cyrene is holding His beam and joining in this crucifixion moment, several scenes began to unfold.
 - Mark mentions that a group of individuals try to give Him wine mixed with myrrh.
- However, with the offering of this drink came Jesus' refusal to partake.
 - The immediate question becomes: "Why would Jesus refuse the aid?"
 - What about this drink would cause Jesus to refuse it altogether?
- In one sense, His refusal to drink the wine could be in conjunction with what He had mentioned to the disciples in the upper room where He states: "He would not drink again until His reception in the Kingdom." (Mark 14:25)
 - The other suggestion I will mention shortly.
- Mark's text states in verse 23 that "they" offered Jesus the wine mixed with myrrh. One thing we should seek to know is, Who is the "they"?
 - Well, if we go to Luke's gospel (Luke 23:27), Luke records that a large crowd of people and women who were mourning and lamenting Jesus were following Him to the site for crucifixion.
 - It was common during that time to have professional mourners in the midst as a means of tradition according to Jewish culture.
- Therefore the "they" in Mark's gospel providing this wine and myrrh mix could have been a sympathetic crowd member or perhaps the wailing women.
 - And according to Scripture, it would affirm the fact that the giver of this wine and myrrh mix would typically be none other than the women in that day reflecting Proverbs 31:6.

**Proverbs 31:6 Give strong drink to him who is perishing,
And wine to him whose life is bitter.**

- This brings us to our next question: What was myrrh?
 - Myrrh was an ingredient from the sap of a plant used as an anaesthetic to ease the pain.
 - So with the addition of wine to this mixture, it would have a similar effect of dampening the pain and easing the mind.
 - However, Matthew's gospel (Matthew 27:34) tells us after tasting it, He refused it.
 - The moment that we find ourselves in pain today, we have quick access to pain-relief medicine and the like so that we don't have to endure the pain we are presently experiencing.
 - Yet here we find our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, refusing the aid of pain relief to fully face His death and suffering while remaining in full control of this situation.
 - Talk about full dependency upon the Father!

- Jesus endured through it all with a single focus: Accomplish the Father's will in a fully aware and controlled state.
- Check out verses 24-25. Mark shifts us to the next scene.

Mark 15:24 And they *crucified Him, and *divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them to decide what each man would take.

Mark 15:25 Now it was the third hour when they crucified Him.

- Mark mentions that as Jesus is being crucified, His belongings were divided among the soldiers as they cast lots on who would take what.
 - Notice how Mark begins this moment – he states “..And they crucified Him”. Nothing more. Nothing less.
 - It's important to note that the Gospels themselves do not go into the minutia of how Jesus was crucified and the methods by which the Roman soldiers would accomplish it.
 - And I find this reality to be very encouraging, because in one way, the gospel writers are not placing emphasis on the how of the crucifixion, but rather the what!
 - What did Jesus' death by crucifixion accomplish for the many?! That becomes the focal point to the narrative of Mark's Gospel.
 - In other words, though the experience of the cross was gruesome, and we will uncover a bit of that, the focus of Mark's brevity of “the how” refocuses us all on what this gruesome and painful death accomplished.
 - Here it is, these soldiers, who at one point fell to the ground at the proclamation of Jesus being the “I AM”, are now gambling, to say the least, over who will own what articles of clothing.
 - And it seems as if, from Mark's description of this moment, that He is pointing to the reality of the fulfillment of scripture regarding the disposing of Jesus' clothes.
 - Mark traces this fulfillment of Psalm 22:18. Check out the text:

**Psalm 22:18 They divide my garments among them,
And for my clothing they cast lots.**

- Along with the casting of lots for Jesus' clothing, we should briefly uncover the cruelty of this form of punishment considering these passion events.
 - For it will be the culmination of the cross in which Jesus has come to take away the sins of the world.
 - Crucifixion was deemed the harshest form of capital punishment in the ancient world.
 - This form of punishment would have been quite familiar to Mark's audience because they would witness many non-Romans experiencing this cruel form of punishment.

- Along with this cruel manner of death came the great humiliation that ensued because although many pictures of Jesus on the cross show Him in loincloth, the reality was Jesus was naked before all.
- As one could imagine, not only is there great pain that Jesus had to endure but He was faced with great shame.
- It would be that shame and pain that was rightfully our shame and pain in which He willfully and lovingly took on Himself for our sake.
- I want to quickly provide some detailed graphics and explanations that were explained by several professionals in their field which was published in JAMA.
 - JAMA is the Journal of the American Medical Association which is a peer review medical journal.
 - This study of the Passion events was accomplished by a Medical Doctor, a Pastor, and a Medical Graphics artist.
 - And my purpose of showing these is to describe and show what the Roman crucifixion entailed and to see how precise God's word is in that no bone was broken in Jesus' body.
 - (Show graphics.)
- And what makes this moment so powerful is that the time in which Jesus was hung on the cross was the exact time in which the National Passover Lamb was slaughtered on behalf of Israel. That time was 9AM. (See slide)
 - Mark indicates that it was the "third-hour" (Roman hour) in which Jesus was crucified and along with the painful shame that came with this method of death was continued mockery.
 - With this being the third hour, it meant that the first 3-hour interval in which Jesus is hanging and suffering is for the sins of humanity.
- Notice, verse 26 mentions that an inscription was made on a placard that would hang on the cross to identify who He was.
 - With a harmonization of the gospel accounts, a type of cross potentially comes to mind being that the Romans had 4 crosses they used.
 - And based on these accounts, Jesus would have hung on a cross having the lowercase t-shape which could hold the inscription above His head.
- And on the placard, the charge against Jesus read, "King of the Jews".
 - What makes these events all the more saddening is this inscription, according to Roman custom, would be hung around the criminal's neck on their way to the execution site.
 - So imagine, walking the path to the cross, now known as the Via Dolorosa, the people are observing and reading the sign around His neck.
 - It was a shameful walk to be made!
 - And the intent behind this inscription, as you can imagine, was to make a mockery of both Jesus and the Jewish leadership. (John 19:19-22)
- Observe, once again, the reality of what Mark is describing.
 - He is not emphasizing the methods of the crucifixion but rather some significant events around it.

- Check out verses 27 and 28.

Mark 15:27 And they *crucified two rebels with Him, one on His right and one on His left.

Mark 15:28 [And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And He was numbered with transgressors.”]

- Mark states that along with Jesus’ crucifixion came the company of two other men – “one to His left and one to His right.”
 - Mark uses the term “robbers” to describe who these men are.
 - The Greek word for “robber” here is *lestes* which can mean a bandit or thief.
 - However, robbery was not a crime that was punishable by death in Rome.
 - With that being said, the term Mark uses can be a bit confusing.
 - However, within BDAG which is Bauer’s Lexicon, it shows that this word also means a revolutionary or insurrectionist.
 - Therefore, the term robbers in this context more than likely speaks to these men as rebels.
 - And at best, these men were potentially grouped in Barabbas’ guerrilla wars against Rome.
 - Secondly, we see that Mark mentions a positioning phrase of the robbers, “one on His right and one on His left”
 - This phrase should sound a bit familiar because this was the request by which James and John sought to have next to Jesus, however in different circumstances.
 - Check out with me really quickly, Mark 10:37-38.

Mark 10:37 They said to Him, “Grant that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your glory.”

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”

- This phrase is interesting yet ironic because where James and John wanted to sit in positions of Honor and Glory, this current position seems far from glorious.
 - Perhaps, this speaks even more to the reality that within our own humanity we seek the glory of the destination yet don’t desire the journey to get there.
 - Our only boast should be in the glorious, finished work of Jesus Christ and what He accomplished on the cross!
 - That through the gore and gruesomeness of the cross would come great Glory and Honor bestowed upon the Son of God.
 - This is why no man can share in His glory because no man could bear the weight of what He went through!

- Here we find a moment of application and that is: In Christ alone do we boast, and not in ourselves, but unto Him and to His Glory, alone!
- Here we find Jesus, the innocent one now numbered with the transgressors.
 - Now as we look at verse 28, you may notice in your bibles that it is either bracketed or not there.
 - This is because there are some that argue this verse was not included in the original manuscripts.
- However, evidence shows within Eusebius' canon listings that verse 28 harmonizes perfectly with Luke 22:37.
 - Therefore, it is safe to say that whether this was a scribal note or not, it is congruent with Markan language and fits the canon of scripture.
- And as we find in verse 28, scripture was fulfilled by Christ yet again according to Isaiah 53:12.

Isaiah 53:12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,
 And He will divide the booty with the strong;
 Because He poured out Himself to death,
 And was numbered with the transgressors;
 Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,
 And interceded for the transgressors.

- What we should be coming to see within Mark's text is the reality of what Jesus is taking on Himself.
 - The Suffering Servant has taken upon Himself the mocking, the ridicule, the assault, the shame, the anger, the injustice, the bitterness.
 - We come to find why Jesus had mentioned to the disciples in Mark 10:45, that He has come not to be served, for that would come at a later time.
 - Rather, He has come to serve! Our glorious salvation could not have been accomplished without the crushing of Jesus on the cross.
 - So, as we move to the next scene of mocking, we will see that even amongst His own, Jesus will be shamed.
 - Even more so, we find that the men crucified with Him join in on the mockery. Check out verses 29-32.

Mark 15:29 Those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, shaking their heads and saying, "Ha! You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,

Mark 15:30 save Yourself by coming down from the cross!"

Mark 15:31 In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes, were mocking Him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; He cannot save Himself!

Mark 15:32 Let this Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe!" Those who were crucified with Him were also

insulting Him.

- As we read these sobering passages, one cannot help but think that the One who has come to save endured the worst for all.
 - At this point, that mix of wine and myrrh would have most definitely been useful given what He not only endured physically but also mentally.
 - Within our own human rationalization, what Jesus allowed Himself to endure could not have been accomplished by men.
 - It could only take One, who is full of grace and truth, that could endure what He did.
 - Our natural proclivity within our fallen nature is to isolate and protect ourselves, not meet the needs of others.
 - So here it is that as Jesus is hanging from the cross that those who were passing by were “hurling abuse” at Him.
 - The phrase “hurling abuse” is not to be confused with obscenities or profane language.
 - The Greek word for “hurling” is *blasphemeo* which is blasphemy in English.
 - That generation had indeed blasphemed the Son of God.
 - Furthermore, individuals were wagging their heads and saying “You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself and come down from the cross.”
 - In one instance, you must ask yourself: “What would cause individuals to be so cruel?”
 - Based on the location of the crucifixion, it would be located on a hill outside of the gate which could be viewed by onlookers coming into the city or individuals leaving the city.
 - And as they would pass by, they could see the inscription above Jesus’ head declaring, not His accused crime, but His acclaimed Title.
 - On top of that, the distance from the site to the Temple Mount was not far so for many this would have been deemed a blasphemous accusation.
 - Needless to say, as they hurled insults upon the Lord Jesus, the reality was they were heaping judgment upon themselves.
 - In all reality, if Jesus wanted to get down, He most certainly could have, yet the opportunity of salvation could not be accomplished.
 - His purpose was not to rescue Himself, but rather to rescue humanity!
 - The enemy would have preferred Jesus to abdicate His responsibility from the cross, yet Jesus’ purpose was before Him and that was to be our substitute.
 - Notice, the next group of individuals who provide mocking gestures – none other than the religious leaders.
 - Mark mentions that along with the chief priest were the scribes who were mocking Him.
 - Their comment of mocking was: “He saved others; He cannot save Himself?”

- Instead of these insults being hurled at Jesus, Mark mentions that the religious leaders' conversations transpired among themselves.
 - What I find most intriguing is that within their own privacy, they know the miraculous works He accomplished in His ministry were real – they couldn't deny it.
 - Yet they still managed to suppress the truth to be right in their own eyes.
- The religious leaders were taunting Jesus to come down as a means to prove who He was.
 - Instead, Jesus remains where He was because taking on the wrath of God and dying for the many was the only way in which men and women could be saved.
 - Mark's readers should recall the very words of Jesus not too long ago in Mark 8:35. Check out the text:

Mark 8:35 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.

- Did you notice the change in the distinction of title which the religious leaders prescribed to Jesus in verse 32?
 - Where the inscription read, "The King of the Jews" the religious leaders altered the title to "The King of Israel."
 - The reason for this change comes from the religious leaders' means of mockery and here's why:
 - The reality was that Romans would typically use the word "Jew" for the inhabitants of Israel, themselves.
 - However, for a Jew, a more accurate use of words would be King of Israel not King of the Jews. (Zephaniah 3:15)
 - Therefore, their use of this title change becomes significant because they are, in a sense, placing a bet.
 - That if Jesus comes down from the cross, then they will believe He is the Messiah.
 - In other words, they need to see in order to believe.
 - However, the way in which one comes into saving faith is based first upon belief in what God has said and in our belief, He demonstrates all the more of who He is.
 - And isn't this indicative of our Christian faith that belief precedes sight!
 - When we consider what salvation looked like for the Hebrew people coming out of Egypt, it began with Moses providing a word from the Lord.
 - That word was to do according to what was said which consisted of killing an innocent lamb and spreading the blood over the door post.
 - In so believing what was said by Moses, the people responded to that word.
 - And in return, the Lord delivered them out of captivity and into His care.
 - The reality is that the means of salvation has not changed from the Old Testament

to the New Testament!

- The Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever more.
- In other words, when you believe in the provision of Salvation which God has made available through Jesus Christ, you will be saved!
- There is no other way around it. God's means of Salvation is based upon His provision, not yours!
- So, we find the religious leaders trying to alter the rules to their own benefit. However, the issue is not a lack of seeing what Jesus could do.
 - The issue was unbelief!
- Lastly, in verse 32b, we see that the two criminals who are nailed beside Him on the cross have joined in on the mockery of Christ.
 - What I love about the harmonization of the Gospels is to see how it all comes together in such a beautiful tapestry.
 - We see in Mark's gospel that three groups of people have joined together, unbeknownst to each other, in ridiculing and mocking the Lord Jesus.
 - The Crowd
 - The Religious Leaders
 - And the Insurrectionist
- However, when we come across Luke's account, (Luke 23:39-43), we find that one of the prisoners, hanging on the cross next to Christ, has had a change of heart.
 - Somewhere between his ridicule and mocking, he has observed and seen Jesus unmoved by the insults while demonstrating great love and forgiveness towards all.
 - Somewhere between this criminal's unbelief and spiritual incapacity emerged spiritual awareness and illumination as to who Jesus was.
- Because according to Luke 23:40-41 the one criminal looks to the other criminal, who is rebuking Jesus, and says, "Do you not fear God?"
 - "We are under the same sentence of condemnation. You and I are suffering justly because what we did was wrong, but Jesus is innocent!"
 - The criminal recognized that there was a problem and came to see that Jesus was indeed the solution.
 - Because right after this realization, the criminal says, "Jesus, remember me in Your Kingdom"(Acceptance of who Jesus is)
 - To which Jesus responds, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."
- In the first few hours of Jesus being crucified He took on the mocking and ridicule in which we all rightfully deserve.
 - Next week, we will see that in the remaining hours on the cross, Jesus would now bear upon Himself the very wrath of God.
 - That the full measure of judgement and wrath would be unleashed upon Him for the sake of all who will believe.
 - I pray that you join us next week for Part 2.

- Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 15E

Chapter 15:33-39

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- We arrive at part two of our teaching on the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
 - We have witnessed the cruel treatment and mockery of the Lord Jesus from both His Jewish and Roman Trials up to Him being nailed to the cross.
 - As we examined last week, it behooves us to examine the biblical accounts in their historical contexts and not the cinematic renditions of the crucifixion.
 - The reason is that the biblical and historical accounts of this gruesome event provide us with a more accurate depiction of events, treatment, and sentiments during that day.
 - What we come to realize even more within the Passion events is the voluntary manner in which Jesus bore our sin and shame upon Himself. (First 3 hours)
 - It was the Jewish leadership and Roman procurator and soldiers who committed the act of killing Jesus.
 - However, although accomplished by human hands, the plan was orchestrated and willed by God Himself.
 - God's Sovereignty is shown in full display on the global stage as He has brought about all of human history to this point in order to witness a divine moment in time.
 - Tonight, we will witness the last three hours of Christ on the cross in which He will now face the full wrath of God on behalf of all men.
 - This amazing demonstration of love becomes the means through which belief in the Lord Jesus and His finished work, saves us from the penalty of sin and separation from God.
 - For as we know, the penalty of sin is death and without His death, there could be no forgiveness of sins.
 - If I were to outline our time tonight, we would see the following:
 - 1. A Judgement and a Cry (v.33-34)
 - 2. Scornful Curiosity (v.35-37)
 - 3. A Divine Response (v.38-39)
 - The tag on our text tonight is: The Crucifixion of Christ: Part 2
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures and meet me in Mark 15:33-39 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Mark 15:33 When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Mark 15:34 At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Mark 15:35 When some of the bystanders heard it, they began saying, “Behold, He is calling for Elijah.”

Mark 15:36 Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, “Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down.”

Mark 15:37 And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last.

Mark 15:38 And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Mark 15:39 When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

- Up to this point, Jesus has been hanging on the cross for three hours.
 - While hanging, He has been mocked, blasphemed, and utterly disrespected.
 - The religious leaders and the passersby mockingly question Jesus’ ability to come down from the cross.
 - Being that He had saved others from their dire circumstances, the fact that He remained on the cross this long to these men was a ridiculous sight.
 - Unbeknownst to these men of unbelief, Jesus’ mission was not to come and save Himself (Mark 10:45).
 - Instead, He came to save those who could not save themselves from the judgment of God.
 - The reality is every human being, apart from the saving work of Christ, rightfully deserves the full weight and judgment of God.
 - No man or woman, in their own merit, can stand before a Holy God and be deemed righteous apart from the finished work of Christ which deems us righteous.
 - It is the provision of God alone, through Christ alone, that saves alone!
 - So it is here in verses 33-34 that the global stage was set to demonstrate upon the innocent One, the wrath of God.
 - Check out verses 33-34.

Mark 15:33 When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour.

Mark 15:34 At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

- Mark tells us that when the 6th hour came, that darkness fell over the “whole land” until the ninth hour.
 - As we discussed last week, Mark is mentioning these time frames using Roman timing which means that the 6th hour puts us at 12 noon. (Jewish time).
 - And this darkness would persist for a total of three hours. (“until the 9th hour”)
 - Witnessing darkness emerge upon the earth from noon to 3 PM was quite ominous knowing that the brightest time of day was three o’clock.
 - So, for cosmic events of this magnitude to occur, to a Jewish believer it would trigger great concern.
 - One detail that should stand out in our minds is Mark’s mentioning of this darkness having fallen over the whole land.

- A question that can be asked of the text is: “What defines the “whole land”?”
- The Greek word for “whole land” is *holos* (*olos*) which means the entire land as a whole.
- Being that this darkness was visible and quite extensive means that surrounding nations may have potentially witnessed and were directly impacted by this cosmic event.
 - In fact, history has provided several archeological writings from several individuals who spoke about this darkness at the exact moment of Jesus’ crucifixion.
- One of those writers was Dionysius who was a Greek scientist who lived in Egypt in a city called Heliopolis.
 - And in the city known as “Sun City”, Dionysius records a time in which the city’s lights went out.
 - Dionysius wrote the following to Apollophanes a Philosopher:

“How, for instance, when we were staying in Heliopolis (I was then about twenty-five, and your age was nearly the same as mine), on a certain sixth day, and about the sixth hour, the sun, to our great surprise, became obscured, through the moon passing over it...”
(Slide 3)

- ○ ■ Further on in his writing, he states:

"What thinkest thou of this thing, O Apollophanes, mirror of learning?" "Of what mysteries do these unaccustomed portents appear to you to be indications?" Thou then, with inspired lips, rather than with speech of human voice, "These are, O excellent Dionysius," thou saidst, "changes of things divine." (Slide 4)

- ○ ■ Lastly, tradition says that Dionysius was so amazed by this phenomenon that he uttered the words, “God suffers, or everything is lost.”
- Another writing was found written by Phlegon of Tralles, a Greek from Asia Minor. (Slide 5)
 - Phlegon, in his historical compendium *Olympiads*, mentioned what seemed to be “an eclipse” which was like none that had ever occurred.
 - He further stated that the day turned to night at the 6th hour.
 - He would continue to include what Matthew’s account mentions was a violent earthquake.
- So, it becomes clear, with historical writings affirming this “falling of darkness”, the day Christ was crucified, was one of global scale and cosmic phenomena.
 - As I mentioned earlier, the sight of growing darkness to a Jewish individual would have been a telltale sign of God’s judgment at hand.
- Even throughout the Old Testament, the sight of darkness or cosmic chaos was representative of divine judgment and lamentation.
 - Amos 8:9 speaks to this reality of darkness during the day and judgment being released. Check out the text.

Amos 8:9 “It will come about in that day,” declares the Lord God,

“That I will make the sun go down at noon
And make the earth dark in broad daylight.

- ○ This darkness that set upon the land and the surrounding lands was not an eclipse but rather a mighty act of God.
 - And that act was to initiate the very thing Jesus was agonizing about in the garden of Gethsemane.
 - That the very cup in which He asked the Father if there were another way, would be the same cup in which He would now drink for the sake of all who would believe. (Cup of Wrath)
- Mark continues in verse 34 by mentioning that at the ninth hour, which was 3 PM, that Jesus cried out with a loud voice: “Eloi Eloi, lama sabachthani”
 - The word “loud” in Greek is *megas* which implies that Jesus uttered these words with a loud cry at the top of His lungs and with great intensity.
 - With every ounce and breath in His beaten and scourged body, Jesus utters these words.
- Mark does the readers a huge service by translating these Aramaic words into Greek.
 - And it’s through the translation that we understand what Jesus said.
 - “Eloi, Eloi, lama (sabach-thani)” means, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”
- This cry goes beyond that of a righteous suffering servant who has fully entrusted Himself to the Father’s plan.
 - These words from Jesus become a fulfillment of prophecy as indicated in Psalm 22:1. Check out the text.

Psalm 22:1 My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?
Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

- ○ We see within the context of Psalm 22 that the abandonment from the king, although very present in the first few verses of Psalm 22, is eventually alleviated in verse 21b.
 - And within the context of Jesus’ words, it becomes clear that the Father’s wrath consequently causes there to be an abandonment.
 - However, not of Jesus’ divine spirit but rather His human spirit and this brings about great distress beyond which words can express.
- This abandonment that Jesus is experiencing in these 3 hours of darkness is judicial and not relational.
 - It was judicial in the sense that the verdict “guilty” had to be displayed upon the guilty party.
 - And being that Jesus willingly and vicariously took our place, that righteous wrath had to be justly poured out on One.
- Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:21 puts this judicial act into plain language. Check out the text.

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might

become the righteousness of God in Him.

- ○ Lastly, we find that within Jesus' statement that the aspect of relationship had not left being that Jesus uses the words, "My God".
 - This cry of trust is the only one of Jesus' recorded prayers where He did not address the Father as "Abba".
 - As one commentary says: "He (Jesus) died forsaken by God so that His people might claim God as their God and never be forsaken."
- The immense crushing of the wrath of God upon the Son of God was necessary so that you and I could be made right with God!
 - As we continue, we come to find in verses 35-37 that the entrusting words of Jesus to the Father for His soon-coming deliverance, by means of the resurrection, ascension, and session, was misunderstood by the onlookers.
 - Check out verses 35-37.

Mark 15:35 When some of the bystanders heard it, they began saying, "Behold, He is calling for Elijah."

Mark 15:36 Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down."

Mark 15:37 And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last.

- Mark tells us that as people continued to pass by and observe the individuals hanging from the cross, "some" of them heard what Jesus had said in verse 34.
 - However, it seems that between what Jesus had said and what these passersby heard, they misheard what Jesus said.
 - Because verse 35b tells us that some in this group said, "Behold, He is calling for Elijah", meaning Elijah the Prophet.
 - This misunderstanding occurred because, although within Matthew's Gospel the letters "Eli, Eli" is "My God", it is also the shortened form of the name Elijah.
 - Therefore, the passersby assumed that Jesus was calling out for Elijah to rescue Him.
 - It was Jewish belief that for those who were deemed righteous men, that Elijah, in times of great distress, would deliver them from their circumstances.
 - From there, we find that John in John 19:28-29 fills in the details as to "someone" running to grab Jesus a drink.
 - It would be this moment that fulfilled yet another prophecy according to Psalm 22:15a.

Psalm 22:15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;

- ○ ■ Now, let's examine John 19:28-29.

John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, *said, "I am thirsty."

John 19:29 A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour

wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth.

- ○ So it's during this time period that Mark mentions that in response to Jesus' thirst, someone ran to provide him with a drink.
 - The contents of this drink were what is known as "sour wine".
 - Sour wine was a vinegar/water mix that relieved thirst more effectively than water.
 - And being cheaper than regular wine, it was a favorite beverage of the lower ranks of society especially soldiers.
- The text does not provide us with details as to "who" provided Jesus with the sour wine, but what we can assume is that it was not a Roman soldier.
 - Therefore, at best we can say that this provision of drink may have been a gesture of care and compassion.
 - But it seems as if this gesture is momentarily interrupted by others with evil intent.
- I mention this because it is in verse 36b that Mark documents a remark from one of the bystanders.
 - Their response to Jesus getting relief is "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down."
- Reading their response in English doesn't provide us with the gravity of what they were truly saying at this moment.
 - The words "Let us" in Greek is *Aphiemi* (A-fee-emi) which means to leave or remain unchanged.
 - In other words, "refrain from giving Jesus a drink so that we can see if Elijah will take Him down!"
- The language therefore suggests that the demand to withhold the drink was a means of mockery.
 - It is then upon Jesus receiving this sour wine that another prophecy was fulfilled which is found in Psalm 69:21.

Psalm 69:21 They also gave me gall for my food
And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

- ○ Mark then writes that Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last breath.
 - One thing I want to continue to reiterate throughout Mark's Gospel is that there are things that Mark will choose to omit because of his audience or his theological point.
 - As we have witnessed throughout the Gospel of Mark, Mark's focus is on Jesus as our Suffering Servant and what He accomplished through His suffering.
- I bring this up because Mark writing that Jesus uttered a loud cry begs a question: "What did Jesus say before He breathed His last?"
 - Well, we need not look any further than Luke 23:46 and John 19:30, because it is here that these writers provide the last few sayings of Jesus.
 - Remember, Mark is focused on the actions of Jesus so it makes sense why he does not include these "last sayings".

- Perhaps Mark mentions Jesus' last breath because the work that was accomplished would provide a demonstrative response (action)?
- HINT: We will see this action in a few.
- In any case, we find in Luke's gospel (Luke 23:46) that Jesus in a loud voice said, "Father, Into Your Hands I commit My Spirit."
- In other words, Jesus, not the Jewish leaders or Roman government, decided when He was going to die, and indeed that authority and Power was in His hands.
- John 10:18 tells us this:

John 10:18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

- ○ Further along in John's gospel, Jesus' last words before dying was *tetelestai* which means, "It is finished". Three words in English but one word in Greek.
 - This term is an accounting term that means "Paid in Full".
 - The work that Jesus was sent to do was accomplished at the cross! However, this would not be the end.
 - For it would then be 3 days later that the receipt of what was accomplished on the cross would be seen!
- It is in verses 38 and 39 that Mark responds with the results of the actions of the suffering servant in full obedience to the Father's plan.
 - Check out verses 38-39 as we witness the Divine Response to Jesus' Righteous action!

Mark 15:38 And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Mark 15:39 When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

- Mark wants both the reader in that time and the reader/hearer today to understand the results of what Jesus accomplished in dying on the cross.
 - That Jesus' actions were impactful in a multiplicity of ways.
 - And one of those ways would have been very apparent to the Jewish audience, especially those in the Temple.
 - Mark states that near the very moment Jesus breathed His last breath, the veil of the temple was torn in two.
 - He then specifies "how" it was torn: from top to bottom.
 - We will explore this significance momentarily, however, there may be some who might ask: "What was the significance of the veil being torn?"
 - For us to do so, we need to take a walk down memory lane back to Exodus 26:30-37.
 - Before there was a Temple, it was preceded by what was known as the Tabernacle which we find in the Old Testament.
 - Both structures were divided into three sections or designated areas.

- The first section consisted of an outside courtyard. This courtyard was created by the exterior boundaries of either a fence (tabernacle) or a wall (temple).
 - The inside of the building was then divided into two sections.
- The larger of the two interior sections was known as the Holy Place or Sanctuary, and the smaller as the Most Holy Place also known as the Holy of Holies.
 - The naming of these sections was also identified as the outer and inner sanctuary during the Old Testament times.
- The Holy Place (Sanctuary) which was located behind an outer veil, held furniture such as the menorah lamp and the table which held the showbread and incense altar.
 - This space was limited to the priesthood of Israel and was frequented by them for their priestly duties, daily.
 - They would burn incense, apply the blood of daily sacrifices to the altar of incense, and keep the lamps burning and set out the showbread.
- The third section of the temple was known as the Holies of Holies or the “Most Holy Place”. This area was deemed the inner sanctuary.
 - And behind this inner veil was where the ark of the covenant would sit with its mercy seat and the Glory of God would dwell continually.
 - However, in Jesus’ day, Josephus mentions that the Holy of Holies was empty since the ark had disappeared during the Babylonian invasion.
 - Therefore, the Holy of Holies remained empty, yet a sacred and protected space hidden behind a large veil.
 - The only time in which this sacred area would be accessed would be on the Day of Atonement where the High Priest would enter to make atonement for the entire Nation of Israel.
- So, when we go back to verse 38 and read that the veil (in the singular) was torn, the question becomes: “Well which veil was torn?” The inner veil or the outer veil?
 - Josephus provides us some clarity as to which veil was torn in his writings from *The Wars of the Jews*:

(209) but then, as the entire house was divided into two parts within, it was only the first part of it that was open to our view. Its height extended all along to ninety cubits in height, and its length was fifty cubits, and its breadth twenty;

(211) but then this house, as it was divided into two parts, the inner part was lower than the appearance of the outer, and had golden doors of fifty-five cubits altitude, and sixteen in breadth;

(212) but before these doors there was a veil of equal largeness with the doors. It was a Babylonian curtain, embroidered with blue, and fine linen, and scarlet, and purple, and of a contexture that was truly wonderful. Nor was this mixture of colors without its mystical interpretation, but was a kind of image of the universe;

- ○ The veil was a curtain 60 feet high, 30 feet wide, and about 4 inches thick. And this veil separated the holy place from the outer court. (As seen in the graphic)
 - Notice how Josephus described this veil.

- It consisted of woven blue, purple, and scarlet, intertwined with fine twined linen and the way in which it was embroidered resembled that of the universe.
- In other words, in the minds of the Jewish people of that day, the veil resembled something of the heavens.
- So, it becomes clear from both Mark's context and Josephus' description that as something of this magnitude could be visually seen from afar means this was the outer veil that was torn.
 - This imagery for a Jew would have seemed as if the heavens above were being torn from top to bottom.
- This becomes Mark's point in emphasizing the work that the Suffering Servant accomplished!
 - That the action of the veil being torn from top to bottom was something that only God Himself could have been able to do.
- Perhaps Mark's inclusion here draws a parallel between two tears that occurred from the beginning of his gospel to the crucifixion.
 - Meaning, that when Jesus was baptized and the Holy Spirit fell upon Him like a dove, Mark states in Mark 1:10 that as Jesus came out of the water, the heavens opened.
 - The Greek word for "opened" is *schizo* which means "to be split or torn apart (ripped)".
- In the same way, the very moment in which Jesus breathed His last, verse 38 tells us that "the veil of the temple was torn."
 - It's the same Greek word for opened in Mark 1:10, *schizo*!
- Mark's action point becomes plain for his reader and that is that the finished work of Christ on the cross has done something that was unprecedented.
 - That where the outer veil once served as a means of obscuring the way and view into the Holy Place, a new day was dawning.
 - This is why the author of the book of Hebrews writes this, speaking of the outer veil in the temple.

Hebrews 9:8 The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing,

Hebrews 9:9 which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,

- ○ The writer of Hebrews mentions that the Holy Place could not yet be revealed if the outer tabernacle's veil (old system) obstructed the view.
 - The only way in which men could worship God and provide their gifts is if it were accomplished through the Priesthood.
- However, when Jesus died on the cross, the Lord provided an unmistakable message that could not be unseen by all who looked upon the Temple.
 - This veil which once served as a blockade and barrier for people to worship God now became a means of access to the Father, now through our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

- That this very tearing of the veil from top to bottom was a sign that a New Covenant was being established and the One in who was establishing it was God Himself.
- I love what Pastor Steve said on his teaching of the tearing of the veil.
 - He said, “The reason why it’s important to understand which veil was torn is because it helps us understand how we respond to God.”
 - In other words, because Jesus is our Great High Priest and has direct access to the Father, we, through the blood of Christ are made clean before God.
 - That through the shedding of Christ’s innocent blood, we are reconciled to the Father and declared righteous, not of our works or deeds, but through the works of Christ.
 - Hebrews 10:19-22 says it this way:

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,

Hebrews 10:20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,

Hebrews 10:21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

Hebrews 10:22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

- ○ Well, it’s after this powerful tearing of the veil and earthquake and shattering that the centurion who was standing in front of Jesus realizes what has caused all of this.
 - The centurion who, more than likely, attended the arrest of Jesus in the Garden, to His scourging in the Praetorium, now finds himself confessing Jesus as the Son of God.
 - And herein lies yet another culminating point in Mark’s Gospel.
- That where Mark began his gospel with the emphatic statement of Jesus being the Son of God, it is now confirmed by a Gentile who professes this out loud.
 - Although the Greek text does not provide a definite article (the) in front of “Son of God”, Mark’s context potentially suggests this is the case.
- This response is quite indicative of how the Lord draws individuals to Himself. He will allow certain travesties or events to occur that grab one’s attention.
 - For some, it simply was you heard the gospel message and believed.
 - For others, the Lord pursued you to the point that you were dragged because of constant rebellion.
- Whatever means and methods it takes, God has it all at His full disposal to make known the truth of Christ.
 - This centurion, who would have been responsible for other men, finds himself completely gripped by the reality of the cross.
 - The gospel always demands a verdict and, in the end, if the gospel is not received, a verdict will be rendered.
- The question becomes, do you believe Jesus is who He says He is?

- Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 15F

Chapter 15:40-47

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- Over the past two weeks, we have covered one of the climatic moments of Mark's gospel, the crucifixion.
 - The first three hours that Jesus hung on the cross represented the consequences of humanity's sin.
 - And those sins would be laid upon the Son of God who vicariously identified himself with sinful men so that sinful men could be drawn near to the Father.
 - In the last three hours, the world would go dark as the wrath of God would be poured out upon Jesus.
 - It was Jesus taking this cup of wrath that would reconcile sinful humanity to a Holy God.
 - And with this cup of wrath meant that the Son of God would be forsaken for a time.
 - This reality for Jesus was crushing, yet this is what He had come to accomplish. (Mark 10:45)
 - Death would become the result of Christ becoming our substitute.
 - God's Holiness demanded it, for as the scriptures teach – the wages of sin is death.
 - However, through the death of Christ would come life and life more abundant.
 - Salvation would be made possible because the Innocent One became a curse for us.
 - Once Jesus breathed His last, it was as if a time clock would begin because sundown would soon commence and His body would need to be placed into a tomb.
 - Within these 8 verses, we will observe the following:
 - 1. Need for Expediency (v.40-42)
 - 2. Solution to a Problem (v.43)
 - 3. Unexpected News (v.44-45)
 - 4. Proper Burial (v.46-47)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be: A Race to the Tomb.
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in our last few verses in Mark 15, verses 40-47 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Mark 15:40 There were also some women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome.

Mark 15:41 When He was in Galilee, they used to follow Him and minister to Him; and there were many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

Mark 15:42 When evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath,

Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.

Mark 15:44 Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead.

Mark 15:45 And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

Mark 15:46 Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

Mark 15:47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were looking on to see where He was laid.

- As I mentioned in our recap portion, Christ has now died but has not officially been pronounced dead. This would have been verified by Pilate.
 - His body was now hanging as a spectacle for all the people to see.
 - I could imagine that perhaps His disciples were at a distance viewing the very event which Jesus told them He would undergo.
 - Interestingly enough, Mark mentions that there was a group of followers who were looking upon Jesus at a distance, but not the individuals we would have expected.
 - Verse 40 tells us that in the company of onlookers were women and among them was Mary Magdalene, from Magdala, a village west of the Sea of Galilee.
 - Mary the mother of James the Less (James the Younger) and Joses, and Salome, who was the mother of the sons of Zebedee.
 - It was these faithful women who had encountered Jesus' ministry early on and served Him in Galilee.
 - These women found themselves now looking upon a dead Jesus, the one whom they loved and cared for.
 - This must have been a feeling of utter helplessness.
 - I find this most interesting because at no point during Jesus' death, in Mark's gospel, does he mention the sightings of the 11 disciples.
 - The only citing of a disciple on the scene is John himself, the beloved disciple.
 - So here we find the women faithfully at a distance and at a distance for a reason.
 - As I mentioned before, upon Jesus' death, time was of the essence because with evening having already come meant that at 6 PM a new day began according to Jewish reckoning.
 - And the start of this new day meant that the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread would begin.
 - According to Jewish custom, the first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread were always considered "High Sabbaths". (Exodus 12:14-20; Leviticus 23:1-8)
 - And being that Passover fell on a Thursday in this year, meant that the High Sabbath would be followed by the typical weekly Sabbath.
 - So this year meant that there would be two Sabbaths back-to-back.

- And being that this was the case, there was even more reason to be expedient with the removal of Jesus' now dead body, off of the cross and into a tomb.
- So, being that there was a double Sabbath this year meant that all work would cease until Sunday, and this included the preparation of burial.
 - And according to Jewish Law, it required a proper burial for all bodies including those who were executed criminals.
- For a proper burial to occur before the Sabbath meant that, the body would:
 - 1. Need to be requested by the victim's relative
 - 2. Properly wrapped and prepared for burial, according to custom
 - 3. Then be buried either in the family graveyard or a tomb.
 - All of this was to be accomplished before 6 PM.
- Well according to our scene no relatives were there, no men were currently present to help remove Jesus' body off the cross, and there was no tomb that was made available.
 - This potentially could have worried the women which is why they were looking from a distance.
 - For they certainly could not remove Jesus' body from the cross themselves, they had no grave to put Him in as tombs were typically located where you lived (and very expensive).
- I imagine that as these women were looking they were praying that someone would take Him down and properly prepare Him for burial before 6PM.
 - Because, at worst, those who were unclaimed would have been tossed in the Valley of Hinnom near the Kidron Valley.
- Well, it would seem as if, despite these barriers, that the Lord had provided the means to properly bury Jesus.
 - And that solution was provided by a rather prominent yet familiar character who had everything in place.
 - Check out verse 43.

Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus

- Mark mentions that Joseph of Arimathea, the prominent member of the Sanhedrin council would be the one used to expedite the process of Jesus' burial.
 - This would have been an unusual sight to see, and request to make, by a man of much social and economic clout.
 - For someone of such clout to aid in the care and burial of Jesus, knowing what He was crucified for, would have caused much social alienation.
 - This would be the equivalent of wearing an "I love seafood" T-shirt in the midst of an anti-shellfish conference.
 - One seen as a Jesus-sympathizer could easily lead to one's societal alienation

and at best, death.

- Joseph's actions at this point seem to be a bit emboldened given his religious position.
 - Mark tells us he was one who was "waiting for the kingdom of God".
 - This becomes an interesting statement to note because it goes beyond the fact that Joseph was awaiting the fulfillment of the Kingdom.
- This was the anticipation for most in that day.
 - However, the distinction as to how that Kingdom would come about became the key.
 - Clearly, Joseph of Arimathea believed that Jesus was the promised One by which this fulfillment of the Kingdom would come about.
- This becomes confirmed when we take a glance at John's gospel (John 19:38). Check out the text.

John 19:38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body.

- ○ So where there was a bit of trepidation regarding the request for Jesus' body, Mark emphasizes the actions of Joseph beyond the fear he could potentially face.
- Because the text mentions in verse 43b that he "gathered up" courage.
 - The phrase "gathered up" in Greek is *tolmao* which means to show boldness or resolution in the face of danger.
 - The CSB (Christian Standard Bible) translation states it this way: "...and boldly went to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body"
 - In other words, nothing and no one was going to stand in the way of Joseph getting to Jesus because his mind was set.
- Where Joseph once stood silently and secretly as a disciple of Jesus, his commitment would be made publicly known.
 - What a beautiful example of being bold for Christ despite the culture around you!
 - One applicational question comes about and that is: Is your discipleship relationship with the Lord secretive or bold?
 - In other words, if the Lord were to lead you to evangelize the lost, pursue ministry opportunities, or serve the needs of others, would you be moved boldly to do so or remain quiet and timid?
- I believe what the text shows us is that from when Joseph and Jesus first met in the evening (secret) to now (public), there has been great growth in the heart of Joseph.
 - He moves from being a secret disciple to a visible disciple.
- As Jesus mentioned in Mark 8:34-35, discipleship comes with great cost.

- That to follow Jesus requires a denying of self and being invited to come and die with Jesus!
- There is a death to our comforts, convenience, and cares and that is exchanged to pursue all that Christ calls and commands us to.
 - Discipleship is not for the weak or faint of heart. Discipleship is a choice.
 - You are either in or out, but you can't have your cake and eat it too.
- This is what Mark helps the reader see about Joseph's actions and because of his bold actions, Joseph is forever etched within the gospel accounts.
 - Quick question to consider privately: How will your participation in Gospel work impact those you will never see?
 - In your home, in your marriage, on the job, at your school, with your neighbors. How will others be impacted by your boldness in the Lord?
- It is from this demonstration of great boldness and allegiance to Christ that an inquisitive investigation arose by the request of Pilate.
 - Check out verses 44-45

Mark 15:44 Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead.

Mark 15:45 And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

- Pilate receiving this request for the body of Jesus by Joseph seems to come at a bit of a surprise.
 - Mark says that Pilate “wondered” if He was dead by this time – for it had only been a few hours.
 - The Greek word for “wondered” is *thaumazo* which means to marvel or be amazed.
 - And the reason for Pilate's amazement was that death by crucifixion was a very slow process.
 - Individuals who were being crucified could last up to 4 days.
 - So this announcement of death, so soon, moved Pilate to inquire further in an effort to validate this claim.
 - As a result, he summons the centurion, more than likely the one who witnessed Jesus' last breath, to provide a report of sorts before him.
 - If the centurion summoned to Pilate was indeed the one in whom witnessed Jesus' last breath, then the record would show that Jesus' seemingly early death along with the unique events surrounding it was quite unique.
 - So, it would be after receiving this report confirming Jesus' death that without requiring a fee, Pilate releases Jesus to Joseph.
 - This “release without fee” could also address Pilate's wonderment about who Jesus was.
 - Mark transitions us immediately to the next scene where the preparation for a

proper burial commences to meet the Jewish requirements of proper burial before the High Sabbath.

- Check out our last two verses, verses 46 and 47.

Mark 15:46 Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

Mark 15:47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were looking on to see where He was laid

- Although Mark chooses to omit this detail, John indicates in his gospel that Nicodemus, a fellow Sanhedrin member, accompanied Joseph with the burial preparation.
 - It would seem as if this maturity and boldness has come upon Nicodemus as well because he too was a secret disciple and first inquired of Jesus at night.
 - And now both men have made a public declaration as to who their Messiah was and where their allegiance was.
 - Time is continuing to count down as 6 PM is approaching.
 - And I can imagine Joseph running, maybe out of breath as he arrives at Golgotha.
 - He probably summons the guards to take Jesus down and has men to remove the nails, the crown of thorns.
 - Alongside him is Nicodemus who, according to John's gospel, has brought proper burial materials to prepare Jesus' body.
 - They would begin by washing his body which was then followed by the proper application of spices and finally linen wrappings.
 - This is what John records in John 19:39-40.

John 19:39 Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

John 19:40 So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

- From this point, they hurry to the tomb which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea which was "hewn out of rock".
 - And once they lay Jesus' body in the tomb, they rolled a large stone in front of it.
 - This stone weighed up to half a ton and therefore required at least two men to move it into place.
 - On top of that, this stone was rolled down a slight incline toward the end of the ramp.
 - The door would almost lock into place causing it to be unopened from the inside.

- Really quickly, I want to mention what Matthew states in his gospel here because he states that the tomb in which Jesus laid was Joseph's "new tomb".
 - This detail speaks to the sacrifice alone that Joseph made.
 - Being that he lived in Arimathea, perhaps he had a tomb there.
- Whatever the case may be, in serving the Lord Jesus in His death, Joseph prepares and presents his best for the Master.
 - This becomes a core aspect of service within Christendom.
 - That our service to Christ and to others, although at times costly, is to the Glory of God and the good of the body!
- Ultimately it is through Joseph's extravagant giving that we see that his actions fulfilled scripture.
 - We find that prophecy in Isaiah 53:9 . Check out the text.

**Isaiah 53:9 His grave was assigned with wicked men,
Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.**

- Finally, Mark rounds out Chapter 15 with the same women who have both viewed the death of Jesus and the burial of Jesus.
 - Although these women were unable to physically assist in the preparation of Jesus' body, they would soon be able to service Him as witnesses to His disciples.
 - But before that would happen, their ability to witness would first begin with great fear and astonishment, because their return to this same tomb would be met with complete shock come Sunday.
 - So with Chapter 15 coming to a close, I would like to use this time to address what may be the big elephant in the room and that is: "What day of the week did Jesus die?"
 - For some, the reading of the previous verses would seem to indicate that Jesus died on a Friday, given it was the day before the Sabbath.
 - However, there are three things worth considering which we mentioned earlier in the text and that is:
 1. John's account mentions that this day was the "Day of Preparation".
 2. Secondly, in the same account, the rationale for the rush to the grave was due to the High Sabbath for Passover.
 - The explanation of High Sabbaths during festival weeks was not anything new, but rather reflected in Hebrew Bible with verses such as Exodus 12:14-20 and Leviticus 23:1-8.
 3. Lastly, Jesus provided us with a "math verse" if you will of how many days He would remain dead and the time in which He would rise.
- ◦ And we find this verse in Matthew 12:40, which was known as the "Sign of Jonah". Check out the text with me again.

Matthew 12:40 for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

- Jesus mentions that He would be in the grave for three days and three nights.
 - And as we have studied the Jewish reckoning of days, it refers to periods of dark and light.
 - By knowing the day on which Jesus rose from the grave, according to scripture, we can work backward to identify the day of the week He died.
 - As you may be aware, there have been many days debated and discussed regarding the day in which Jesus died.
 - Many theological writings have been done arguing everything from a Wednesday death to a Friday death, however, the best way to resolve it is by reading the scriptures.
 - So, to figure out the biblical day of Jesus' death, let's put up a graphic starting with the "traditional date" of His death which is said to be Friday.
 - And in our counting remember, we won't include Sunday's Light portion because the gospel records tell us it was "very early on the first day of the week" (Mark).
 - Now, Luke's gospel states that "as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week".
 - According to the Greek-English Lexicon (LSJ) dawn is the period that proceeds daybreak while it is still dark.
 - Matthew's gospel tells us in Matthew 28 verse 1, "As it began to dawn" which means we have not yet arrived at the light portion of that Sunday.
 - So, with that in mind, you will see that I will have the day portion on Sunday greyed out.
 - So, let's now begin with a Friday date given our "math verses" in Matthew 28:1.
 - If we place Friday as the day of Passover, all the while not emphasizing the High Sabbath as mentioned in John's gospel, and keep the weekly sabbath as is, we have this result.
 - So, a Friday date of crucifixion still leaves us with a remaining light portion and a dark portion unaccounted for.
 - Now let's examine a Thursday date.
 - If we place Thursday as the "day of Preparation", which is Passover, and place Friday as the High Sabbath followed by the Weekly Sabbath, then that puts the third day as Sunday.
 - Furthermore, if we look at Chapter 16, the first two verses, we see that Mark mentions the Sabbath being over which is followed by the phrase "Very early on the first day of the Week" in verse 2.
 - I believe this further affirms a Thursday date and the exclusion of a day-portion counting.
 - Because, as we will see next week in Mark 16:2, Mark seems to suggest that

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome left their homes during the early hours to arrive to the Tomb.

- And it would be that upon arrival, the sun was beginning to rise.
- But in an effort to not get ahead, I want to highlight a few things:
 - 1. Holding a high view of scripture is a huge benefit to understanding the scriptures and allows us to grow more in our faith.
 - 2. Trying to pinpoint the exact day and time in which Jesus died, although very beneficial, does not impact one's salvation in the Lord Jesus.
 - It is His finished works alone that save us and so rest in that truth.
 - 3. Lastly, as we pursue truth, be grace-filled and seek not to prove to be right, but rather allow the Holy Spirit to bring about the necessary illumination.
 - The reality is, you too needed the grace and time to get to where you are today.
- Lastly, as we prepare to begin the last Chapter of Mark, we will encounter one of the most debated textual criticisms within evangelicalism today and that is the last 12 verses of Mark 16.
 - The question that comes to mind for many is: “How does one deal with what is known as “the longer ending of Mark”?”
 - I pray that you join us over the next few weeks as we tackle all 20 verses and come to a proper biblical conclusion as to the author's intent.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 16A

Chapter 16:1-8

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- As we discussed last week, the race to properly bury Jesus, according to Jewish custom, was of great concern.
 - The concern for a proper burial was first witnessed at a distance by 3 women, Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James the Less), and Salome.
 - This concern was eventually resolved by both Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.
 - Both men were emboldened to step out of the shadows as secret disciples and demonstrate their allegiance to Christ.
 - These women have witnessed Jesus crucified and, now, properly buried in a rich man's tomb.
 - Tonight, the narrative of these women will pick back up as they are seeking to anoint Jesus' body themselves with certainty He was still there.
 - However, as we will find in the text, their anticipation of seeing Jesus laid in a tomb will be met with an unexpected messenger.
 - If I were to outline our time tonight in the text, we will see the following things:
 - 1. An Early Morning Surprise (v.1-4)
 - 2. A Message Given (v.5-7)
 - 3. A Message to Be Sent (v.8)
 - And if I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would simply be: "He Has Risen"
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in Mark 16:1-8 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Mark 16:1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him.

Mark 16:2 Very early on the first day of the week, they *came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

Mark 16:3 They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"

Mark 16:4 Looking up, they *saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.

Mark 16:5 Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed.

Mark 16:6 And he *said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him.

Mark 16:7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.'"

Mark 16:8 They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

- The ramifications of the resurrection of Jesus Christ hold tremendous weight in our

Christian faith and theology both in our present and future reality as believers in Christ.

- Not only is the resurrection documented historically, but the fact that this event happened is a testament to the finished work of Christ.
 - These divine works were all accomplished for the sake of the many regarding God's salvific and redemptive plan.
- When we consider the importance of the resurrection, there are several things in which the resurrection directly impacts and that is:
 - 1) Confirms Jesus is who He said He was: The Son of God
 - 2) The Gospel Message Regarding Salvation
 - 2) The future resurrection of both believers and unbelievers
 - 3) A Future Judgement
 - 4) The Believer having been justified through the death of Christ therefore demonstrating through the resurrection that Justification was accomplished.
 - 5) The forgiveness of the believers' sins
 - 6) The resurrection places Jesus as the head of the Church (Established in Acts 2)
- As I like to say, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the receipt of all that Christ completed.
 - The event of the resurrection is so important that the Apostle Paul mentioned this event as essential in response to the Gospel for salvation.
 - This is what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

1 Corinthians 15:1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand,
1 Corinthians 15:2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.
1 Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
1 Corinthians 15:4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

- It is through believing that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, was buried and raised from the dead, according to the scriptures by which men are saved.
 - This means that the Jesus of the bible is one who has been both crucified and resurrected!
 - For if we had a crucified Christ yet not raised, then we have a faith which is in vain!
 - At best, there would be temporary life with no hope in the end beyond death.
 - However, if we have a crucified Christ that has been both crucified and raised then we have a true and Living Hope. (1 Peter 1:3-9)
 - The resurrection of Jesus is of such importance that the New Testament writers are constantly pointing to this event both in a historical manner and providing its

theological implications.

- However, before we can see the full reality of this event worked out canonically in the New Testament, we must first come to recognize that the apostles, and even the witnesses, to some extent, began in disbelief.
- Jesus would have to show these men that what He said while in His earthly ministry, He would accomplish in the end.
 - As we will see in our first 4 verses, the resurrection of Jesus will come as a huge surprise which will later be followed by an unexpected messenger.

Mark 16:1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him.

Mark 16:2 Very early on the first day of the week, they *came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

Mark 16:3 They were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?”

Mark 16:4 Looking up, they *saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.

- According to verses 1-2, it was very early Sunday that these women at the end of Chapter 15 were making their way to the tomb where they expected to see Jesus’ body.
 - Mark mentions that the two Marys and Salome were headed to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body with spices.
 - The fact that these women were going to anoint Jesus’ body with these spices meant that they were expecting Jesus to still be dead.
 - In other words, not only did the disciples not take Jesus at His Word (with regard to Him rising from the dead), but neither were the women who also were familiar with His teachings.
 - There were three times within Jesus’ earthly ministry that He stated He would die yet be raised. (Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:34)
 - And each time He mentioned this He expounded a bit further.
 - Yet, His disciples refused to believe it. (For lack of understanding, Peter rebuked)
 - This didn’t compute for the disciples because a dead Messiah meant that there was no hope for these men.
 - Indeed, the death of Christ seemed like a very hopeless and dark situation.
 - So, at this point, this group of women are the lone rangers seeking to display their love and devotion to Jesus while the 11 disciples are far off in sadness.
 - With these women having waited till the “dark portion” of Sunday since the Sabbath had ended at 6 PM, they prepared spices and perfumes. (Luke 24:56)
 - According to Mark’s account, it seems as if on the way to the tomb, in the early portion of the morning, they are conversing with one another.

- A thought happens to cross their minds which was: “Who is going to roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?”
- Their response here once again proves that they had no comprehension of Jesus being raised from the dead or believed He would be raised.
- However, there is a suspicious and unbelieving group who wanted to cover all their grounds regarding Jesus’ statement of rising again.
- Now what Mark’s account omits and Matthew documents is, after the tomb had been closed by Joseph and Nicodemus, that the religious leaders went before Pilate to have the tomb sealed.
- Check out what Matthew documents in Matthew 27:62-66.

Matthew 27:62 Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate,

Matthew 27:63 and said, “Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I am to rise again.’

Matthew 27:64 Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last deception will be worse than the first.”

Matthew 27:65 Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how.”

Matthew 27:66 And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone.

- ○ The sealing of the tomb was an effort to eliminate the opportunity for the disciples to steal the body of Jesus away at night.
 - All of this became a ploy to totally eradicate the impact of Jesus’ earthly ministry and “rising from the dead”, or so they thought.
- So at best, the women were expecting to see a scene similar to what they last witnessed – the tomb closed with Jesus’ body wrapped inside.
 - However, verse 4 tells us that once they arrived and “looked up” they saw that the stone had been rolled away.
 - Friends, this means that some time prior to their arrival the stone had already been rolled away and Jesus was already raised.
 - This sense of an immediate response to the women’s needs now seems to have been accomplished by God, Himself.
- What is so intriguing to read throughout all four gospel accounts is that no gospel writer provides a description as to the details of the resurrection per se.
 - The only events documented are the results of the promise that Jesus made and that was He would rise on the third day.
- We find that Mark emphasizes the efforts in which it would take for Jesus to have risen because the text mentions in verse 4b that the stone was “extremely large.”
 - In other words, the efforts of someone to roll the stone back up the incline

would potentially require more physical strength and effort than perhaps rolling a half-ton circular rock down an incline.

- This simply goes to show that the efforts for one to attempt to get Jesus' body out of the grave would require a lot of effort, especially given the Roman seal on the tomb.
- One could only imagine the shock on these women's faces.
 - And even more so, their entry into the tomb would provide even more startling news.
 - This amazement would be followed by a message from an angelic messenger.
 - Check out verses 5-7.

Mark 16:5 Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed.

Mark 16:6 And he *said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him.

Mark 16:7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.'"

- Imagine, as these women peek into the tomb hoping to see the body of Jesus, that instead they find a "young man" sitting at the right wearing a white robe.
 - And it's almost as if the "young man" was expecting questions to be asked regarding the whereabouts of Jesus.
 - And without opportunity for the women to frame a question out loud, it is as if this young man knew exactly what they wanted to say.
 - However, before moving too quickly, one question comes to mind and that is: "Who is this "Young man" in the white robe?"
 - When observing all four gospel accounts of the resurrection, we find that the "young man" described in Mark's gospel is none other than an angel.
 - Angels, as we know biblically, are messengers sent from the Lord in order to carry out His divine will and plans.
 - The white robe is emphasized within Luke's gospel as "dazzling clothing" and Matthew's account as an appearance "like lightning".
 - The term "dazzling clothing" in Greek is *astrapto* which means flash or gleam of lighting.
 - This glowing and shine could resemble that of a heavenly glow like what Peter, James, and John witnessed on the Mount of Transfiguration.
 - As a quick note, some may examine the varied number of angels at the tomb between the Gospel accounts.
 - Luke and John's account says there were two angels whereas Matthew and Mark state there was one.
 - However, that is not the focal point!

- What is to be understood from the gospel records is that this event of the resurrection was one that could only be accomplished by God.
 - God in His kindness authenticated this angelic visitation and has provided three witnesses to affirm this miraculous event. (Deuteronomy 19:15)
- The first thing that the angel tells these women is “Do not be amazed” which is a typical angelic greeting or statement given after divine demonstration.
 - And within this context, the Greek word “*ekthambeo*” means to be alarmed or distressed.
 - So the angel is letting them know, “Do not be alarmed by my being here for I simply have come to provide a message to you.” (Paraphrased)
- The angel provides strong descriptors as to what these women were expecting to see – Jesus laid in the tomb.
 - Instead, he tells them that the crucified Christ is no longer dead but has risen.
 - And he presents to them where Jesus’ body previously rested.
 - Here is where seeing all the accounts together matters because John’s gospel helps explain how 2 angels were present.
 - If one was at the head of where Jesus lay and one at the feet, then the shining glimmer of light could have easily blocked the visibility of the other.
- After the angel shows them the evidence of where Jesus once laid, he then follows up by sending them out with a message.
 - And the message which the angel gives them is quite incredible.
 - He says this in verse 7, “But go, tell the disciples and Peter, “He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you””.
- These women were to take these very words that they heard and what they witnessed and tell the disciples and Peter where to meet the risen Savior.
 - This message had to have been a mouthful for these women to process.
 - They have gone from helpless, to great fear, to utter shock, and back to utter fear – all of this in a matter of minutes.
- Now the content of this message to be sent was greatly important and along with the importance of this message were the end receivers of the message.
 - But let us begin with the receivers of this message: The Disciples and Peter.
 - A question arises which is: “Why would the angel provide this sense of distinction between the disciples and Peter?”
- If we recall from the time of the Garden to Jesus being placed in the grave, Jesus made known to them that not only would they be scattered but He mentioned Peter’s denial. (Mark 14:26-31)

Mark 14:26 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mark 14:27 And Jesus *said to them, “You will all fall away, because it is written, ‘I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.’

Mark 14:28 But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.”

Mark 14:29 But Peter said to Him, “Even though all may fall away, yet I will

not.”

Mark 14:30 And Jesus *said to him, “Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times.”

Mark 14:31 But Peter kept saying insistently, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And they all were saying the same thing also.

- ○ Both the disciples and Peter at this point demonstrated a sense of allegiance no matter what persecutions would come.
 - Yet they all failed in being able to accomplish what they said they could/would do in their own strength.
 - On top of that, there is this great sense of pride that oozes from the mouth of Peter as if he is exempt from the very words of Christ.
- So, when the scattering occurs and Peter finds himself surrounded by these guards and denying Jesus, his very heart is crushed!
 - Because Peter’s self-confidence led him toward self-reliance and not Christ-reliance and dependency!
- Therefore, with the scattering of the 11 came an immense amount of grief and brokenness for them all, especially Peter.
 - Unfortunately, with this amount of grief Peter was experiencing, he did not feel that there was any room for redemption and forgiveness.
 - So, this signaling out Peter by name amongst the other disciples becomes a means of redemption in letting Peter know, although you denied me, I will never forsake you.
 - And how comforting is that for us to know that no matter how badly we drop the ball, it does not remove us from the hand of God?
- I’m reminded of Jesus’ words in John 6:37-39. Check out the text.

John 6:37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 6:39 This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

- Secondly, it’s within the content of the message that the angel will remind the disciples of the promise that Jesus made to them regarding His resurrection.
 - The angel tells the three women to tell the disciples that the risen Savior, Jesus Christ, is going to meet them in Galilee as He told them prior in Mark 14:28.
 - This is what Jesus said in Mark 14:28 after He tells them that they will all scatter.

Mark 14:28 But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.”

- So the content of this message to the disciples seems to serve as a reminder to them

as to what Jesus had already shared with them as a promise prior.

- This reality is good news even for us as believers today and that is the promise of Resurrection life!
- That if God has said it, it is so!
- He demonstrates that not by means of words alone, but He backs up what He says with the evidence of the Son's life being raised up.
- Now before we move on, we need to consider the authenticity of this account for a moment given the witnesses of this message.
 - If this event of the resurrection was to somehow be “invented” or fabricated, you wouldn't make your eyewitnesses women, in that day.
 - The testimony of women was not accepted within the Jewish courts.
- So, for the scriptures to utilize the women's testimony as a means of authentication of the resurrection of Jesus solidifies the reality of what took place.
 - Therefore, these women's testimony, having observed Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection becomes the authentication factor which Paul later emphasizes as matters of “First importance”. (Content of the Gospel)
- For one to be saved requires that their trust be placed in the reality of what Christ accomplished (His Person and work) over two thousand years ago (He died, was buried, and was raised)
 - For the reality is if there was no resurrection our hope is in vain!
 - Plainly put, the resurrection is the lynchpin by which our Christian faith is secured!
- And it is by faith in the word of God that we believe.
 - For it is faith alone in the trustworthy word of God that we stand eternally secure in the finished work of Jesus Christ.
 - Not our merit, not our works, not our intellect. Solely the work of God through His Son.
- What becomes even more assuring for our faith is the multiple eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus, over a period of 40 days after He was raised.
 - All of this would be done so that these men would believe the content of their faith accomplished through the Object of their faith (Jesus Christ).
- The question now becomes what the women will do with this message they have been given. Let's check out verse 8.

Mark 16:8 They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid

- According to the earliest manuscripts, this is where Mark's gospel ends.
 - To the reader it would seem as if what was great news to be sent to provide hope and zeal, ends in fearful failure.

- The message that the angel has given to these women to share with the men seems to go nowhere.
- The text says that “they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid”
- However, to end this gospel in that way would completely defeat the reality of what the other gospel writers provide and what the book of Acts documents regarding the outward growth of the Gospel.
 - It seems as if through Mark’s ending, he wants the reader to decide what to do with what they have read and heard from his account.
- Mark has provided within his account great moments of the disciples’ success and their immense failures as it relates to what Jesus said and did, time and again.
 - And here at his short ending, we see that Mark is continuing in the same format yet this time he seems to use a bit of irony to paint a picture of a triumphant story.
- If we consider Jesus’ statement to the disciples from the beginning of His ministry to their arrival at the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was very forward with His instructions to them.
 - He lets them know the unfolding plan regarding His death, yet they have not come to a full understanding of what His death means.
 - With His death, Jesus mentioned them being scattered due to the intense persecution. Their faith would, in a way, collapse.
 - However, in all of that, He provides great promise in the end and that is that once He has been raised from the dead, He’ll meet them in Galilee.
 - The instructions of Christ are ever so clear!
- He even tells Peter that despite his hyper-sense of self-confidence Peter would drop the ball in a big way.
 - Yet even in the very end, Jesus demonstrates great grace and love towards him.
 - So why would the story suddenly change for the worse?
- The text seems to display at this point a bit of irony not too far removed from the pattern displayed by the disciples prior to this moment.
 - For example, in the majority of Chapter 15, the disciples lacked understanding and toward the end had a collapse of faith due to fear.
 - Their failure to understand certain matters of the Kingdom Program resulted in their silence around Jesus until He explained certain matters further.
- In the same way, these women, after receiving great revelation as to the resurrection of Christ, the text states that “trembling and astonishment had gripped them.”
 - In other words, these women are overwhelmed to the point that they can’t even put words together because of what they have just witnessed and heard.
 - It’s similar to when individuals today see a celebrity and the celebrity speaks back and engages with them – the individual becomes start-struck.
 - Why? Because they can’t seem to rationalize in their minds the reality that they are speaking to their favorite celebrity.

- In a similar way, these women are both gripped with this incredible sense of awe that they have received such incredible news, yet overcome with great emotion at what they have witnessed.
 - Therefore, because of their emotional state, Mark says, “and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”
- So, it seems that the combination of the news and reverential awe of the experience of meeting this angel drove them to flee in great silence.
 - Now before we close here, we know that Matthew 28:8 tells us the opposite of Mark 16:8.
- That where Mark expresses the women leaving in fear and not telling anyone, Matthew says that the women left quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell the disciples.
 - It’s not a far stretch to say that Mark is expressing the same thing here.
 - The reason is that although the women left in silence, contextually speaking, it could be understood that their initial silence was due to what they just witnessed.
 - Therefore, their silence would only be temporary and the message from the angel would be given to no one outside of the apostolic circle.
- This is why I believe that Mark, for whatever reason, leaves the reader with a cliffhanger.
 - The reader must conclude for themselves in their own personal silence with the text: “What will you do regarding the information you have been told about Jesus?”
 - You will either respond in faith to His Person and work in belief or you won’t!
- The disciples were to adhere to the words of Jesus even when it made no sense to them at the moment. (This is MY Son, listen to Him!)
 - Why? Because the words of Jesus were progressively unfolding. They simply needed to take Him at His word!
- And isn’t that the conundrum for many today? We want everything to make sense right now, yet don’t want to trust God in the process.
 - Faith is simply acting on the fact that God is telling the truth, even when it doesn’t make sense!
- And as you continue to depend on His word and take Him as a truth-teller, He provides the understanding that you need!
 - Adam, by faith, believed God’s promise of a deliverer because God said it in Genesis 3:15
 - Abraham anticipated this saving seed and was given special revelation about Him. (John 8:56)
 - Moses, by faith, understood the coming suffering of the coming Savior and spoke about Him. (John 5:46; Hebrews 11:26)
 - David understood the Seed would be His descendant (2 Samuel 7:1-29)
- Although the disciples initially responded in unbelief to Jesus being raised from the dead, after being told multiple times by several witnesses, Christ Himself

would appear to them all.

- And it would be this expanded sense of revelation which these men would need to know to carry out the mission of the Kingdom Program.
- What is most beautiful in it all is even with the failure of the disciples and their lack of understanding, Jesus never wavered on what He would accomplish through them.
 - He did not abandon them or forsake them but simply continued to reveal Himself to them until they believed.
 - For in Christ, there is no failure!
- And in the end, they understood it all after He provided understanding by His Spirit, especially Peter.
 - Check out Peters' words in 1 Peter 1:3-9.

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Peter 1:4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

1 Peter 1:5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

1 Peter 1:7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

1 Peter 1:9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

- Next week, we will explore the extended ending of Mark 16 as we observe historical evidence supporting the shorter ending.
 - Yet, we will come to see the relevance of why scribes, later, would have added this ending for clarity and continuity.
 - I pray you join us in the following weeks.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 16B

Chapter 16:9-14

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- As we approach the last 12 verses of Mark 16, we are faced with a critical question.
 - That question is: “What do we do with Mark’s gospel past the first 8 verses?”
 - Do we acknowledge the fact that it is in our current scriptures, or do we neglect it altogether given the scribal notations provided?
 - For some, depending on which bible translation you possess, you may have a note provided after verse 8 which indicates the following verses were not in the original manuscripts.
 - For instance, here is the note found in the Greek New Testament Bible (TGNTB).
 - The note reads as follows:

‘In some of the copies, the evangelist finishes here, up to which (point) also Eusebius of Pamphilus made canon sections. But in many the following is also contained.’

- ◦ As we will come to understand a little later tonight, the discussion of the longer ending of Mark has been debated over many centuries.
 - So, the point of tonight’s message is not to enter into textual critique with ancient writers, but to understand the text as part of the canon.
- Additionally, we will see how the early church fathers viewed this textual variance and how these external sources inform theological thought today.
 - By being informed of textual criticism, canonicity, and veracity of scripture, we can walk away as better bible students.
 - Above all, we can grow in our reliance on the Scripture and its inerrancy and infallibility.
- If I were to establish an outline of our time tonight, we will cover the following:
 - 1. Understand the importance of Textual Criticism (Define Textual Criticism)
 - 2. Explore where the Church Fathers stood in light of the ending of Mark
 - 3. How to best understand the last 12 verses within the context of Mark 16?
- Prayerfully, we will get through the first 6 verses tonight to gain a better grasp of both Mark’s traditional ending and the significance of the Longer Ending.
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight’s text, it would simply be: Now What? An Explanation of the Long Ending of Mark 16.
 - Let’s begin with some background work before we dive into the text.
- We must first understand what “Textual Criticism” is:
 - Textual criticism is defined as the science and art that seeks to determine the most reliable wording of a text.
- This process becomes necessary because there are no true autographs available for both the old and new testament today.
 - We simply have copies of the originals which were transcribed as best as possible over a period of time by scribes.
 - We see the careful preservation of scripture with strong internal evidence as well as relative external proof.
- For instance, the original copy of the book of Jeremiah was destroyed by King Jehoiakim in Jerusalem, yet God told Jeremiah to write it again just as he did prior.
 - Check out quickly, Jeremiah 36:27-28 and verse 32

Jeremiah 36:27 Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah after the king had burned the

scroll and the words which Baruch had written at the dictation of Jeremiah, saying, Jeremiah 36:28 “Take again another scroll and write on it all the former words that were on the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah burned.

Jeremiah 36:32 Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the son of Neriah, the scribe, and he wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and many similar words were added to them.

- ○ ■ So, it is clear to see that God is serious about His word and the preservation and consistency of it.
- Therefore, if we know the seriousness of autograph transcription and its inspiration by the Spirit, then we can rest assured that the Holy Spirit would provide similar oversight in the transcription of the autographs.
 - Another question that you might ask is: “What qualifies the difference between the original autographs versus copies of the scriptures we have today?”
- Autographs are the completed or final works of the author that have been sent out to others.
 - In other words, it is the published works of that writer to his audience.
- Then we have what is referred to as manuscripts or copies.
 - Manuscripts were original copies of the autographs which would have been copied repeatedly to circulate the text to surrounding communities.
- Think of it as a means to preserve the originals and the integrity of the autographs.
 - The more copies you have of the originals, the better preservation of the autographs you have.
 - Unfortunately, over time since the canonization of the scriptures, the majority of the autographs have been lost.
- Be it as it may, the good news is through the process of scribal copying, therein lies a means of authorial preservation and textual integrity.
 - One scholar named G.W Houston argues that “manuscripts could last anywhere from 75 to 500 years, with the average being about 150 years.”
- Now you put that on top of the fact that, to date, we have a little over 5,500 New Testament manuscripts speaks a lot to the integrity of the scriptures and their preservation over time.
 - The process by which a scribe was involved in the copying of a manuscript was quite time-consuming and meticulous.
 - The process is not like what we have in Microsoft Word or other programs today where you can speak and AI technology converts audio to text.
 - No! This process required handwriting using ink on a material called Papyrus.
- The scribe would be required to first lay out strips of the Papyrus plant in both a horizontal and vertical format, joined together by the plant’s juices.
 - After the juice was applied to bond the papyrus together, a hard and heavy item would rest on top of the papyrus for the material to mesh.
 - Once this process was complete, the scribe would have one sheet of Papyrus.
- After that, the scribe would lay his sheet of Papyrus down on a board pinning the edges of the sheet to the board to prepare the copying.
 - With a sharpened reed at hand and a small container of ink, the scribe would be

ready to begin his copying venture.

- Lastly, because there were no pre-printed margins and lines for the scribe, it required him to etch these lines as a means of boundary and separation for the respected text.
 - Therefore, penmanship and detail were of great importance.
- What makes the manuscripts we possess today trustworthy is the reality of the methodical process by which scribes took to copy the text.
 - And most assuredly the Holy Spirit's oversight and internal conviction of the transcribers to preserve the accuracy of the text.
- Now one thing that comes to mind for many is the issue of variance in the scriptures.
 - This is where certain manuscripts have minor variations in word order or spelling errors due to the scribal transcription.
 - These were humans not inspired by the Holy Spirit, simply copyists.
- The individuals who penned the autographs of these 66 books which was approximately 42 Jewish men, were under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
 - Therefore, these copyists, with their best efforts, try to remain consistent in their copying of every word in the autographs.
- All of this to say, we can trust the Word of God knowing that it is the only trustworthy book there is.
 - I mention this brief background because I want us to approach these remaining 12 verses of Mark with a sense of confidence.
 - Confidence not in and of ourselves, but rather confidence in God's ability to rightfully preserve His word throughout the ages.
- Again, just to reiterate, it is believed that Mark's gospel ends at verse 8 of Chapter 16, yet we find a longer ending is provided, perhaps through scribal addition.
 - And as we have just discussed, how scribes copy information is based on manuscripts that they have come across.
 - This means that within these over 5,898 Greek Manuscripts, there have been several instances where the long ending is included.
 - Whether through Mark's omission or scribal addition, the fact remains that it is in the canon of scripture.
 - Furthermore, we have external evidence that speaks to the longer ending of Mark through writings of some early Church leaders.
- For example, here is a list of early church fathers and leaders who mentioned in their writing or agreed to the inclusion of Mark's longer ending with no major qualms:
 - 1. Irenaeus
 - 2. Hippolytus
 - 3. Chrysostom
 - 4. Jerome
 - 5. Ambrose
 - 6. Augustine
 - 7. Victor of Antioch
- On the other hand there are some church fathers and leaders such as Eusebius, Jerome, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen who expressed no knowledge of Mark's Long Ending in the oldest manuscripts.
 - They attest to the fact that verses 9-20 are absent from the two oldest Greek

Manuscripts which are:

- 1. Codex Sinaiticus (4th Century manuscripts)
- 2. Codex Vaticanus (4th Century manuscripts)
- At lastly to throw even more fuel on the fire, within all documented manuscripts there are a total of 5 endings of Mark that have been circulated. They are:
 - 1. The Traditional Ending (16:8)
 - 2. The Traditional Ending (16:8) followed by two sentences known as the Intermediate Ending (IE)
 - 3. The Traditional ending of (16:8) with the Intermediate Ending, followed by the Long Ending (16:9-20)
 - 4. Long Ending (LE) (16:9-20)
 - 5. Long Ending (16:9-20) followed by four extra sentences inserted between verses 14 and 15. Known as the Freer Logion (FL)
- So, it is easy to see why these variations of Mark's ending could cause confusion for many and potentially have some call into question Mark's gospel altogether.
 - However, with the Long Ending remaining consistent throughout most manuscripts, it is safe to say that, as some early church fathers mentioned regarding the Longer ending, it would essentially be wrong to consider one to be canonical and the other not.
 - And in my study of this text, I find that statement to be fair, because the reality was the scribes were not inspired, they simply copied what they saw.
 - Therefore, to stay true to scripture and not remove words from the scrolls, it was a safe bet to keep what was there as recorded.
- So, with all of this information and data to wrestle with, as we approach the text tonight, let us approach it without bias and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us into truth.
 - With that being said and time being of the essence, pick me in Mark 16:9-14 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Mark 16:9 [Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.

Mark 16:10 She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping.

Mark 16:11 When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.

Mark 16:12 After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country.

Mark 16:13 They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either.

Mark 16:14 Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.

- If you recall from last week, the text ended quite abruptly.
 - The women arrive at an empty tomb, they see an angel inside, they receive a message to bring to the disciples, and consequently run away in fear having told no one.

- Again, an abrupt ending with an amazing message to be shared and made known to provide the hope and assurance the 11 disciples needed.
- But here it is that Mark leaves us with a cliffhanger.
- I believe that the hope of that ending was similar to the point of Mark's thesis statement in Mark 1:1, that those who hear about and have read about this Jesus would come to know who He is.
 - It begs the question, "What do we do with this Jesus of the bible?"
 - We will either respond to who He is based upon what He said and has accomplished, or we remain in unbelief.
 - Do we escape the wrath to come through belief upon the Lord Jesus because of who He is, or do we stand rightly condemned?
 - This would have been where Mark's gospel ended – with us wrestling with that reality.
- However, as most scholars have debated, most narratives within the gospels have always been rounded out with a resurrection appearance and not just a resurrection pronouncement.
 - As we think through the build-up that Mark has provided prior, from Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34, it is clear that the narrative naturally wants to move into the resurrection appearance.
 - Yet, Mark concludes with a simple pronouncement.
- I believe a fair assessment of the text leads us to see that there is an implied sense that the resurrection has occurred because the Angel mentions that "Jesus has indeed risen."
 - So, as we approach verses 9-20, we will see that the scribe/writer who added these additional verses seems to want to round out the text for the reader in a summary form.
- We find, starting in verse 9, that there is a repeat of information that seems to conform to both Luke's and John's accounts regarding the timing related to who arrived at the grave first.
 - All the gospel accounts confirm that the women were the first to arrive at the empty tomb as the disciples are in great grief and mourning at home.
 - More specifically, John's gospel mentions that Mary Magdalene was the first to arrive on the scene of the empty tomb.
 - The timing is further verified because John, too, mentions that it was very early when she arrived for it was "still dark".
- The scribe that added this long ending specifies that it is "the" Mary Magdalene whom Jesus "had expelled seven demons out of."
 - So far, this ending remains consistent with the gospel accounts.
 - This becomes one way in which textual critics can verify the authenticity of particular verses.
- Furthermore, we notice that there is a subject shift.
 - This means that where the women in the previous text (v.8) were the focus, it now moves to Jesus being the subject now appearing before Mary Magdalene.

John 20:11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb;

John 20:12 and she *saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.

John 20:13 And they *said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She *said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”

John 20:14 When she had said this, she turned around and *saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.

John 20:15 Jesus *said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing Him to be the gardener, she *said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

John 20:16 Jesus *said to her, “Mary!” She turned and *said to Him in [\[a\]](#)Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher).

John 20:17 Jesus *said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’”

John 20:18 Mary Magdalene *came, announcing to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and that He had said these things to her.

- ○ ■ So, verse 9 alone seems to round out the narrative regarding a resurrection appearance feature from a literary standpoint.
- If we were to observe this passage in light of another gospel account, it would most align with what we find in John 20:11.
 - Contextually speaking, this would now be the second time that Mary Magdalene would have been at the tomb.
 - Because the first time she went and saw that the tomb was open, she ran to go and tell Peter and John.
 - And in response to that news, Peter and John both go to see the tomb and find that Jesus was not there, upon which seeing this sight John responds in belief based upon what Jesus told them before. (He would rise from the dead).
- According to John’s gospel, Peter and John do not go to the other disciples but rather go to their own homes.

John 20:10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

- ○ ■ Luke in Luke 24:12 mentions that Peter marveled and went to his home.
- So it seems that the message the women in verse 8 were to give was in fact distributed according to verse 10.
 - And now we know by whom first – none other than Mary Magdalene.
 - Check out the response of the disciples upon receiving the word from Mary and the women in verse 11.

Mark 16:11 When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.

- Upon the disciples receiving Mary’s witness statement of having seen Jesus herself during her second visit to the tomb, they respond in unbelief.
 - It would seem that the disciples’ understanding of the message Mary and these women had brought was at best “wishful thinking”.

- Because these men at far distance saw Jesus die and could not stomach the sight of this event.
- So, in their minds, there is no way that these women's statement of the tomb being empty made sense.
- As a matter of fact, Luke 24:11 tells us that the disciples' response to Jesus having been raised was nonsense.
 - Check out Luke 24:11

Luke 24:11 But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.

- ○ ■ And just for good measure, after Mary leaves, Peter goes to the tomb to see for himself and simply marvels at the sight.
 - Again, this too corroborates with John 20:6-10.
- These men would have to witness for themselves Jesus standing before them to truly believe He had been raised.
 - Isn't it funny how we want the evidence before we can believe it?
 - However, as we have learned before, faith does not require sight, simply trust in what has been said and not yet seen.
- Despite the unbelief of the disciples, we still see Jesus faithfully meeting the needs of the 11 disciples so that they may come to believe in His resurrection.
 - Check out verses 12-13.

Mark 16:12 After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country.

Mark 16:13 They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either

- The writer of this Long Ending mentions in summary a particular event in which Jesus appeared to "two of them", meaning disciples, as they were walking to the country.
 - From this encounter, it looks as if the two who encountered Jesus believed what they saw and communicated their findings to the other disciples.
 - But without much surprise, the disciples refuse to believe this report as well.
 - Up to this point, Jesus has made Himself known to Mary Magdalene, the women, and these two disciples on a road heading to the country.
 - As we mentioned earlier, for a variant like this one, in order to determine its accuracy and reliability to be included in the canon, there has to be some level of certainty.
 - This means the scribal committee would have to determine where, within the immediate context or surrounding text, is there corroboration of the text.
 - The slides show a list which contains the 3 levels of certainty that are measured for textual variances.
 - We need look no further than Luke 24:13-35 and here is where we find the story of two disciples on the road to Emmaus.
 - Emmaus was a village about 7 miles outside Jerusalem.
 - And Luke states that these two disciples, one of which is a man named Cleopas, are in deep conversation with one another.
 - And amid their conversation, the text says that "Jesus Himself approached and

- And during their conversation, the text says that Jesus himself approached and began traveling with them” (Luke 24:15)
- What becomes both interesting and confirming to our textual variant is that these two disciples were “prevented from recognizing Him”
 - Well, this confirms with some certainty the weird description of Jesus “appearing in a different form” in Mark 16:12.
- Luke tells us that the reason for these men not recognizing who Jesus was is due to their eyes being prevented from recognizing Him.
 - This is not surprising because a similar experience happened with Mary Magdalene in John 20:13-16.

John 20:13 And they *said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She *said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”

John 20:14 When she had said this, she turned around and *saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.

John 20:15 Jesus *said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing Him to be the gardener, she *said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

John 20:16 Jesus *said to her, “Mary!” She turned and *said to Him in [a]Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher).

- ○ By doing a clear read-through in the text, we see that Mary turned twice.
 - The first time she turned was answering the question from the two angels at the tomb.
 - Perhaps she was wiping her tears or disheartened at the sight knowing that Jesus was not there.
 - Yet as she turned with Jesus standing before her, she does not recognize who He was.
- Mary is then asked the question again, “Woman why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”
 - John states that Mary supposed it was a gardener to which she tells Him, “Just tell me where you laid Jesus’ body and I’ll take Him away – off your hands”
- It is this second time that Mary is called by name and the text says, “She turned”.
 - She now recognizes who this is man before her. He’s not the gardener – He is the resurrected Christ!
- Now let’s examine the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.
 - Both these men have Jesus traveling with them to this nearby town.
 - They are talking to a man who they don’t realize is Jesus.
- Now if you are walking somewhere, it requires a means of sight.
 - The text does not mention these disciples are blind by any stretch of the imagination, so we know it’s not their physical sight that is hindered.
- As they carry on in conversation, they are talking about recent events regarding the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
 - They even mention a recent moment in which 2 disciples went to verify the story from the women about the empty tomb.
 - Yet, after seeing the evidence of the tomb because they did not see Jesus, the

disciples did not believe.

- The response from Jesus begins to set the stage for the growing familiarity they will soon recognize in Luke 24:31.
 - For it is in Luke 24:31 that these two disciples welcome Jesus into the village with them and recline with Him at the table.
 - Once they witness how He broke the bread and blessed it, the text says “Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him.”
 - And it is at that point that Jesus vanishes.
 - Both experiences required personal experience with Jesus!
- One thing to note is that Jesus’ resurrected body is able to do things in which our earthly physical bodies cannot. (We can’t vanish and appear)
 - The resurrected body is one which materially is quite distinct in form, yet it is not so foreign that these men weren’t able to recognize Him as Jesus.
- As Dr. Fructenbaum suggests, it’s like a friend whom you haven’t seen in a while and something appears different when you meet again.
 - You may not recognize each other at first, but after some time the recognition and familiarity hits you.
 - So, this “difference of form” in Mark 16:12 potentially addresses the physical changes to His body which caused Him to look differently and not be initially recognized.
 - As these two pictures express, from the hearing of Mary’s name to the burning of the hearts of the disciples on the Emmaus Road, familiarity hits them.
- Now one would imagine that with these several witness accounts, there would strike belief in the recipients of these testimonies.
 - However, according to Mark 16:13, there still remained unbelief among the 11 apostles.
 - And their continued unbelief would now move Jesus to go before the 11 Apostles, Himself, to reprimand them for their unbelief and hardness of heart. Check out verse 14.

Mark 16:14 Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen

- The text states that later that day, Jesus appeared to the eleven apostles as they were reclined at the table, and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of hearts.
 - This type of rebuke is a very strong verb that was not used by Jesus before.
 - The Greek word *oneidizo* means to reprimand in the harshest way.
 - In other words, Jesus is on these boys like white on rice because He has told them on several occasions that He would rise.
 - Not only that, but there have been several witnesses, even those amongst the larger disciple group who have made mention to them that Jesus was raised.
 - And at every opportunity, these 11 men refused to believe the testimony.
 - And Mark’s account reveals that their failure to believe was directly linked to their hardness of heart.
 - The phrase “hardness of heart” is a combination of two separate Greek words.

- *Skleros* which means hard or stern, and *kardia* which is heart. So, these men have hard or stern hearts.
 - This is someone who has an unyielding frame of mind.
- The text makes it clear that even believers can find themselves with hardened hearts at points in their walk with the Lord.
 - And like my Mom used to say: A hard head makes a soft butt.
 - Translation: Discipline will commence!
 - And that is exactly what these men received.
- The reality was, these men hearing of the testimony of these eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection was providing them the opportunity to learn what it looks like to believe the testimony of eyewitnesses.
 - This would be the way in which those, after the Ascension of Christ in His Session, would come to believe in the Lord Jesus – through the testimony of eyewitnesses!
 - That's how you and I came to faith, through the preaching of the Gospel by means of the eyewitness testimonies.
- No one here in this room or listening to this message has seen Jesus or walked with Him in the 1st century.
 - Therefore, what we believe is based upon what the scriptures say Jesus accomplished and through the personal accounts and witness of men and women.
 - All of these witnesses' accounts have been perfectly preserved in scripture which provides solid integrity of the text itself.
 - And furthermore, it provides us with assurance that what God has completed through His Son has been accomplished in real History.
 - Friends, the Gospel is verifiable!
- As we round out our last 7 verses next week, it is my prayer that we see the veracity of scripture!
 - In other words, there is no doubt in our mind that these 66 books and every word within them provides confirmation of the Power of God and displays His Glory throughout all the world!
 - I pray you join us next week as we conclude the Gospel of Mark.
 - Let's Pray.



Mark - Lesson 16C

Chapter 16:15-20

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- Tonight, we arrive to the last 5 verses of Mark's gospel.
 - As we approach these last few verses, we come across a group of text that have been quite difficult to interpret.
 - The interpretive difficulties come with the reality that many denominations approach these text with their own interpretive lenses.
 - For our Charismatic/Pentecostal brothers as sisters, they place a huge emphasis on the accompanying signs as described in verses 17-18.
 - However, as we will see tonight, context is key to understand who these signs are truly meant for and for what purposes.
 - For others, the topic of controversy is Baptismal regeneration.
 - For those who have come out of Roman Catholicism, many were under the belief that it is baptism that saves you.
 - However, with having proper context and a general understanding of salvation in scripture, it is easy to see that Salvation is not a matter of baptism.
 - Rather, one comes to faith by placing trust in God's provision which is found in a Person who has completed the necessary work, and that is Christ alone.
 - So as you can see, although these are the last five verses, they present the reader with much difficulty.
 - Last week, I took a lengthy amount of time explaining the textual criticism process and how it was determined for the Long Ending to be in the Canon.
 - because we do not have time for that recap, I will direct you back to the Mark 16B teaching to review that on your own time.
 - Our outline for our remaining time in Mark 16 will be the following:
 - 1. The Commission (v.15-16)
 - 2. Accompanying Signs (v.17-18)
 - 3. Apostolic Work (v.19-20)
 - If I were to put a tag on our text tonight, it would be: Now What? The Long Ending of Mark (Part 2).
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in Mark 16:15-20 for the reading of the word of the Lord.

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

Mark 16:16 He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

Mark 16:17 These [a]signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues;

Mark 16:18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Mark 16:19 So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

Mark 16:20 And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the [b]signs that followed.

- Before these passages, we have witnessed several eyewitness testimonies of Jesus being

raised from the dead.

- If I were to give us a repeated theme throughout verses 9 up to this point, it would be “unbelief”.
 - Verse 11, “they didn’t believe He was raised”
 - Verse 13, “they didn’t believe He was raised”
 - Verse 14, “Jesus rebuked them because they didn’t believe He was raised.”
- So, unbelief in the resurrection seems to be the issue for the eleven and as a result, it presents a huge problem as it relates to the Kingdom Program.
 - Remember, these eleven men were going to be the ones who would help usher in the Church.
 - And with such a task along with Christ’s coming ascension to the right hand of the Father, there would need to be Apostolic representatives to go forth in this work.
- If you recall, their trial run began in Mark 6:7, where Jesus sent the disciples out two by two giving them authority over unclean spirits, healing diseases, and the like.
 - These men would be Jesus’ witnesses in the various places they were sent out.
 - However, in that context, Jesus was still present with them in His earthly ministry.
 - Therefore, they would need to believe what He had said to properly accomplish the work that He would do through them.
- Unfortunately, at this point, these men refused to believe the eyewitness accounts which prompted Jesus to go before them with a stern rebuke.
 - If you recall from last week, the word for reproach in Greek is oneidizo which is a severe and intense term.
 - It is a sense of heaping insult or reprimanding a guilty party or a kind of verbal extortion with the purpose of obtaining something.
- At this point, one would ask the question: *“What did Jesus tell them specifically within this reproach?”*
 - The text doesn’t seem to provide that information.
 - But whatever He told them, as we see later on throughout the book of Acts, they got it together and believed what they were told.
- *It’s like being told something by your parents regarding something important for you to do, like cleaning your room.*
 - *And when inspection time comes and you are found not having done what was necessary, your parents pull you aside for a stern talking to.*
 - *“This room is not clean, and I have laid out the instructions and expectations.*
 - *If you don’t get it together, there will be consequences that follow. Now get the room clean.”*
 - This, in essence, is what Jesus is sternly telling these 11 to do. And we see the command that He provides.
- So, it’s in verse 15 that Jesus tells the eleven to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”
 - Now, up to this point, with identifying the context and the audience, who is Jesus addressing specifically?
 - None other than the eleven (The Apostles).
 - There has been no subject change simply a command given considering the

reproach He had given the eleven because of their unbelief.

- So, to assume that this verse is referencing future believers who will go out to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ or parallel the Great Commission is not in alignment with the context.
 - Notice, the command of the commissioning belongs to the required party to obey, which is the eleven (apostles) versus the disobedience that has been previously demonstrated (remaining in unbelief).
 - In other words, where these men have refused to believe the eyewitnesses testimony of the resurrection, there now needs to be a pivot to obedience and submission to the command given.
 - And in this case, the command is for these 11 to “Go and preach the Gospel.”
- And in the command of their Commission follows certain conditions.
 - Jesus continues in verse 16 saying: *“He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.”*
 - This is then followed by a list of accompanying signs of those who believe and have been baptized in verses 16-18.
- So in following this train of thought, we should consider the following questions:
 - 1. Who/What is to be believed, in this context?
 - 2. What is the baptism that will be undertaken?
 - 3. What meaning of save is found here?
 - Lets begin with question 1.
- Remember, context is key! Because if we take the text and assume that Jesus is speaking about all disciples (believers), then it will cause other interpretive issues.
 - Another thing that we are to textually consider is within the New Testament, a normal construction that follows an imperative (command) normally is directed towards the same audience.
 - In other words, verse 11 begins with (they didn’t believe), verse 13 (they didn’t believe) verse 14, they didn’t believe, and verse 16 (he who believes).
 - Therefore, the natural progression of this address speaks, once again, to the eleven (apostles) as the subject at hand.
- Now, some could assume “Well isn’t this a Great Commission passage?”
- However, in taking account of the other Great Commission passages and their order, we must consider who the address was to.
 - *Was this a public or private address, and to whom was Jesus addressing?*
 - *By reading through both Matthew and Luke’s Great Commission accounts we see that Mark and John’s text is the only one that speaks to this private meeting in a private setting with only the 11 apostles.*
 - *The other accounts are in public places with more than the apostles present. One setting is in Galilee and another in Bethany. (Mt.28:16-17; Lk.24:50)*
 - *However, in Mark and John’s gospel, they are in a home, because verse 14 tells us that the eleven were reclining at a table. (Jn.20:19-23,24-29)*
- *Therefore, we can conclude that verse 16 speaks specifically about the Apostles.*
- Now, being that we know who is to believe, the next half interpretive question becomes, “What should they believe?”
 - Remember, they were in unbelief regarding these accounts which triggered Jesus’

reprimanding of them in the house.

- So, the resurrection becomes the content to be believed.
- Our next question addresses the next section of verse 16, “and has been baptized”. This further begs the question: *“What baptism is in view here?”*
 - Being that there were multiple baptisms during this day, we need to contextually determine which baptism is Jesus referring to.
- The word baptized is used 10 times within Mark’s Gospel alone and provides us with several Baptisms in particular.
 - 1. Baptism by Water (Unto Repentance)
 - 2. Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2)
 - 3. Baptism of Christ’s death (Mark 10:39)
- Obviously, there are many more baptisms that the New Testament speaks of, however, within Mark’s gospel these are the ones mentioned.
 - Now with careful examination, we know the first one deals with identifying with whom John the Baptist pointed to regarding being the Messiah.
 - The Baptism of the Holy Spirit has not yet occurred because this is an Acts 2 event and Jesus has not yet ascended.
 - A ceremonial cleansing is nowhere in view here nor are these eleven proselytes.
 - This only leaves the Baptism which Jesus talked about in Mark 10:38-39. Check out the text.

Mark 10:38 But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”

Mark 10:39 They said to Him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized

- ○ Contextually, Jesus is speaking to James and John about the disciples being baptized with the baptism He would be baptized which speaks to this sense of humiliation, suffering, and death.
 - All this comes to accomplish the will of the Father.
 - This seems to fit the context of what the ending of Mark is talking about even the history recorded in the book of Acts.
- In other words, those of the eleven who submit to the plan of God, even to the point of great humiliation, suffering, and death are what is the baptism in view here.
 - And as verse 16 is rounded out, those of the eleven who respond in this way (positively) will be saved.
- Now, many will see the word “will be saved” and assume it deals with eternal salvation, but this is not the case.
 - Remember, the context always determines the interpretation of the word in the text itself.
- Salvation is solely based upon belief in the Lord Jesus Christ - no works or merit necessary.
 - The Greek word for saved is sozo means to be saved or delivered in a physical sense from temporal danger.
 - Sozo could also mean healed of an illness, or delivered from being killed or

condemned.

- For instance in Mark 5:23 the term “get well” is (sozo) or Mark 5:28, the term “get well” is (sozo).
- However, in Mark 8:35 the context of sozo is in reference to that of a wasted life.

Mark 8:35 For whoever wishes to save his [a]life will lose it, but whoever loses his [b]life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.

- ○ ■ The context here is discipleship and following the will of God as a follower of Jesus Christ and the cost required to be a disciple.
- Furthermore, right after verse 35 of Mark 8, we find these words, *“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul.”*
 - So, if the context of the apostles need to believe in the resurrection and submit in obedience to the Father’s plan even to the point of humiliation, suffering, and death, then the Apostles will be preserved or kept from a wasted life.
- However, the consequence is found in verse 16b, that if the apostles do not believe in the resurrection and submit to the Father’s will, then they will stand condemned.
 - Now, the same rule we applied to the term saved applies to the term condemned.
- The reality is when we see the term condemned in scripture, our minds instantly run to eternal punishment or hell, however, context is key!
 - The word condemned in Greek is katakrino which means to judge someone as definitely guilty and is subject to punishment.
 - It deems someone guilty.
 - Therefore, if one of the Apostles remains in unbelief regarding the resurrection and does not submit to the Father’s plan to the point of humiliation, suffering, and even death, then they can expect divine discipline from God, Himself.
- This becomes the warning that the Lord Jesus has with these eleven men in the privacy of this home at the table.
 - In other words, don’t waste your life because you refuse to believe these eyewitness accounts. Get in the game!
- *It’s like a coach in the last quarter of the game. A few minutes left to spare.*
 - *He gives you the necessary pep talk to push you to the point of achievement and it’s time to get off the bench!*
 - Well, it’s from this point that Jesus outlines the results of the Apostle’s belief based upon the conditions outlined in verse 16. Check out verses 17-18.

Mark 16:17 These [a]signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues;

Mark 16:18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

- Jesus follows up the verse 16 with what comes in conjunction with their belief in the resurrection and obedience and submission to the Father.
 - He mentions that there will be accompanying signs in their belief!
 - And these signs are the following:
 - 1. Casting out demons

- 2. Speak with new tongues
- 3. Pick up serpents
- 4. Drink any deadly poison and it won't hurt them
- 5. They will lay hands on the sick and they will recover
- What is key to notice here is, again, who are the recipients of this commission and conditions?
 - It is solely the Apostles.
- Our Charismatic brothers and sisters will run immediately to these verses and say that all believers will and should be able to do these things.
 - Some will even argue that if you can't do these things, you never truly believed.
- There was one charismatic church I heard about that went to graveyards to raise the dead.
 - They also run to this scripture to confirm that all need to speak with "new tongues", however, if we are not grounded contextually, we make room for error.
 - And for many, they begin to question if they are truly saved,
- So it's important to note that the phrase "accompany those who have believed" is in the dative form.
 - This simply indicates the recipient of a verbal action.
 - And the action, as previously stated in verse 16, is for the eleven to believe in the resurrection and obey the Father, so that they will receive these signs.
- Therefore, we can say that these actions are to affirm and confirm the messengers of Christ (the Apostles) who will be responsible for advancing the Gospel.
 - Check out what Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians 12:12.

2 Corinthians 12:12 The [a]signs [b]of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by [c]signs and wonders and [d]miracles.

- ○ ■ This becomes even clearer through the reading of the Book of Acts.
 - The Apostles accomplished many of these things!
 - We know that Paul survived a snakebite in Acts 28:1-6. Check out the text.

Acts 28:1 When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called [a]Malta.

Acts 28:2 The [b]natives showed us extraordinary kindness; for because of the rain that had set in and because of the cold, they kindled a fire and received us all.

Acts 28:3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out [c]because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand.

Acts 28:4 When the [d]natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, "Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, [e]justice has not allowed him to live."

Acts 28:5 However he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm.

Acts 28:6 But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

- ○ So, these dynamic and supernatural signs not only authenticated the works of the Apostles but they demonstrated the Power of God at work in and through them.
 - We now arrive at the last 2 verses, verses 19-20.

Mark 16:19 So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

Mark 16:20 And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the [\[b\]](#)signs that followed

- The writer of the long ending of Mark's gospel sums up the eleven's response to what Jesus had said.
 - The text states that upon the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, the eleven went everywhere to preach the gospel.
 - And in submitting to the plans of the Father, their preaching of the gospel and the content of the message of the gospel was confirmed in the signs that followed.
 - From a plain reading of the text, it seems as if the eleven have responded in belief to the resurrection.
 - The only way in which the signs would be demonstrated to authenticate the message that they would carry is if they first believed the resurrection took place.
 - They had to be submitted fully to the plans and will of God for the Power of God to be powerfully at work through them.
 - I believe that is the interesting piece to note here- the eleven won't operate in their own strength, they are vessels by which the Lord is working through!
 - The teaching and miracles of the Apostles were a result of their dependency on God.
 - And isn't this true for how we are to operate in ministry today?! Total dependence upon the Lord!
 - Their ability to accomplish this work hinged on what Jesus told them God would accomplish in Him being raised from the dead.
 - The message they would preach, proclaim, and promote would be the work accomplished through the Person of Jesus Christ - that He died, was, buried, and was raised from the dead.
 - Something clicked for the eleven, because throughout all the book of Acts, the message of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection became of first importance.
 - That the eye witnessing of Jesus' resurrection was the content by which men and women would be justified and made right before God.
 - The Power of the resurrection of Jesus would be the means through which men and women would be sanctified and able to live a Spirit-led life.
 - I love how scripture interprets scripture, because the reality of what Jesus accomplished and the fact that His life was observed and personally witnessed, brings weight to His words!
 - This is why I believe John started off 1 John this way: Check out 1 John 1:1-3.

1 John 1:1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life

—

1 John 1:2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

1 John 1:3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

- ○ The Church Age would require the Apostles to preach the object of our faith (Jesus Christ) accomplishing the content of our faith (His death, burial, and resurrection), which results in Eternal Salvation for those who believe it.
 - This reality speaks to the fact that what the Father begins, He sees it through to its completion. (Phil.1:6)

Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

- ○ ■ Through opposition and imprisonment, the Apostles, with great joy, preached the Gospel.
 - Through internal and external opposition of the Church, the Apostles continued to preach the foundation of the Christian faith - the Gospel.
 - From both Jewish and Gentile conversions the message of the Gospel remained the same- Christ died, was buried, and raised from the dead.
- Friends, there is no other name by which men can be saved.
 - There is no other message that brings eternal salvation and security.
- It required the selfless and service-centered actions of a selfless man named Jesus Christ to come in the form of a human being, die a death He didn't deserve, yet was raised with all Power in His hands.
 - This reality was seen, felt, heard, and experienced and has been documented for those who, in hearing this message, may move from death to life.
 - No work is needed - only belief.
 - No striving is necessary, only trust.
- This Gospel we have is a sure and trustworthy testimony of the faithfulness of our great God and Coming King.
 - Mark's Gospel showed us that through the actions of Jesus and the work He accomplished, He is the Son of God.
 - Lets Pray.