



COMPLETE STUDY GUIDE • GOSPEL • 16 CHAPTERS • 8 SESSIONS

The Gospel of Mark

Follow • Serve • Believe

“For the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

MARK 10:45



Eight sessions

Leader's guide

Answer guide

Full text of Mark (WEB)

SIMPLE. ACCESSIBLE. TRANSFORMATIONAL.



CLEAR PATH BIBLE STUDIES

The Gospel of Mark

Complete Study Guide

Follow · Serve · Believe

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- 1** Eight sessions with every discussion, reflection, and recall question from the online study, and room to write.
- 2** Reference pages: the five moments that reveal the King, major themes, key passages, key people, and all 16 chapters at a glance.
- 3** Leader's guide with the group leader notes, a timed plan, an answer guide for every discussion question, and the recall answer key.
- 4** The full text of Mark in the World English Bible, so nothing else is needed to do the study.

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The online study, free and with no sign-in: clearpathbiblestudies.com/studies/mark

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

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START HERE

How to use this guide

A complete, eight-session walk through the Gospel of Mark — built for small groups, Sunday school, and personal study. Read together, observe, interpret, and leave each session with one clear thing to live out.

EVERY SESSION FOLLOWS ONE RHYTHM

1

Read together

The session's chapters and key passages. The text is in Part Four.

2

Observe

What does the passage say? Who is there, and what happens?

3

Interpret

What does it show about Jesus? What did the author want us to see?

4

Apply this week

What will I do with it this week? One thing, lived out.

On your own

This guide gives you eight weekly sessions, each with a reading plan, questions, a memory verse, and one action.

- Write your answers. Thinking on paper is slower, and it lasts.
- Finish with the recall page: answer from memory first, then check the text.

In a group

Each session fits a 60-minute meeting of 5–12 people: read together, discuss, and apply, with leader notes built in.

- The leader uses Part Three: leader notes, an answer guide, and the recall answer key.
 - Participants need Parts One, Two, and Four.
- Of Part Five, pages 99 and 104–110 are for everyone, and pages 100–103 are for leaders.

PRINTING FOR A GROUP

Participant pages (sessions and reference): pages 8–48. Leader's guide: pages 49–74. The text of Mark: pages 75–97. Part Five: pages 98–110.

My progress

☐ 1 The Servant Appears

☐ 3 Power and Compassion

☐ 5 The Way of the Cross

☐ 7 Watch and Stay Alert

☐ 2 Authority and Opposition

☐ 4 Who Is Jesus?

☐ 6 Confrontation in Jerusalem

☐ 8 The Cross and the Empty Tomb

WHY MARK

Why read this Gospel

The shortest, fastest Gospel — a vivid, urgent portrait of Jesus the Servant-King who came to give His life as a ransom for many.

01 The action-packed Gospel

Mark is fast and vivid. “Immediately” drives the story forward as Jesus moves from one mighty work to the next.

02 Jesus the suffering Servant

Mark shows a Servant-King who came not to be served but to give His life as a ransom for many.

03 The shortest Gospel

The briefest of the four, Mark is the perfect place to begin — a swift, powerful portrait of who Jesus is.

04 Who do you say that I am?

Mark builds to one question and one answer: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God — confessed even by a Roman soldier at the cross.

“For the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

MARK 10:45 • WEB

ORIENTATION

Before you begin

A quick orientation to the Gospel — who wrote it, when, for whom, and the threads to watch for as you read.

AUTHOR	Background Traditionally John Mark, a companion of Peter and Paul. An early church tradition says he wrote down Peter's preaching, and scholars differ on how much weight to give it.
DATE	When It Was Written Many scholars regard it as the earliest Gospel and date it near A.D. 65 to 70, though some place it earlier. Rome is the traditional place of writing.
AUDIENCE	Who It Was Written For Likely readers unfamiliar with Jewish customs and Aramaic — traditionally Roman believers.
PURPOSE	Why Mark Wrote To proclaim the good news that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God — and to call readers to follow a crucified Lord.
STYLE	How Mark Writes Fast, vivid, and urgent. Mark favors action over long discourse and uses "immediately" more than forty times.
KEY WORD	The Word That Drives It "Immediately." Other key ideas: gospel, Son of God, Son of Man, the way, ransom, and the call to follow.
JESUS	Jesus in Mark The powerful Son of God and the Son of Man, Jesus' own title for Himself, who suffers (many readers hear Daniel 7 behind it) — a Servant who heals, casts out demons, and gives His life as a ransom.
DISCIPLESHIP	What It Means to Follow Take up your cross, lose your life to save it, become a servant of all, and follow Jesus "on the way" to Jerusalem.

STRUCTURE

Two Halves, One Turning Point: 16 chapters, 8 sessions

Mark turns on Peter's confession (8:29). The first half asks "Who is Jesus?"; the second half walks the road to the cross.

The Servant at Work Mark 1–7							The Road to the Cross Mark 8–10			Confrontation in Jerusalem Mark 11–13			The Cross and the Empty Tomb Mark 14–16		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Session 1		Session 2		Session 3		Session 4		Session 5		Session 6		Session 7		Session 8	

Sessions follow the reading plan, not the section edges: Session 4 spans chapters 7–8 and Session 7 spans chapters 13–14, so each one crosses a section break.

THE EIGHT SESSIONS

Your study plan

EITHER WAY

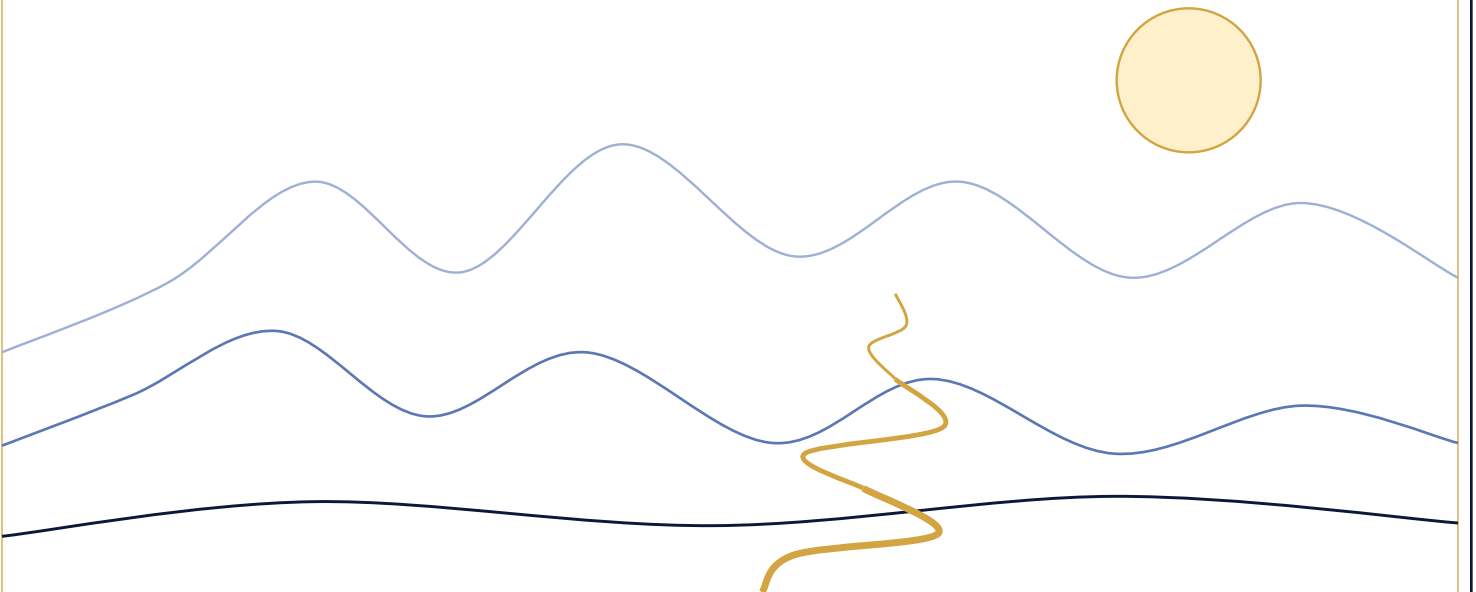
Eight sessions carry you through all 16 chapters of Mark — from the voice in the wilderness to the empty tomb and “He has risen.”

	SESSION	READ	MEMORY VERSE	SESSION PAGE	LEADER PAGE	TEXT PAGE
1	The Servant Appears Mark plunges straight into action — John prepares the way, Jesus is baptized, and He bursts into Galilee proclaiming the kingdom with stunning authority.	Mark 1–2	Mark 1:15	9	51	76
2	Authority and Opposition Jesus appoints the Twelve and teaches the kingdom in parables, then stills a storm — and the disciples wonder, “Who then is this?”	Mark 3–4	Mark 4:41	13	54	78
3	Power and Compassion Jesus frees a demonized man, heals a bleeding woman, raises Jairus’s daughter, and feeds five thousand with compassion for the shepherdless crowd.	Mark 5–6	Mark 6:34	17	57	80
4	Who Is Jesus? Jesus challenges human tradition that sets aside God’s command and heals — leading to a turning point of Mark: Peter’s confession, “You are the Christ.”	Mark 7–8	Mark 8:29	21	60	83
5	The Way of the Cross Transfigured before Peter, James, and John, Jesus teaches the way of the cross: greatness is servanthood, and the Son of Man gives His life as a ransom for many.	Mark 9–10	Mark 10:45	25	63	85
6	Confrontation in Jerusalem Jesus enters Jerusalem, cleanses the temple, and silences His opponents — naming love of God and neighbor as the greatest commandment.	Mark 11–12	Mark 12:30–31	29	66	89
7	Watch and Stay Alert Jesus calls His people to watchfulness; then the passion begins — anointing, Last Supper, Gethsemane, betrayal, and denial.	Mark 13–14	Mark 13:31	33	69	91
8	The Cross and the Empty Tomb Jesus is crucified; a centurion confesses Him as the Son of God; and the women find the tomb empty: “He has risen.”	Mark 15–16	Mark 16:6	37	72	94

PART ONE

The Eight Sessions

Read, discuss, reflect, and recall. One session a week carries you through all 16 chapters.



SESSION 1 OF 8

The Servant Appears

Read Mark 1–2 · text on pages 76–78

1

Mark opens at full speed: John prepares the way, Jesus is baptized and tempted, then bursts into Galilee proclaiming the kingdom, calling disciples, healing the sick, and forgiving sins – all with stunning authority.

There is no genealogy and no nativity – Mark plunges straight into the action. The Son of God arrives announcing good news, calling ordinary people to follow, and demonstrating an authority over sickness, demons, and sin that leaves the crowds amazed.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Feel the urgency and pace of Mark's Gospel
- ☐ See Jesus' authority over sickness, demons, and sin
- ☐ Hear the first call to repent, believe, and follow

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Mark 1:15	Memory verse
Mark 1	Chapter 1
Mark 2	Chapter 2

MEMORY VERSE

"The time is fulfilled, and God's Kingdom is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Good News."

MARK 1:15 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Mark 1–2 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Mark 1 ☐ Mark 2

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 Why might Mark begin with action rather than a birth story?

2 What kinds of authority does Jesus show in these chapters?

3 What does Jesus mean by “Repent, and believe in the Good News”?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

- ① What would it mean to follow Jesus “immediately,” as the first disciples did?

- ② Where do you need to experience Jesus’ authority right now?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Respond to Jesus’ first call this week: name one thing to turn from and one way to follow Him more closely.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You came proclaiming good news. Give me grace to repent, believe, and follow You today. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1 How does Mark describe Jesus in the very first verse? (1:1)
 - ☐ A A great teacher
 - ☐ B The Christ, the Son of God
 - ☐ C A prophet like Elijah
 - ☐ D The son of Joseph
- 2 What is Jesus' first message in Mark? (1:15)
 - ☐ A Love one another
 - ☐ B Follow the prophets
 - ☐ C Keep the Sabbath
 - ☐ D The kingdom is near; repent and believe
- 3 How do the first disciples respond to Jesus' call by the sea? (1:18, 20)

- 4 Why does Jesus say He has come, when challenged for eating with sinners? (2:17)

- 5 Without looking back, write Mark 1:15.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 53.

SESSION 2 OF 8

Authority and Opposition

Read Mark 3–4 · text on pages 78–80

2

Jesus appoints the Twelve and teaches the kingdom in parables – the sower, the growing seed, the mustard seed – even as opposition hardens. He calms a storm, and the disciples wonder, “Who then is this?”

Mark holds together rising conflict and revealing teaching. Jesus forms His community, explains the kingdom through parables of seed and soil, and then stills a storm with a word – pressing the central question of His identity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Understand the parables of the kingdom
- ☐ See opposition to Jesus beginning to build
- ☐ Grapple with the question of Jesus' identity

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Mark 4:41	Memory verse
Mark 3	Chapter 3
Mark 4	Chapter 4

MEMORY VERSE

“Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

MARK 4:41 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Mark 3–4 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Mark 3 ☐ Mark 4

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What does the parable of the sower teach about receiving God's word?

2 Why do you think opposition to Jesus grows so quickly?

3 What does calming the storm reveal about who Jesus is?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① What kind of “soil” is your heart for God’s word right now?

② Where do you need to trust Jesus’ authority over a “storm”?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Identify one “thorn” crowding out God’s word this week, and take a step to clear it.

PRAYER

Jesus, make my heart good soil, and still the storms I fear. I trust Your authority. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1 After Jesus calms the storm, what do the disciples ask? (4:41)**
 - A** Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?
 - B** Where are we going?
 - C** Why did you wake us?
 - D** Are we safe now?
- 2 In the parable of the sower, what is the seed sown? (4:14)**
 - A** Faith
 - B** Good deeds
 - C** The word
 - D** Grain for bread
- 3 Why does opposition to Jesus begin to harden in chapter 3? (3:6)**

- 4 What does the parable of the mustard seed teach about the kingdom? (4:30–32)**

- 5 Without looking back, write Mark 4:41.**

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 56.

SESSION 3 OF 8

Power and Compassion

Read Mark 5–6 · text on pages 80–83

3

Jesus frees a demonized man, heals a bleeding woman, and raises Jairus's daughter — then, rejected at home, He sends out the Twelve and feeds five thousand with compassion for the shepherdless crowd.

Mark stacks mighty works that reveal Jesus' power over evil, disease, and death — and the compassion behind them. Even rejection in His hometown does not slow the mission; He multiplies it through the Twelve and feeds the hungry crowd.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ See Jesus' power over demons, disease, and death
- ☐ Notice the compassion driving His miracles
- ☐ Watch the mission extend through the Twelve

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Mark 6:34	Memory verse
Mark 5	Chapter 5
Mark 6	Chapter 6

MEMORY VERSE

"Jesus came out, saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things."

MARK 6:34 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Mark 5–6 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Mark 5 ☐ Mark 6

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What do the healings in chapter 5 reveal about Jesus' heart?

2 Why is Jesus rejected in His hometown?

3 What does the feeding of the five thousand show about Jesus?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where do you need to reach out to Jesus in bold faith?

② Who are the “sheep without a shepherd” around you?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Show Christ's compassion to one overlooked person this week.

PRAYER

Jesus, full of compassion, meet me in my need and make me tender toward others. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1** What does Jesus say has made the woman well? (5:34)
 - ☐ A A ritual
 - ☐ B The priests
 - ☐ C A payment
 - ☐ D Her faith
- 2** Seeing the great crowd, what moves Jesus to begin teaching them? (6:34)
 - ☐ A Duty
 - ☐ B Compassion — they were like sheep without a shepherd
 - ☐ C Their requests
 - ☐ D The disciples' urging
- 3** What does Jesus do for Jairus's daughter? (5:41–42)

- 4** How is Jesus received in His hometown? (6:3–6)

- 5** Without looking back, write Mark 6:34.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 59.

SESSION 4 OF 8

Who Is Jesus?

Read Mark 7–8 • text on pages 83–85

4

Jesus challenges human tradition that sets aside God’s command, heals a Gentile woman’s daughter and a deaf man, feeds four thousand, and warns against blindness of heart — leading to a turning point of Mark: Peter’s confession, “You are the Christ.”

These chapters turn from the crowds’ wonder to the deeper question of identity. Jesus challenges human tradition that sets aside God’s command, extends grace to a Gentile woman, and heals a blind man in two stages, which many readers take as a picture of the disciples’ slowly opening eyes — until Peter finally names Him the Christ.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Distinguish heart-religion from mere tradition
- ☐ See Jesus’ grace reaching beyond Israel
- ☐ Reach the turning point of Mark: Peter’s confession

THIS SESSION’S KEY PASSAGES

Mark 8:29	Memory verse
Mark 7	Chapter 7
Mark 8	Chapter 8

MEMORY VERSE

“But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.”

MARK 8:29 • WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Mark 7–8 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Mark 7 ☐ Mark 8

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What does Jesus teach about what truly defiles a person?

2 How might the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (8:22–26), just before Peter's confession, shape how we read it?

3 What does it mean to confess Jesus as the Christ?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where might your faith be more tradition than heart?

② Who do you say Jesus is — and does your life confess it?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Make one honest confession of Jesus as Lord this week, in word or action.

PRAYER

Jesus, open my eyes to see You clearly, and let my heart confess You as the Christ. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1** What does Jesus say truly defiles a person? (7:15, 21)
 - ☐ A Unwashed hands
 - ☐ B Certain foods
 - ☐ C What comes out of the heart
 - ☐ D Contact with Gentiles
- 2** At Caesarea Philippi, what does Peter confess? (8:29)
 - ☐ A You are the Christ
 - ☐ B You are a prophet
 - ☐ C You are John raised
 - ☐ D You are Elijah
- 3** How do many readers understand the two-stage healing at Bethsaida, just before Peter's confession? (8:22–26)

- 4** What does Jesus do for the Syrophenician woman's daughter, and why? (7:29)

- 5** Without looking back, write Mark 8:29.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 62.

SESSION 5 OF 8

The Way of the Cross

Read Mark 9–10 · text on pages 85–88

5

Transfigured before Peter, James, and John, Jesus then teaches the way of the cross: true greatness is servanthood, the kingdom belongs to children, and the Son of Man came to give His life as a ransom for many.

After the Transfiguration, Jesus repeatedly foretells His death and overturns the disciples' ideas of greatness. On the road to Jerusalem He redefines power as service and sets His own self-giving as the pattern and the price.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Hold together the Transfiguration and His coming death
- ☐ Learn greatness as servanthood
- ☐ Understand the cross as a ransom

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Mark 10:45	Memory verse
Mark 9	Chapter 9
Mark 10	Chapter 10

MEMORY VERSE

“For the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

MARK 10:45 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Mark 9–10 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Mark 9 ☐ Mark 10

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What does the Transfiguration reveal, and to whom?

2 How does Jesus redefine greatness for His disciples?

3 What does it mean that Jesus gives His life “as a ransom for many”?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where is Jesus calling you to serve instead of to be served?

② What would taking up your cross look like this week?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Take one concrete step to serve someone humbly, expecting nothing back.

PRAYER

*Jesus, You served and gave Your life for me.
Teach me to follow the way of the cross. Amen.*

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 What does Jesus say is the path to being first? (9:35)

☐ A Strength

☐ B Wealth

☐ C Being last of all and servant of all

☐ D Knowledge

2 Why did the Son of Man come, according to Mark 10:45?

☐ A To serve and give His life as a ransom for many

☐ B To rule

☐ C To teach the Law

☐ D To be served

3 What happens at the Transfiguration, and what does the voice from the cloud say? (9:2–7)

4 How does blind Bartimaeus respond after Jesus heals him? (10:52)

5 Without looking back, write Mark 10:45.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 65.

SESSION 6 OF 8

Confrontation in Jerusalem

Read Mark 11–12 · text on pages 89–91

6

Jesus enters Jerusalem to shouts of Hosanna, cleanses the temple, and silences His opponents with wisdom — naming love of God and neighbor as the greatest commandment and the heart of the Law.

The King arrives in the city where its leaders will move against Him. He confronts worship that had lost its purpose, answers every trap with authority, and gathers the whole Law into love for God and neighbor — exposing hearts as the showdown nears.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ See Jesus enter Jerusalem as King
- ☐ Understand His challenge to the temple and its leaders
- ☐ Center the Law on love of God and neighbor

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Mark 12:30–31	Memory verse
Mark 11	Chapter 11
Mark 12	Chapter 12

MEMORY VERSE

“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.’ This is the first commandment. The second is like this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

MARK 12:30–31 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Mark 11–12 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Mark 11
- ☐ Mark 12

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What is Jesus saying by cleansing the temple?

2 How does Jesus handle the questions meant to trap Him?

3 How do the two great commandments reframe everything else?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where might your worship have become fruitless routine?

② Who is the neighbor God is calling you to love this week?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Choose one person and love them concretely this week, as yourself.

PRAYER

Lord, cleanse my heart, and teach me to love You fully and my neighbor truly. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 What does Jesus call the temple as He cleanses it? (11:17)

☐ A A palace

☐ B A fortress

☐ C A ruin

☐ D A house of prayer for all the nations, which they made a den of robbers

2 What does Jesus name as the greatest commandment? (12:30)

☐ A Keep the Sabbath

☐ B Love the Lord your God with all you are

☐ C Honor the temple

☐ D Give to the poor

3 How does Jesus respond to the questions meant to trap Him? (12:13–34)

4 What does Jesus notice about the widow's offering? (12:43–44)

5 Without looking back, write Mark 12:30–31.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 68.

SESSION 7 OF 8

Watch and Stay Alert

Read Mark 13–14 · text on pages 91–94

7

Jesus speaks of what is coming and calls His people to stay alert. Then the passion begins: a woman anoints Him, the Last Supper is shared, and in Gethsemane He is betrayed and arrested, and Peter then denies Him in the high priest's courtyard.

Jesus turns the disciples' eyes to the future and urges them to stay awake. Then Mark's passion narrative opens — extravagant devotion, a shared supper, agonized prayer, betrayal, and denial — as the Servant moves toward the cross.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Hear Jesus' call to watchfulness
- ☐ Enter the passion narrative
- ☐ See devotion and failure side by side

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

Mark 13:31	Memory verse
Mark 13	Chapter 13
Mark 14	Chapter 14

MEMORY VERSE

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

MARK 13:31 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Mark 13–14 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Mark 13 ☐ Mark 14

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 What does Jesus mean by “watch” and “keep alert”?

2 What makes the woman’s anointing so significant?

3 What leads Peter from confidence to denial?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① What would “staying awake” spiritually look like for you?

② Where have you, like Peter, been weaker than you expected?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Practice watchfulness this week through a daily, unhurried time of prayer and Scripture.

PRAYER

Lord, keep me awake and faithful. When I am weak like Peter, restore me by Your grace. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1** What does Jesus say will never pass away? (13:31)
 - ☐ A His words
 - ☐ B The temple
 - ☐ C The heavens
 - ☐ D The city
- 2** In Gethsemane, what does Jesus pray? (14:36)
 - ☐ A That the disciples be spared
 - ☐ B For a sign from heaven
 - ☐ C “not what I desire, but what you desire”
 - ☐ D For judgment
- 3** What is significant about the woman who anoints Jesus? (14:8–9)

- 4** How does Peter go from confidence to failure that night? (14:29–31, 66–72)

- 5** Without looking back, write Mark 13:31.

NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 71.

SESSION 8 OF 8

The Cross and the Empty Tomb

Read Mark 15–16 · text on pages 94–96



Jesus is tried, crucified, and buried. At His death a Roman centurion confesses Him as the Son of God – a high point of Mark’s identity theme. Then the women find the tomb empty: “He has risen.”

Mark’s Gospel reaches its goal at the cross, where a Roman soldier sees how Jesus dies and confesses Him as God’s Son. Then the empty tomb and the young man’s word turn the story outward — He has risen, and His followers are sent to tell.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Walk through Mark’s account of the cross
- ☐ See the centurion’s confession as a high point
- ☐ Hear the news of the resurrection at the empty tomb

THIS SESSION’S KEY PASSAGES

Mark 16:6	Memory verse
Mark 15	Chapter 15
Mark 16	Chapter 16

MEMORY VERSE

“Don’t be amazed. You seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen. He is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him!”

MARK 16:6 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read Mark 15–16 slowly across the week. Each day, ask God to show you one thing to believe and one thing to do.

- ☐ Mark 15 ☐ Mark 16

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

1 Why is it a Roman soldier who confesses Jesus at the cross?

2 What stands out in Mark's account of Jesus' death?

3 How does the empty tomb call for a response from us?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① What does the cross of Jesus mean for you personally?

② At the tomb the women are told to go and tell — who can you tell?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Share the heart of Mark's good news with one person this week: Jesus, the Son of God, crucified and risen.

PRAYER

*Risen Lord, You gave Your life and rose again.
Make me a faithful witness who goes and tells.
Amen.*

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 Who confesses Jesus as the Son of God at the cross? (15:39)☐ A A disciple☐ B A Roman centurion☐ C A priest☐ D Pilate**2 What does the young man at the tomb announce? (16:6)**☐ A Go home and mourn☐ B The body was moved☐ C Wait for the priests☐ D He has risen; He is not here**3 What unusual thing happens to the temple curtain when Jesus dies? (15:38)**

4 If Mark ends at 16:8, what response does it call for? (16:6–8)

5 Without looking back, write Mark 16:6.

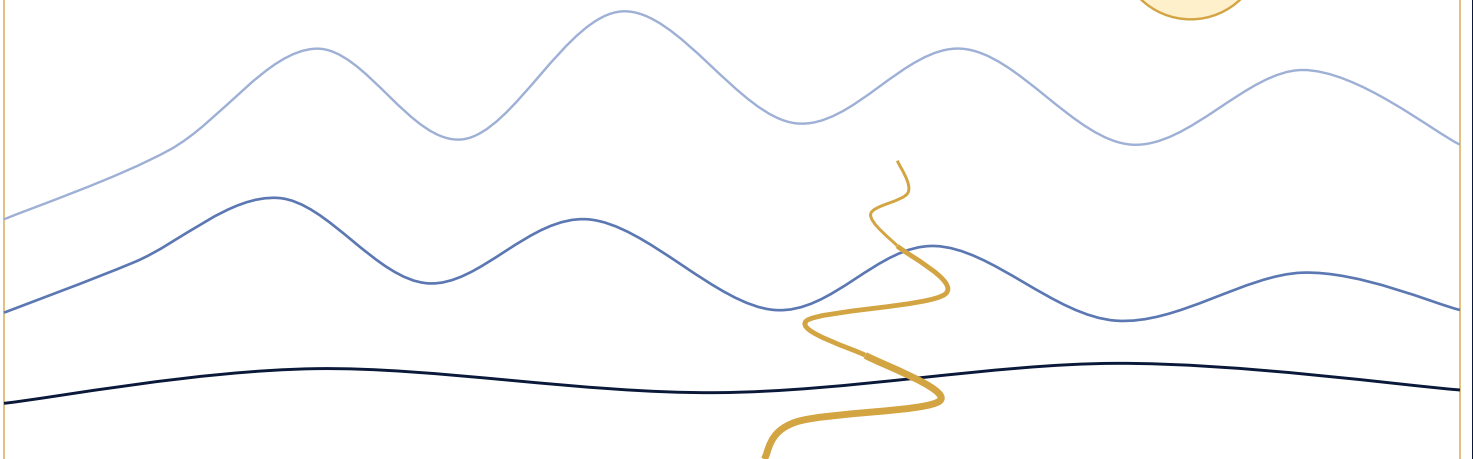
NOTES, AND QUESTIONS TO BRING TO THE GROUP

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 74.

PART TWO

Reference

The five moments, the themes, the passages, the people,
and every chapter at a glance.



MIGHTY WORKS · MARK

Five moments that reveal the King

Mark moves at speed through mighty works and turning points — each pressing the question that drives the whole Gospel: who then is this?

1	Calming the Storm Mark 4:35–41	WHAT HAPPENED	With a word, Jesus stills a raging storm as His terrified disciples cry out.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	Even wind and sea obey Him. Mark presses the question: “Who then is this?”
		FOR YOU	Trust the One who is in the boat with you. His authority reaches the storms you fear most.
2	Healing the Bleeding Woman Mark 5:25–34	WHAT HAPPENED	A woman sick for twelve years touches Jesus’ garment in faith and is healed instantly.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	No one is too unclean or unnoticed for Jesus. Faith reaches out, and He responds personally.
		FOR YOU	Reach out to Jesus with your need. He is never too busy to stop for one trembling person.
3	Feeding the Five Thousand Mark 6:30–44	WHAT HAPPENED	Jesus feeds a vast crowd from five loaves and two fish, with twelve baskets left over.
		WHAT IT REVEALS	The Servant-King provides abundantly. He has compassion on the crowd and meets real need.
		FOR YOU	Bring Jesus your “not enough.” In His hands, what little you have can feed many.
4	Peter’s Confession Mark 8:27–29	WHAT HAPPENED	At Caesarea Philippi, Peter answers Jesus’ question: “You are the Christ.”
		WHAT IT REVEALS	This is a widely recognized turning point of Mark. Peter names Jesus as the Christ — just before Jesus begins to teach about the cross (8:31).
		FOR YOU	Answer the question yourself: who is Jesus to you? Let your life confess Him as Lord.
5	The Centurion’s Confession Mark 15:39	WHAT HAPPENED	Seeing how Jesus died, a Roman soldier declares, “Truly this man was the Son of God.”
		WHAT IT REVEALS	Mark’s identity theme reaches a high point here: even a Roman centurion who stood facing Jesus confesses the crucified Jesus as God’s Son.
		FOR YOU	It is at the cross that we see most clearly who Jesus is. Look there, and believe.

“Truly this man was the Son of God!” — Mark 15:39

MAJOR THEMES

The threads running through Mark

The ideas Mark returns to again and again — each one a window on who Jesus is.

01 Jesus is the Son of God

Mark 1:1

Mark announces it in the first verse and confirms it at the cross — the whole Gospel shows Jesus is God's Son.

02 The Servant who gives His life

Mark 10:45

The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

03 Action and urgency

Mark 1:18

Mark moves fast — “immediately” and “at once” — capturing the breathless pace of Jesus' ministry.

04 Authority over all things

Mark 1:27

Jesus teaches, heals, forgives, casts out demons, and commands nature — with an authority that astonishes.

05 The way of the cross

Mark 8:34

To follow Jesus is to take up a cross. Mark's second half walks the road of suffering to Jerusalem.

06 The messianic secret

Mark 8:30

Jesus often silences demons and commands people to tell no one about Him (1:25, 1:34, 1:44, 8:30). Scholars call this pattern the “messianic secret” and debate what it means.

07 Failure and faith of the disciples

Mark 8:21

Mark honestly shows the disciples' dullness and fear — a mirror that calls us to deeper faith.

08 Discipleship as servanthood

Mark 9:35

“If any man wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.” Greatness is redefined.

09 Compassion for the crowds

Mark 6:34

Jesus is moved with compassion for people who are like sheep without a shepherd, and He meets their need.

10 Faith that reaches out

Mark 5:34

Again and again Mark highlights people whose bold, desperate faith brings them to Jesus. Illness is never a sign of weak faith.

11 Conflict with the religious leaders

Mark 3:6

From early on, opposition builds. Mark traces the growing plot that leads to the cross. Jesus and His disciples are Jewish, and the conflict is among Jews over how to follow God.

12 The kingdom of God

Mark 1:15

Jesus' first words announce that the kingdom has come near — a call to repent and believe the good news.

13 The cross at the center

Mark 15:39

Everything in Mark drives toward the cross, where a Roman soldier confesses Jesus as the Son of God.

14 Resurrection and the ending of Mark

Mark 16:6

"He has risen." The women are told to go and tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus goes before them into Galilee (16:6–7); they flee and say nothing (16:8).

KEY PASSAGES

Passages worth knowing well

Fourteen pivotal texts that carry the heart of Mark's Gospel. Read them, mark them, return to them.

Mark 1:1	The Beginning of the Gospel Mark's opening declaration that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
Mark 1:15	The Kingdom Has Come Near Jesus' first message: repent and believe the good news.
Mark 1:17	Come After Me Jesus' call to the first disciples to leave all and follow.
Mark 2:17	Not the Righteous but Sinners Jesus came as a physician for the sick, calling sinners to repentance.
Mark 4:39	Peace, Be Still Jesus' command stills the storm and reveals His authority.
Mark 8:29	You Are the Christ Peter's confession — a widely recognized turning point of the Gospel.
Mark 8:34	Take Up Your Cross The cost and shape of true discipleship.
Mark 9:24	I Believe; Help My Unbelief A father's honest cry that captures the struggle of faith.
Mark 9:35	Servant of All Greatness in the kingdom is measured by servanthood.
Mark 10:14	Let the Children Come The kingdom belongs to those who receive it like a child.
Mark 10:45	A Ransom for Many A key statement of Jesus' mission.
Mark 12:30–31	Love God and Neighbor The greatest commandment: no other commandment is greater than these.
Mark 15:39	Truly the Son of God The centurion's confession at the cross — a high point of Mark's identity theme.
Mark 16:6	He Is Risen The announcement at the empty tomb by a young man in a white robe: "He has risen."

KEY PEOPLE

The faces of Mark

The Gospel of Mark is full of real people who met Jesus — some who believed, some who doubted, some who were changed forever. Here are the ones worth knowing.

Jesus

The Son of God and suffering Servant who gives His life as a ransom for many.

John the Baptist

The forerunner who prepares the way and baptizes Jesus.

Peter

The bold, stumbling disciple whose confession is a turning point of Mark; an early tradition names him as the source behind the Gospel.

James and John

The brothers called from their nets, who ask for glory but must learn servanthood.

The Twelve

The disciples Jesus calls, teaches, and sends — often slow to understand.

The bleeding woman

The desperate woman whose faith reaches out and touches Jesus' garment.

Jairus

The synagogue ruler whose daughter Jesus raises from death.

The Syrophenician woman

The Greek, Syrophenician mother whose reply leads Jesus to heal her daughter.

Bartimaeus

The blind beggar who calls Jesus "son of David" and follows Him on the way.

The rich man

The man who ran to Jesus and knelt, but went away sorrowful because he had great possessions.

The Pharisees and scribes

Some of the religious leaders, whose opposition to Jesus hardens into a plot. Others, like the scribe in 12:34, are not far from God's Kingdom.

Judas Iscariot

The disciple who betrays Jesus to the authorities.

Pilate

The Roman authority who, wanting to satisfy the crowd, hands Jesus over to be crucified (15:15).

The centurion

The Roman soldier who, seeing Jesus die, confesses Him as the Son of God.

ALL 16 CHAPTERS · A CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER JOURNEY

The Library

Read any chapter in full in the World English Bible. The Observe, Interpret, and Apply steps are described on page 4 and built into each session.

THE SERVANT AT WORK

1	The Beginning of the Good News John the Baptist prepares the way, Jesus is baptized and tested, calls His first disciples, and begins to teach and heal in Galilee.	John the Baptist · Simon · Andrew · James · John
2	Authority to Forgive and Heal Jesus forgives and heals a paralyzed man, calls Levi, eats with sinners, and answers questions about fasting and the Sabbath.	Levi · The paralyzed man · The Pharisees
3	The Twelve and Growing Opposition Opposition hardens as Jesus heals on the Sabbath and appoints the twelve; He answers the charge that He casts out demons by Satan and names His true family.	The Twelve · The Pharisees and Herodians · Jesus' family
4	Parables of the Kingdom Jesus teaches in parables, among them the sower, the lamp, the growing seed, and the mustard seed, and then calms the storm.	The crowd · The disciples
5	Power over Demons, Disease, and Death Jesus frees a man from a legion of demons, heals a woman who touched His clothes, and raises Jairus's daughter.	The man among the tombs · Jairus · The woman with bleeding
6	Rejection, the Twelve Sent, and Feeding the Five Thousand Jesus is rejected in His hometown, sends out the twelve, feeds five thousand, and walks on the sea.	Herod · John the Baptist · The Twelve
7	Tradition and the Heart Jesus teaches that what comes out of a person defiles, heals the daughter of a Syrophenician woman, and heals a deaf man.	The Pharisees and scribes · The Syrophenician woman · A deaf man

THE ROAD TO THE CROSS

8	Bread, Blindness, and Peter's Confession Jesus feeds four thousand, warns about the leaven of the Pharisees, heals a blind man at Bethsaida, and Peter names Him the Christ.	Peter · The disciples · The blind man at Bethsaida
9	The Transfiguration and True Greatness Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James, and John, heals a boy with a spirit, and teaches that the first must be last of all.	Peter · James · John · Moses · Elijah

10 Discipleship on the Way to Jerusalem

Jesus teaches about marriage, children, and riches, foretells His death a third time, answers James and John, and heals Bartimaeus.

The rich man · James · John · Bartimaeus

CONFRONTATION IN JERUSALEM**11 The Triumphal Entry and the Temple**

Jesus enters Jerusalem to shouts of Hosanna, curses the fig tree, cleanses the temple, and is asked by what authority He acts.

The disciples · The chief priests · The scribes and elders

12 Questions and the Greatest Commandment

Jesus tells the parable of the vineyard, answers questions about taxes, the resurrection, and the greatest commandment, and notices a widow's gift.

The Pharisees and Herodians · The Sadducees · A scribe · The poor widow

13 The Coming of the End

On the Mount of Olives Jesus tells four disciples what is coming and calls them to watch.

Peter · James · John · Andrew

THE CROSS AND THE EMPTY TOMB**14 The Anointing, the Supper, and the Arrest**

A woman anoints Jesus, He shares the Passover with the twelve, prays in Gethsemane, is betrayed and arrested, and Peter denies Him.

The woman at Bethany · Judas Iscariot · Peter · The high priest

15 The Crucifixion

Jesus is handed over to Pilate, mocked, crucified, and buried; a centurion confesses Him as the Son of God.

Pilate · Barabbas · Simon of Cyrene · The centurion · Joseph of Arimathea

16 The Resurrection

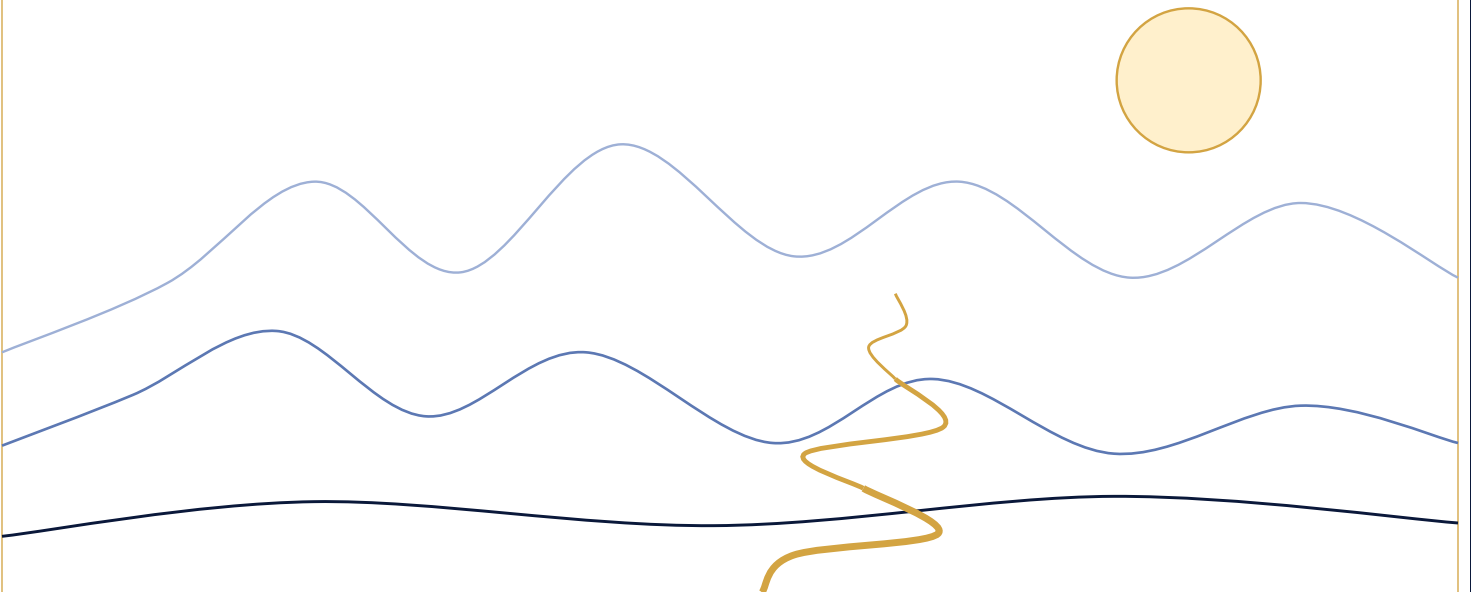
The women find the tomb empty, and a young man tells them that Jesus has risen and goes before them into Galilee.

Mary Magdalene · Mary the mother of James · Salome

PART THREE

Leader's Guide and Answer Guide

Group leader notes, a timed plan, an answer guide, and the recall answer key for every session.



LEADER'S GUIDE

Leading this study

You do not need to be a Bible teacher to lead this study. You need to have read the passage, to ask the questions, and to leave room for people to answer them.

Before you meet

- Read the session's chapters twice, once straight through and once slowly.
- Read that session's leader page. Note what to watch for.
- Decide which questions matter most for your group. You will rarely finish all of them, and that is fine.
- Pray for the people who will be in the room, by name.

In the room

- Read Scripture aloud before discussing it. Let the text speak first.
- Ask the question, then wait. Silence usually means people are thinking.
- When an answer drifts, ask, "Where do you see that in the passage?"
- Keep to the time plan loosely. Protect the closing minutes for reflection and prayer.

How to read a leader page

Group leader notes	How to open, the places where this session commonly goes off course, and where the session should land.
Timed plan	A suggested use of the hour, drawn to scale.
Answer guide	What the passage supports for each discussion question, with verse references, and a follow-up question to use if the group stalls.
Reflection notes	Reflection questions are personal and have no answer to check. Each has a short note on what it is for and how to lead it.
Recall answer key	The recall practice answers. Online, option order may differ: match by answer.

USING THE ANSWER GUIDE

The answer guide is there so you can lead with confidence. It is not a script to read aloud. Let the group do the finding; use the guide to confirm, to fill a gap, or to bring the conversation back to the text. Questions marked **PERSONAL** have no single right answer. For those, the guide gives what the passage offers and what a good answer tends to include.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 1 OF 8

The Servant Appears

Mark 1–2 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 9–12 · memory verse Mark 1:15

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “If you had one page to introduce Jesus to someone, where would you start?” Mark starts with a shout and a river.

WATCH FOR

1. Missing the pace. Mark says “immediately” over and over; read chapter 1 aloud in one go so the room feels it.
2. “Repent, and believe” being heard as scolding. Read it as Jesus’ first invitation — turn and trust.

PUSH TOWARD

The reflection question — what would following “immediately” mean — pairs with the “one thing”: name one thing to turn from and one way to follow more closely. Give a minute of quiet before anyone answers.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 109.

5	10	15	15	15
Open	Read chapter 1 aloud	Authority over sickness, demons, sin	The call and the good news	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 Why might Mark begin with action rather than a birth story?

Mark opens with the announcement of who Jesus is: “The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (1:1). He then moves straight from John’s preaching to Jesus’ baptism, the voice from the sky, “You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” and the wilderness (1:9–13). The word “immediately” runs through the chapter (1:10, 12, 18, 20, 23), and the pace does not slow. The text does not say why Mark chose this beginning. It shows what he puts first: Jesus’ identity and then Jesus at work.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does Mark tell us about Jesus in the first verse, and what does the voice add in 1:11?

2 What kinds of authority does Jesus show in these chapters?

Chapter 1 shows authority in His teaching: the crowd was astonished, “he taught them as having authority” (1:22). It shows authority over unclean spirits (1:27) and over sickness, as with the fever (1:31) and the leper (1:41–42). Chapter 2 adds authority to forgive sin and over the Sabbath. The scribes object, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (2:7). Jesus answers, “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (2:10), and later says “the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath” (2:28).

IF THE GROUP STALLS Which of these claims do the scribes object to, and what do they say in 2:7?

3 What does Jesus mean by “Repent, and believe in the Good News”?

Jesus announces “The time is fulfilled, and God’s Kingdom is at hand!” (1:15), and the response He asks for comes in two parts: “Repent, and believe in the Good News.” To repent is to turn; John preached “the baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins” (1:4). To believe is to trust the Good News that the kingdom has come near in Jesus. In 2:17 He says whom He came for: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 1:15, what has arrived, and what two things does Jesus ask people to do?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 What would it mean to follow Jesus “immediately,” as the first disciples did?

This asks what quick obedience looks like in an ordinary week. Point to 1:18 and 1:20, where the fishermen leave their nets and their boat, then let each person name one small step they have been putting off.

2 Where do you need to experience Jesus’ authority right now?

Invite honest answers about a real need rather than a polished one. Do not press anyone to share. The friends in 2:3–5 who carried the paralytic show that people can bring others to Jesus.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 How does Mark describe Jesus in the very first verse? (1:1)

B The Christ, the Son of God

Mark states his purpose up front: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

2 What is Jesus' first message in Mark? (1:15)

D The kingdom is near; repent and believe

The kingdom has come near — a call to repent and believe the good news.

3 How do the first disciples respond to Jesus' call by the sea? (1:18, 20)

Simon and Andrew immediately leave their nets, and James and John leave their father in the boat, to follow Him.

4 Why does Jesus say He has come, when challenged for eating with sinners? (2:17)

The sick need a physician — He came to call sinners, not the righteous.

Memory verse: Mark 1:15, printed on page 9.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 2 OF 8

Authority and Opposition

Mark 3–4 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 13–16 · memory verse Mark 4:41

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: "When has something good in your life met unexpected resistance?"

WATCH FOR

1. The sower parable becoming a sorting of other people. Keep the reflection question personal: what kind of soil is my heart right now?
2. Skipping the storm because the parables ate the time. The storm is where the session's question is asked aloud — "Who then is this?" — and it's the memory verse.
3. Mark 3:28–30. Some readers fear they have committed the sin Jesus names here. In context, scribes call the work of the Spirit in Jesus the work of an unclean spirit (3:22, 3:30). The passage does not describe someone who is troubled and wants to be right with God. Say this plainly, do not debate who might qualify, and offer to talk privately with anyone who is distressed.
4. Mark 4:11–12 is hard. Jesus quotes Isaiah, and faithful readers differ on how to read it. Stay with its question about hearing, and do not use it to judge anyone's faith.

PUSH TOWARD

The "one thing" is to name a thorn crowding out the word and take a step to clear it. Ask people to write the thorn privately, then the step.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 109.

5	10	15	15	15
Open	The Twelve and the opposition	Sower and soils	The storm	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What does the parable of the sower teach about receiving God's word?

Jesus says plainly what is being sown: "The farmer sows the word" (4:14). The soils are four ways of hearing it. The word is taken away from the ones by the road (4:15), received with joy but without root by the rocky ground (4:16–17), choked by the cares of the age and the deceitfulness of riches among the thorns (4:18–19), and received by the good ground, those who "hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit" (4:20). The seed is the same in every case, and the difference lies in how it is received.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What happens to the seed in each of the four places in 4:3–8?

2 Why do you think opposition to Jesus grows so quickly?

Opposition begins to harden in chapter 3. After Jesus heals a withered hand on the Sabbath, the Pharisees “conspired with the Herodians against him” (3:6). The scribes from Jerusalem say, “He has Beelzebul” (3:22), and His friends say He is out of His mind (3:21). Mark records that Jesus was “grieved at the hardening of their hearts” (3:5). The text shows opposition from those who watch Him closely and from those who are close to Him, and it gives the reasons in their own words.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What had Jesus just done in 3:1–5, and how did the people watching respond?

3 What does calming the storm reveal about who Jesus is?

The disciples wake Jesus with a complaint: “don’t you care that we are dying?” (4:38). He rebukes the wind and says to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” (4:39), and there is a great calm. His question to them in 4:40 shows that He expected faith. The disciples are left asking “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (4:41). Mark leaves that question for the reader to answer. Many readers hear in it the God of the Psalms who calms the sea.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What do the disciples say to Jesus in 4:38, and what do they say to each other in 4:41?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 What kind of “soil” is your heart for God’s word right now?

This asks for honest self-examination, so let people answer privately first. Point to 4:19 and keep the tone one of invitation. Avoid turning the soils into a diagnosis of anyone in the room. Mark 3:28–30 is not a trap for anxious believers. Someone who fears they have done wrong and wants to turn to God is not the person the passage describes.

2 Where do you need to trust Jesus’ authority over a “storm”?

Invite one storm, and let people name it as plainly or as generally as they choose. The disciples’ cry in 4:38 is a model, since they bring their fear to Jesus. Do not offer quick fixes.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 After Jesus calms the storm, what do the disciples ask? (4:41)

A Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

His authority over nature presses Mark's central question of identity.

3 Why does opposition to Jesus begin to harden in chapter 3? (3:6)

After He heals on the Sabbath, the Pharisees plot with the Herodians to destroy Him.

Memory verse: Mark 4:41, printed on page 13.

2 In the parable of the sower, what is the seed sown? (4:14)

C The word

The sower sows the word; the soils are how hearts receive it.

4 What does the parable of the mustard seed teach about the kingdom? (4:30–32)

It starts tiny but grows into a plant greater than all the herbs — small beginnings, vast result.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 3 OF 8

Power and Compassion

Mark 5–6 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 17–20 · memory verse Mark 6:34

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “Describe a time someone noticed you when you felt invisible.” The bleeding woman in chapter 5 did not expect to be noticed.

WATCH FOR

1. Treating the healings as spectacle. The discussion question asks what they reveal about Jesus' heart; keep the woman, Jairus's daughter, and the man among the tombs as people, not cases.
2. The rejection in His hometown being glossed. Ask why the people who knew Him best received Him least.
3. Mark 5 describes a man in severe distress, including self-injury (5:5). Do not equate mental illness or sickness with demonization. Jesus says “your faith has made you well” to one woman (5:34). It is not a rule that sickness or an unanswered prayer means someone lacked faith.
4. Mark 6:14–29 tells of John's execution. Name it first, and let anyone skip the detail.

PUSH TOWARD

“sheep without a shepherd” (6:34) is the memory verse and the reflection question. Who around each person is un-shepherded? The “one thing”: show Christ's compassion to one overlooked person this week.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 109.

5	20	10	10	15
Open	Chapter 5 healings	The hometown rejection and the Twelve sent	Feeding the crowd	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What do the healings in chapter 5 reveal about Jesus' heart?

Jesus crosses the sea to meet a man no one could bind (5:3–4). Afterward he is “in his right mind” (5:15), and Jesus sends him home to tell what “the Lord has done for you, and how he had mercy on you” (5:19). He stops for the woman who touched His clothes, finds her in the crowd, and calls her “Daughter” (5:34). He tells Jairus, “Don't be afraid, only believe” (5:36), then takes the girl by the hand (5:41). In each story Jesus gives personal attention to one person in need: a man no one could restrain, a woman who had suffered twelve years, and a ruler's dying daughter.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Who is helped in each story, and what does Jesus say or do for each?

2 Why is Jesus rejected in His hometown?

The people of His hometown are first astonished at His teaching (6:2). Then they ask, “Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary” (6:3), and Mark says, “They were offended at him.” Jesus says, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country” (6:4). He heals a few sick people and “marveled because of their unbelief” (6:6). The text shows that the people who knew Him best took offense at Him. It gives no other reason.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What did the people say about Jesus before they took offense?

3 What does the feeding of the five thousand show about Jesus?

When Jesus sees the crowd, “he had compassion on them” (6:34) because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and He begins to teach. When evening comes, the disciples want to send the people away, and Jesus answers, “You give them something to eat” (6:37). He blesses and breaks the loaves, all eat and are filled, and twelve baskets of pieces are left (6:41–43). The story shows His compassion first, then His provision, and it shows that He involves His disciples in both.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What did the disciples want to do with the crowd, and what did Jesus ask them to do instead?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where do you need to reach out to Jesus in bold faith?

The woman in 5:27–28 acts before anyone invites her. Let people name a need they have hesitated to bring to Jesus, and do not ask anyone to share more than they offer.

2 Who are the “sheep without a shepherd” around you?

This turns the group outward. In 6:34 compassion comes first and teaching follows. Help each person name one overlooked person and one small act, and avoid turning the answers into a list of problems to fix.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 What does Jesus say has made the woman well? (5:34)

D Her faith

“your faith has made you well” — desperate faith reaches out and Jesus responds personally.

3 What does Jesus do for Jairus's daughter? (5:41–42)

He takes her hand, says “Talitha cumi,” and raises her from death — power over death itself.

2 Seeing the great crowd, what moves Jesus to begin teaching them? (6:34)

B Compassion — they were like sheep without a shepherd

Compassion drives Jesus' mighty works — He shepherds the shepherdless.

4 How is Jesus received in His hometown? (6:3–6)

They take offense at Him; He marvels at their unbelief and can do little there.

Memory verse: Mark 6:34, printed on page 17.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 4 OF 8

Who Is Jesus?

Mark 7–8 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 21–24 · memory verse Mark 8:29

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “What’s a habit you keep that has lost its meaning?” It sets up the question of tradition without pointing at anyone.

WATCH FOR

1. The clean/unclean debate (7:1–23) turning into a discussion of food laws. Jesus’ point is what defiles — the heart — and that’s the first discussion question.
2. Missing the shape Mark builds: the Bethsaida blind man (8:22–26) before the confession and Bartimaeus (10:46–52) after it. The second discussion question asks why; let the group weigh whether the disciples’ eyes are being opened slowly too.
3. Mark 7:24–30. The word “dogs” (7:27) is hard to read. Readers differ on what Jesus meant and how the woman’s answer fits. Do not explain it away or use it to belittle anyone. Note the outcome: He heals her daughter (7:29).
4. Blindness at Bethsaida is a literal healing. Many readers also see a picture of the disciples’ sight, but Mark does not say so, and physical blindness is never a spiritual failing.

PUSH TOWARD

“You are the Christ” (8:29). Ask the reflection question directly — who do you say Jesus is, and does your life confess it — and give the “one thing”: one honest confession this week, in word or action.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 109.

5	15	10	15	15
Open	What defiles	Grace to Gentiles	Peter’s confession	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What does Jesus teach about what truly defiles a person?

Jesus says, “the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man” (7:15). He sets this against the washings of the elders, telling the Pharisees, “you set aside the commandment of God, and hold tightly to the tradition of men” (7:8). In 7:21–22 He names what comes from within, from evil thoughts to pride and foolishness, and says it comes “out of the hearts of men.” In the WEB, the closing phrase of 7:19 reads “making all foods clean.” Translators differ on whether this is Jesus’ words or Mark’s comment, and Christians read its bearing on the food laws in different ways. The point of the passage is the heart.

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 7:21–22, where does Jesus say the things that defile come from?

2 How might the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (8:22–26), just before Peter’s confession, shape how we read it?

The text does not state why Mark arranged the stories this way. At Bethsaida the man’s sight comes in two stages. First he says, “I see men; for I see them like trees walking” (8:24), and then he sees everyone clearly (8:25). Just before this, Jesus asks the disciples about the baskets of leftovers. They answer only “Twelve” (8:19) and “Seven” (8:20), and He asks, “Don’t you understand yet?” (8:21). After the confession in 8:29, Peter rebukes Jesus in 8:32. Bartimaeus comes later, in 10:46–52. Many readers see the disciples’ understanding growing in stages, and the text invites that reading without stating it.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does Jesus ask the disciples in 8:17–21, and how do they answer?

3 What does it mean to confess Jesus as the Christ?

Jesus asks, “But who do you say that I am?” (8:29), and Peter answers, “You are the Christ.” “Christ” means the Anointed One, the Messiah. Jesus then tells them to tell no one (8:30) and begins to teach that the Son of Man must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise again (8:31). Peter rebukes Him, and Jesus says Peter has in mind “not the things of God, but the things of men” (8:33). To confess Jesus as the Christ is to take Him as He is, including the cross.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does Peter say in 8:29, and what does Jesus begin to teach in 8:31?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where might your faith be more tradition than heart?

Jesus quotes Isaiah in 7:6: “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” Keep the question about the person’s own habits and not about other people. Give silence and require no answers.

2 Who do you say Jesus is — and does your life confess it?

This mirrors the question Jesus asks in 8:29. Invite a short answer in each person's own words, and leave room for those who are still working it out.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 What does Jesus say truly defiles a person? (7:15, 21)**C What comes out of the heart**

Defilement is from within — the heart — not from external, ceremonial things.

2 At Caesarea Philippi, what does Peter confess? (8:29)**A You are the Christ**

Peter's confession is a widely recognized turning point of Mark — and Jesus at once speaks of the cross.

3 How do many readers understand the two-stage healing at Bethsaida? (8:22–26)

Many readers see a picture of the disciples' gradual, partial sight, though Mark does not say so.

4 What does Jesus do for the Syrophoenician woman's daughter, and why? (7:29)

He heals her daughter because of her reply, "Yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs" — grace reaching a Greek, Syrophoenician woman (7:26–29).

Memory verse: Mark 8:29, printed on page 21.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 5 OF 8

The Way of the Cross

Mark 9–10 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 25–28 · memory verse Mark 10:45

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “Who is the greatest person you know — and what makes them great?” Hold the answers; Jesus will redefine the word.

WATCH FOR

1. The Transfiguration becoming a debate about Moses and Elijah. The question asks what it reveals and to whom — Jesus shown to three, then a walk back down toward a cross.
2. “a ransom for many” (10:45) being rushed. It’s the memory verse and a key statement of Jesus’ mission in Mark; read it twice.
3. Mark 9:42–50 uses sharp pictures. Jesus is not telling anyone to injure their body. Hand, foot and eye are strong figures of speech: take sin, and causing others to stumble, with full seriousness. Do not use it to frighten anyone about hell. If anyone seems distressed or mentions harming themselves, speak with them privately and help them reach a pastor or counselor, or call or text 988 in the U.S.
4. Mark 10:2–12 is painful for many. Jesus answers a test question and affirms God’s purpose for marriage. Do not use it to judge anyone who is divorced, remarried, or who left an abusive marriage. This study does not settle how churches apply it, and faithful Christians differ. Safety comes first, and anyone in an unsafe home should be helped toward safety and a pastor or counselor.
5. Mark 10:17–31. Jesus looks at this one man with love and tells him to sell what he has (10:21). Readers differ on whether this is a rule for everyone. Do not turn it into a wealth test or shame anyone’s money situation.
6. Taking up the cross (8:34) never means staying in abuse or accepting harm from others.
7. Mark 9:14–29. Jesus meets the father’s honest “Help my unbelief!” (9:24) with help. Do not use this story to suggest that an unanswered prayer means someone lacked faith, or that seizures, deafness, or any disability point to a demon, and offer a private word to anyone for whom the story hurts.

PUSH TOWARD

The reflection question — where is Jesus calling you to serve instead of be served — leads to the “one thing”: one concrete act of humble service, expecting nothing back.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 109.

5	10	20	10	15
Open	Transfiguration	The passion predictions and greatness	The ransom	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What does the Transfiguration reveal, and to whom?

Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain privately, and He is “changed into another form in front of them” (9:2). Elijah and Moses appear and talk with Him (9:4). A cloud comes and a voice says, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him” (9:7). It is shown to the three, and Jesus tells them to tell no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead (9:9). The command to listen comes after Jesus has begun to teach about His suffering (8:31), and the disciples do not yet understand (9:10).

IF THE GROUP STALLS Who goes up the mountain with Jesus, and who hears the voice?

2 How does Jesus redefine greatness for His disciples?

The disciples had been arguing on the road about who was greatest (9:33–34). Jesus sits down and says, “If any man wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all” (9:35), and He puts a child among them. James and John later ask for places at His right and left (10:35–37). Jesus tells them that rulers lord it over others, and then says, “whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant” (10:43). Greatness in His kingdom is measured by service.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What are the disciples after in 9:33–34 and in 10:35–37?

3 What does it mean that Jesus gives His life “as a ransom for many”?

Jesus says the Son of Man came “not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (10:45). A ransom is the price paid to set someone free. He has just told the twelve that He will be condemned, mocked, killed, and rise on the third day (10:33–34). Faithful traditions describe how the ransom works in different ways. The text itself says that Jesus gives His life for many.

IF THE GROUP STALLS In 10:33–34 what will happen to the Son of Man, and what does 10:45 say it is for?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where is Jesus calling you to serve instead of to be served?

Keep this concrete. Point to 10:45 and let each person name one place, at home, at work, or at church, where serving would cost something. Nobody should have to disclose more than they choose.

2 What would taking up your cross look like this week?

Jesus gives the call in 8:34: “let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Keep the answers about obedience and its cost, and do not let the discussion become a comparison of who has suffered most. Taking up a cross means costly obedience to Jesus. It never means staying in abuse or accepting harm from others.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 What does Jesus say is the path to being first? (9:35)

C Being last of all and servant of all
Greatness in the kingdom is servanthood —
Jesus inverts the world's order.

3 What happens at the Transfiguration, and what does the voice from the cloud say? (9:2–7)

Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James, and John; the voice says, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.”

2 Why did the Son of Man come, according to Mark 10:45?

A To serve and give His life as a ransom for many

A key statement of Jesus' mission: a Servant who gives His life as a ransom.

4 How does blind Bartimaeus respond after Jesus heals him? (10:52)

He receives his sight and follows Jesus “on the way” — a model of discipleship.

Memory verse: Mark 10:45, printed on page 25.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 6 OF 8

Confrontation in Jerusalem

Mark 11–12 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 29–32 · memory verse Mark 12:30–31

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: "When has a routine you loved gone hollow without your noticing?"

WATCH FOR

1. The temple cleansing read as anger for its own sake. Pair it with the fig tree on either side — many readers see fruitlessness, and a house meant for all nations, behind His anger. Jesus speaks as a Jew in the line of the prophets. Do not let it become a charge against Jews or Judaism, or only a complaint about buying and selling.
2. The trap questions (taxes, resurrection) becoming trivia. Watch how Jesus answers each one; that's the second discussion question.
3. Jesus' answer about Caesar is short and has been used to support very different views of government. Do not use it to settle a political argument.

PUSH TOWARD

The two great commandments (12:30–31) gather the session. The reflection question names the neighbor; the "one thing": choose one person and love them concretely this week, as yourself.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 109.

5	15	15	10	15
Open	Entry, fig tree, temple	The traps	The greatest commandment	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What is Jesus saying by cleansing the temple?

Jesus enters the temple, throws out those who sell and buy, and overturns the tables (11:15). He explains from Scripture: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations" (11:17), and then says, "you have made it a den of robbers." The chief priests and scribes then look for a way to destroy Him (11:18). Mark places the cursing of the fig tree around this scene (11:12–14, 20–21), and many readers see the two as one picture of worship that bears no fruit. Jesus speaks as a Jew in the line of the prophets, and the text does not say the problem was buying and selling alone.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does Jesus say the temple was meant to be, and for whom?

2 How does Jesus handle the questions meant to trap Him?

Mark says they sent men “that they might trap him with words” (12:13). Jesus asks for a denarius and asks whose image is on it (12:15–16). Their own answer, “Caesar’s,” turns the trap back on them, because the coin already carries Caesar’s image. Then He says, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (12:17), and they marvel. Readers differ on what the saying means for how Christians relate to government. When the Sadducees ask about the resurrection, He answers that they are “mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God” (12:24). In each case He goes to the heart of the matter, and His opponents cannot catch Him.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does Jesus ask them to bring Him in 12:15–16, and what does that do to their question?

3 How do the two great commandments reframe everything else?

The scribe asks which commandment is greatest (12:28). Jesus gives the call to love God with all heart, soul, mind, and strength (12:30), and then says the second is like it: love your neighbor as yourself (12:31). He adds, “There is no other commandment greater than these.” The scribe agrees that loving God and neighbor “is more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices” (12:33), and Jesus tells him, “You are not far from God’s Kingdom” (12:34). These two commandments shape how everything else is read.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What are the two commandments in 12:30–31, and what does the scribe say they are worth in 12:33?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where might your worship have become fruitless routine?

Link this to 11:17 and 12:33. Offer it as an invitation to renew worship and not as an accusation. Give the group silence before anyone speaks.

2 Who is the neighbor God is calling you to love this week?

The measure in 12:31 is “as yourself.” Ask for one named person and one concrete act, and let people keep the name to themselves if they prefer.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 What does Jesus call the temple as He cleanses it? (11:17)</p> <p>D A house of prayer for all the nations, which they made a den of robbers</p> <p>He speaks of a house of prayer for all the nations, and the quotation echoes Isaiah and Jeremiah.</p> | <p>2 What does Jesus name as the greatest commandment? (12:30)</p> <p>B Love the Lord your God with all you are</p> <p>Love God fully, and your neighbor as yourself — the whole Law gathered into love.</p> |
| <p>3 How does Jesus respond to the questions meant to trap Him? (12:13–34)</p> <p>With authority and wisdom — “Render to Caesar... and to God the things that are God’s.”</p> | <p>4 What does Jesus notice about the widow’s offering? (12:43–44)</p> <p>She gave more than all — out of her poverty, everything she had — God measures the heart. Some read 12:40–44 as a lament over her exploitation.</p> |

Memory verse: Mark 12:30–31, printed on page 29.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 7 OF 8

Watch and Stay Alert

Mark 13–14 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 33–36 · memory verse Mark 13:31

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: “What helps you stay awake when you’re tired?” Literal answers are fine; the chapter will turn the question.

WATCH FOR

1. Chapter 13 pulling the group into end-times timelines. Jesus’ instruction is “watch”; keep the first discussion question about what watching means.
2. Peter’s denial being judged from a distance. The reflection question asks where we have been weaker than expected; go there gently.
3. Chapter 13 can raise fear. Jesus’ word is “watch” and “keep alert” (13:33–37), the picture of a household staying faithful, not a call to live in dread. No one knows the day (13:32). Do not use the chapter to judge anyone’s readiness, and offer to talk privately with anyone who is anxious.
4. The Supper (14:22–25). Christians understand the bread and cup in different ways. Read Mark’s words and do not settle the debate here.

PUSH TOWARD

The woman’s anointing is the still center of the chapter — extravagant devotion while others calculate. The “one thing” is a daily, unhurried time of prayer and Scripture this week; ask each person to name when it will happen.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 109.

5	15	15	10	15
Open	Watch and stay alert	The anointing and the supper	Gethsemane and denial	Reflection and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 What does Jesus mean by “watch” and “keep alert”?

Jesus says, “Watch, keep alert, and pray; for you don’t know when the time is” (13:33). He tells of a man who leaves his servants in charge and commands the doorkeeper to keep watch (13:34), so that “coming suddenly he might find you sleeping” (13:36). No one knows the day or the hour (13:32), and Jesus warns against being led astray (13:5, 21). He closes with “What I tell you, I tell all: Watch” (13:37). Faithful readers differ on some details of this chapter. All can see its main charge to stay awake and keep alert.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What does Jesus say no one knows in 13:32, and what does He tell everyone to do in 13:37?

2 What makes the woman's anointing so significant?

A woman breaks an alabaster jar of costly nard and pours it over His head (14:3). Some say it was wasted and could have been given to the poor (14:4–5). Jesus answers, “She has done what she could” (14:8), and says she has anointed His body beforehand for burial. He adds that “wherever this Good News may be preached throughout the whole world, that which this woman has done will also be spoken of for a memorial of her” (14:9). Mark does not name her. Her act is set beside Judas going to the chief priests in 14:10.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What do the onlookers say in 14:4–5, and how does Jesus answer in 14:6–8?

3 What leads Peter from confidence to denial?

Peter says, “Although all will be offended, yet I will not,” and Jesus tells him he will deny Him three times (14:30). In Gethsemane Jesus tells him to watch and pray and says, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (14:38). Peter sleeps. After the arrest, everyone flees (14:50), and Peter follows at a distance (14:54). In the courtyard he denies Jesus three times, remembers the word of Jesus, and weeps (14:66–72). The text shows self-confidence (14:29), sleep when he was told to pray (14:37), and a denial under questioning (14:66–72), which most readers connect with fear.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What did Jesus tell Peter to do in 14:37–38, and what did Peter do?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 What would “staying awake” spiritually look like for you?

Anchor this in 13:37 and 14:38. Ask for a daily practice small enough to keep, and tie it to the “one thing to live out.”

2 Where have you, like Peter, been weaker than you expected?

This invites honest talk about failure, so handle it gently. Peter's story carries the grace in it, since Jesus says in 14:28 that He will go before them into Galilee, and in 16:7 Peter is named. Do not ask anyone to share.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 What does Jesus say will never pass away? (13:31)

A His words

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

3 What is significant about the woman who anoints Jesus? (14:8–9)

Her extravagant act prepares Him for burial; wherever the Good News is preached, what she did will be told in memory of her.

2 In Gethsemane, what does Jesus pray? (14:36)

C “not what I desire, but what you desire”

He surrenders to the Father’s will — “Abba, Father... not what I desire, but what you desire.”

4 How does Peter go from confidence to failure that night? (14:29–31, 66–72)

He denies Jesus three times, then weeps — Mark’s honest portrait of a stumbling disciple.

Memory verse: Mark 13:31, printed on page 33.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 8 OF 8

The Cross and the Empty Tomb

Mark 15–16 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 37–40 · memory verse Mark 16:6

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Open with: "What's one thing from these eight sessions you don't want to forget?"
Let everyone answer.

WATCH FOR

1. Rushing the cross. Read Mark 15 slowly; the first discussion question — why a Roman soldier is the one who confesses — needs the whole scene in view.
2. The ending at 16:8 worrying the group. Say plainly that some of the earliest manuscripts end at 16:8, and that verses 9–20 appear in most later manuscripts and in most Bibles; at 16:8 the response is left to the reader.
3. Mark 16:17–18, in the longer ending, speaks of serpents and poison. Do not let the group treat them as a test of faith.
4. Mark 15 describes flogging and crucifixion. Tell the group before reading, and let anyone listen without following along. The cry in 15:34 opens Psalm 22, which many readers hear as a sufferer who still speaks to God.
5. Jesus, His disciples and the crowds are Jewish, and the Romans carried out the crucifixion. Do not let 15:11–14 or the chief priests become a charge against Jews today.

PUSH TOWARD

"He has risen" (16:6) and the reflection question — who can you tell. The "one thing": share the heart of Mark's good news with one person this week. Close by praying for each name.

SIXTY MINUTES

Care agreements and help lines: page 109.

5	20	10	10	15
Open	The cross	The tomb	Who can you tell	What we carry from Mark, and prayer

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

1 Why is it a Roman soldier who confesses Jesus at the cross?

Mark names him a centurion, an officer in the Roman army. He “stood by opposite him” (15:39), saw how Jesus died, and said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” Mark does not say why the confession comes from him. The disciples have fled (14:50), and just before this, passersby mock Him over the temple (15:29–30), and the chief priests and scribes say, “He saved others. He can’t save himself” (15:31). Since the centurion was a Roman officer, most readers take him to be a Gentile. His words return to the opening of the Gospel, where Jesus is called the Son of God (1:1).

IF THE GROUP STALLS What had the passersby and the chief priests just said to Jesus in 15:29–32?

2 What stands out in Mark’s account of Jesus’ death? PERSONAL

There is no single right answer. The text offers these details: Jesus gives Pilate almost no answer (15:2, 5) and is mocked as King of the Jews (15:18). There is darkness over the whole land (15:33). His last words are “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (15:34), and the veil of the temple is torn in two (15:38). The mockers say, “He saved others. He can’t save himself” (15:31), and many readers notice that they say more than they know. Let each person say what caught their attention.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Which detail in chapter 15 is hardest to read, and why?

3 How does the empty tomb call for a response from us?

The women find the stone rolled back and a young man in a white robe, who says, “He has risen. He is not here” (16:6). He gives them a task: “go, tell his disciples and Peter” (16:7), and says Jesus goes before them into Galilee. Verse 8 says they fled and “said nothing to anyone,” for they were afraid. Some of the earliest manuscripts end at 16:8, and verses 9–20 appear in most later manuscripts, so the group will meet both. Either way, the news of the empty tomb calls for a response.

IF THE GROUP STALLS What are the women told to do in 16:7, and what do they do in 16:8?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 What does the cross of Jesus mean for you personally?

This is the most personal question in the study. Give silence, invite a sentence of response, and do not press. Jesus’ own words about His death are in 10:45 and 14:24.

2 At the tomb the women are told to go and tell — who can you tell?

The women are told to go and tell (16:7), and then they flee and say nothing (16:8). Say honestly that fear is part of the story. Invite one person and one sentence, and let anyone who prefers keep the name private. Close by praying for the names that are shared and for those held silently.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- 1** Who confesses Jesus as the Son of God at the cross? (15:39)
- B** A Roman centurion
- A Roman soldier, seeing how Jesus died, makes a high point of Mark's confession theme.

- 3** What unusual thing happens to the temple curtain when Jesus dies? (15:38)
- It is torn in two from top to bottom (15:38) — commonly read as access to God opened, or as judgment on the temple.

Memory verse: Mark 16:6, printed on page 37.

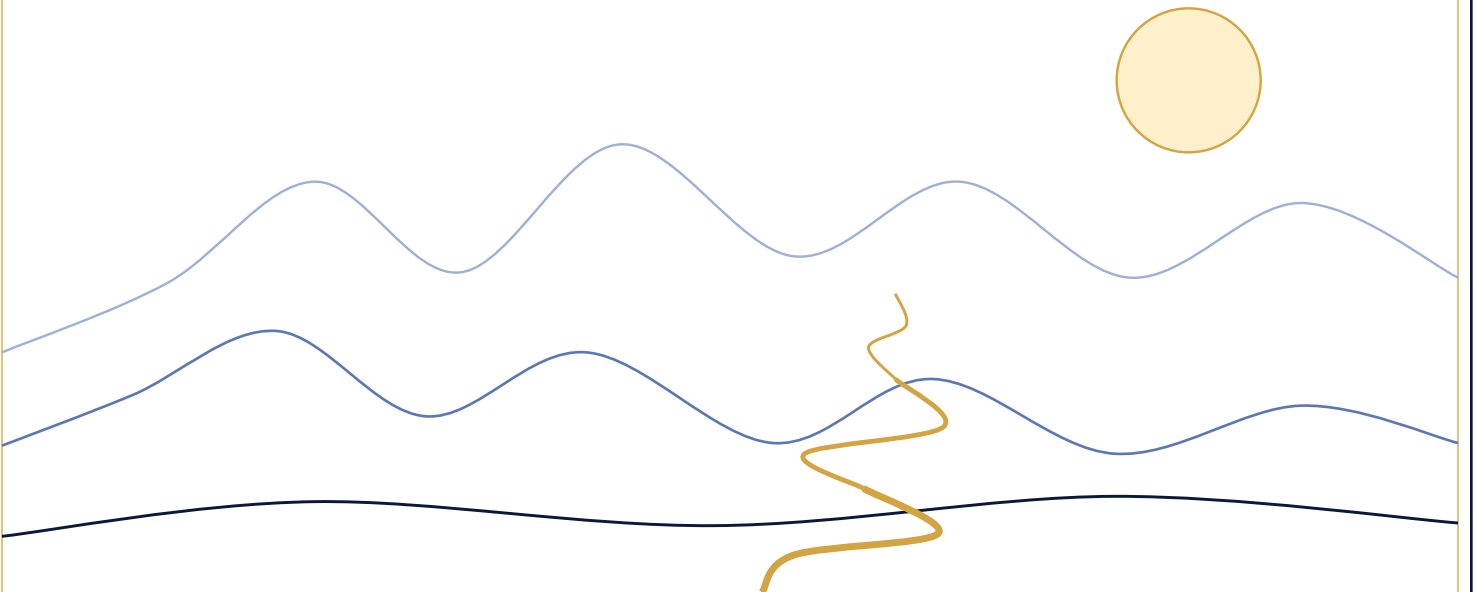
- 2** What does the young man at the tomb announce? (16:6)
- D** He has risen; He is not here
- "He has risen." — the empty tomb and the young man's word turn the story outward.

- 4** If Mark ends at 16:8, what response does it call for? (16:6–8)
- The women are told to go and tell (16:7) but flee in fear and say nothing (16:8), leaving the reader to respond.

PART FOUR

The Gospel of Mark

The complete text in the World English Bible, arranged by session.



WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

The Gospel of Mark

The complete text, arranged by session. Verse numbers are small and raised; each session's reading begins with a tinted heading.

SESSION 1 READING

Mark 1–2 The Servant Appears · session on page 9

MARK 1

The Beginning of the Good News

¹The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophets,

*“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you:*

³the voice of one crying in the wilderness,

‘Make ready the way of the Lord!

Make his paths straight!’ ”

⁴John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching the baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins. ⁵All the country of Judea and all those of Jerusalem went out to him. They were baptized by him in the Jordan river, confessing their sins. ⁶John was clothed with camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and loosen. ⁸I baptized you in water, but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit.”

⁹In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

¹⁰Immediately coming up from the water, he saw the heavens parting, and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹A voice came out of the sky, “You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

¹²Immediately the Spirit drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was there in the wilderness forty days tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals; and the angels were serving him.

¹⁴Now after John was taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Good News of God's Kingdom, ¹⁵and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and God's Kingdom is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Good News.”

¹⁶Passing along by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you into fishers for men.”

¹⁸Immediately they left their nets, and followed him. ¹⁹Going on a little further from there, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets.

²⁰Immediately he called them, and they left their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him. ²¹They went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. ²²They were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, ²⁴saying, “Ha! What do we have to do with you, Jesus, you Nazarene? Have you come to destroy us? I know you who you are: the Holy One of God!”

²⁵Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!”

²⁶The unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching? For with

authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!" ²⁸The report of him went out immediately everywhere into all the region of Galilee and its surrounding area.

²⁹Immediately, when they had come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. ³¹He came and took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her immediately, and she served them. ³²At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to him all who were sick, and those who were possessed by demons. ³³All the city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. He didn't allow the demons to speak, because they knew him.

³⁵Early in the morning, while it was still dark, he rose up and went out, and departed into a deserted place, and prayed there. ³⁶Simon and those who were with him searched for him. ³⁷They found him and told him, "Everyone is looking for you."

³⁸He said to them, "Let's go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because I came out for this reason." ³⁹He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons.

⁴⁰A leper came to him, begging him, kneeling down to him, and saying to him, "If you want to, you can make me clean."

⁴¹Being moved with compassion, he stretched out his hand, and touched him, and said to him, "I want to. Be made clean." ⁴²When he had said this, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean. ⁴³He strictly warned him, and immediately sent him out, ⁴⁴and said to him, "See you say nothing to anybody, but go show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."

⁴⁵But he went out, and began to proclaim it much, and to spread about the matter, so that Jesus could no more openly enter into a city, but was outside in desert places. People came to him from everywhere.

MARK 2

Authority to Forgive and Heal

¹When he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was heard that he was in the house.

²Immediately many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even around the door; and he spoke the word to them. ³Four people came, carrying a paralytic to him. ⁴When they could not come near to him for the crowd, they removed the roof where he was. When they had broken it up, they let down the mat that the paralytic was lying on.

⁵Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

⁶But there were some of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷"Why does this man speak blasphemies like that? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

⁸Immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you reason these things in your hearts?"

⁹Which is easier, to tell the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Arise, and take up your bed, and walk?' ¹⁰But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹"I tell you, arise, take up your mat, and go to your house."

¹²He arose, and immediately took up the mat, and went out in front of them all; so that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

¹³He went out again by the seaside. All the multitude came to him, and he taught them. ¹⁴As he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he arose and followed him.

¹⁵He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many, and they followed him. ¹⁶The scribes and the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why is it that he eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹⁷When Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

¹⁸John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, and they came and asked him, “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples don’t fast?”

¹⁹Jesus said to them, “Can the groomsmen fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they can’t fast. ²⁰But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. ²¹No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, or else the patch shrinks and the new tears away from the old, and a worse hole is made.

²²No one puts new wine into old wineskins, or else

the new wine will burst the skins, and the wine pours out, and the skins will be destroyed; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins.”

²³He was going on the Sabbath day through the grain fields, and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of grain. ²⁴The Pharisees said to him, “Behold, why do they do that which is not lawful on the Sabbath day?”

²⁵He said to them, “Did you never read what David did, when he had need, and was hungry—he, and those who were with him? ²⁶How he entered into God’s house at the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the show bread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and gave also to those who were with him?” ²⁷He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸Therefore the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

SESSION 2 READING

Mark 3–4 Authority and Opposition · session on page 13

MARK 3

The Twelve and Growing Opposition

¹He entered again into the synagogue, and there was a man there who had his hand withered. ²They watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day, that they might accuse him. ³He said to the man who had his hand withered, “Stand up.” ⁴He said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? To save a life, or to kill?” But they were silent. ⁵When he had looked around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their hearts, he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored as healthy as the other. ⁶The Pharisees went out, and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

⁷Jesus withdrew to the sea with his disciples, and a great multitude followed him from Galilee, from Judea, ⁸from Jerusalem, from Idumaea, beyond the Jordan, and those from around Tyre and Sidon. A great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came to him. ⁹He spoke to his disciples that a little

boat should stay near him because of the crowd, so that they wouldn’t press on him. ¹⁰For he had healed many, so that as many as had diseases pressed on him that they might touch him. ¹¹The unclean spirits, whenever they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, “You are the Son of God!” ¹²He sternly warned them that they should not make him known.

¹³He went up into the mountain, and called to himself those whom he wanted, and they went to him. ¹⁴He appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them out to preach, ¹⁵and to have authority to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: ¹⁶Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); ¹⁷James the son of Zebedee; and John, the brother of James, (whom he called Boanerges, which means, Sons of Thunder); ¹⁸Andrew; Philip; Bartholomew; Matthew; Thomas; James, the son of Alphaeus; Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot; ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Then he came into a house. ²⁰The multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. ²¹When his friends heard it, they went out to

seize him; for they said, “He is insane.” ²²The scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul,” and, “By the prince of the demons he casts out the demons.”

²³He summoned them, and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶If Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he can’t stand, but has an end. ²⁷But no one can enter into the house of the strong man to plunder unless he first binds the strong man; then he will plunder his house. ²⁸Most certainly I tell you, all sins of the descendants of man will be forgiven, including their blasphemies with which they may blaspheme; ²⁹but whoever may blaspheme against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation.” ³⁰—because they said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

³¹His mother and his brothers came, and standing outside, they sent to him, calling him. ³²A multitude was sitting around him, and they told him, “Behold, your mother, your brothers, and your sisters are outside looking for you.”

³³He answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” ³⁴Looking around at those who sat around him, he said, “Behold, my mother and my brothers! ³⁵For whoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister, and mother.”

MARK 4

Parables of the Kingdom

¹Again he began to teach by the seaside. A great multitude was gathered to him, so that he entered into a boat in the sea, and sat down. All the multitude were on the land by the sea. ²He taught them many things in parables, and told them in his teaching, ³“Listen! Behold, the farmer went out to sow, ⁴and as he sowed, some seed fell by the road, and the birds came and devoured it. ⁵Others fell on the rocky ground, where it had little soil, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of soil. ⁶When the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. ⁷Others fell among the

thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. ⁸Others fell into the good ground, and yielded fruit, growing up and increasing. Some produced thirty times, some sixty times, and some one hundred times as much.” ⁹He said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.”

¹⁰When he was alone, those who were around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹He said to them, “To you is given the mystery of God’s Kingdom, but to those who are outside, all things are done in parables, ¹²that ‘seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest perhaps they should turn again, and their sins should be forgiven them.’ ”

¹³He said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How will you understand all of the parables? ¹⁴The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵The ones by the road are the ones where the word is sown; and when they have heard, immediately Satan comes, and takes away the word which has been sown in them. ¹⁶These in the same way are those who are sown on the rocky places, who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷They have no root in themselves, but are short-lived. When oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they stumble. ¹⁸Others are those who are sown among the thorns. These are those who have heard the word, ¹⁹and the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. ²⁰Those which were sown on the good ground are those who hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, some thirty times, some sixty times, and some one hundred times.”

²¹He said to them, “Is the lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Isn’t it put on a stand? ²²For there is nothing hidden, except that it should be made known; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light. ²³If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.”

²⁴He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With whatever measure you measure, it will be measured to you, and more will be given to you who hear. ²⁵For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he who

doesn't have, even that which he has will be taken away from him."

²⁶He said, "God's Kingdom is as if a man should cast seed on the earth, ²⁷and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, though he doesn't know how. ²⁸For the earth bears fruit: first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

³⁰He said, "How will we liken God's Kingdom? Or with what parable will we illustrate it? ³¹It's like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, though it is less than all the seeds that are on the earth, ³²yet when it is sown, grows up, and becomes greater than all the herbs, and puts out great branches, so that the birds of the sky can lodge under its shadow."

³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. ³⁴Without a

parable he didn't speak to them; but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

³⁵On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let's go over to the other side." ³⁶Leaving the multitude, they took him with them, even as he was, in the boat. Other small boats were also with him. ³⁷A big wind storm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so much that the boat was already filled. ³⁸He himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion, and they woke him up, and told him, "Teacher, don't you care that we are dying?"

³⁹He awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? How is it that you have no faith?"

⁴¹They were greatly afraid, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

SESSION 3 READING

Mark 5–6 Power and Compassion · session on page 17

MARK 5

Power over Demons, Disease, and Death

¹They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. ²When he had come out of the boat, immediately a man with an unclean spirit met him out of the tombs. ³He lived in the tombs. Nobody could bind him any more, not even with chains, ⁴because he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him, and the fetters broken in pieces. Nobody had the strength to tame him. ⁵Always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out, and cutting himself with stones. ⁶When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and bowed down to him, ⁷and crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have I to do with you, Jesus, you Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, don't torment me." ⁸For he said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

⁹He asked him, "What is your name?"

He said to him, "My name is Legion, for we are many." ¹⁰He begged him much that he would not send them away out of the country. ¹¹Now on the mountainside there was a great herd of pigs feeding. ¹²All the demons begged him, saying, "Send us into the pigs, that we may enter into them."

¹³At once Jesus gave them permission. The unclean spirits came out and entered into the pigs. The herd of about two thousand rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and they were drowned in the sea.

¹⁴Those who fed them fled, and told it in the city and in the country.

The people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵They came to Jesus, and saw him who had been possessed by demons sitting, clothed, and in his right mind, even him who had the legion; and they were afraid. ¹⁶Those who saw it declared to them what happened to him who was possessed by

demons, and about the pigs. ¹⁷They began to beg him to depart from their region.

¹⁸As he was entering into the boat, he who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹He didn't allow him, but said to him, "Go to your house, to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how he had mercy on you."

²⁰He went his way, and began to proclaim in Decapolis how Jesus had done great things for him, and everyone marveled.

²¹When Jesus had crossed back over in the boat to the other side, a great multitude was gathered to him; and he was by the sea. ²²Behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, came; and seeing him, he fell at his feet, ²³and begged him much, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Please come and lay your hands on her, that she may be made healthy, and live."

²⁴He went with him, and a great multitude followed him, and they pressed upon him on all sides. ²⁵A certain woman, who had a discharge of blood for twelve years, ²⁶and had suffered many things by many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better, but rather grew worse, ²⁷having heard the things concerning Jesus, came up behind him in the crowd, and touched his clothes. ²⁸For she said, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be made well."

²⁹Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.

³⁰Immediately Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd, and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

³¹His disciples said to him, "You see the multitude pressing against you, and you say, 'Who touched me?'"

³²He looked around to see her who had done this thing. ³³But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done to her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be cured of your disease."

³⁵While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue ruler's house saying, "Your daughter is dead. Why bother the Teacher any more?"

³⁶But Jesus, when he heard the message spoken, immediately said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Don't be afraid, only believe." ³⁷He allowed no one to follow him, except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. ³⁸He came to the synagogue ruler's house, and he saw an uproar, weeping, and great wailing. ³⁹When he had entered in, he said to them, "Why do you make an uproar and weep? The child is not dead, but is asleep."

⁴⁰They ridiculed him. But he, having put them all out, took the father of the child, her mother, and those who were with him, and went in where the child was lying. ⁴¹Taking the child by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha cumi!" which means, being interpreted, "Girl, I tell you, get up!" ⁴²Immediately the girl rose up and walked, for she was twelve years old. They were amazed with great amazement. ⁴³He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and commanded that something should be given to her to eat.

MARK 6

Rejection, the Twelve Sent, and Feeding the Five Thousand

¹He went out from there. He came into his own country, and his disciples followed him. ²When the Sabbath had come, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many hearing him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things?" and, "What is the wisdom that is given to this man, that such mighty works come about by his hands? ³Isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judah, and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" They were offended at him.

⁴Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own relatives, and in his own house." ⁵He could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people, and healed them. ⁶He marveled because of their unbelief.

He went around the villages teaching. ⁷He called to himself the twelve, and began to send them out two

by two; and he gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a staff only: no bread, no wallet, no money in their purse, ⁹but to wear sandals, and not put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, “Wherever you enter into a house, stay there until you depart from there. ¹¹Whoever will not receive you nor hear you, as you depart from there, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony against them. Assuredly, I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!”

¹²They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed many with oil who were sick, and healed them. ¹⁴King Herod heard this, for his name had become known, and he said, “John the Baptizer has risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” ¹⁵But others said, “He is Elijah.” Others said, “He is a prophet, or like one of the prophets.” ¹⁶But Herod, when he heard this, said, “This is John, whom I beheaded. He has risen from the dead.” ¹⁷For Herod himself had sent out and arrested John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, for he had married her. ¹⁸For John said to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” ¹⁹Herodias set herself against him, and desired to kill him, but she couldn’t, ²⁰for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he did many things, and he heard him gladly.

²¹Then a convenient day came, that Herod on his birthday made a supper for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. ²²When the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and those sitting with him. The king said to the young lady, “Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you.” ²³He swore to her, “Whatever you shall ask of me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom.”

²⁴She went out, and said to her mother, “What shall I ask?”

She said, “The head of John the Baptizer.”

²⁵She came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, “I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptizer on a platter.”

²⁶The king was exceedingly sorry, but for the sake of his oaths, and of his dinner guests, he didn’t wish to refuse her. ²⁷Immediately the king sent out a soldier of his guard, and commanded to bring John’s head, and he went and beheaded him in the prison, ²⁸and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the young lady; and the young lady gave it to her mother.

²⁹When his disciples heard this, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

³⁰The apostles gathered themselves together to Jesus, and they told him all things, whatever they had done, and whatever they had taught. ³¹He said to them, “You come apart into a deserted place, and rest awhile.” For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. ³²They went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³They saw them going, and many recognized him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to him. ³⁴Jesus came out, saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things. ³⁵When it was late in the day, his disciples came to him, and said, “This place is deserted, and it is late in the day. ³⁶Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat.”

³⁷But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.”

They asked him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give them something to eat?”

³⁸He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go see.”

When they knew, they said, “Five, and two fish.”

³⁹He commanded them that everyone should sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰They sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties. ⁴¹He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to

heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves, and he gave to his disciples to set before them, and he divided the two fish among them all. ⁴²They all ate, and were filled. ⁴³They took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and also of the fish. ⁴⁴Those who ate the loaves were five thousand men.

⁴⁵Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat, and to go ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he himself sent the multitude away. ⁴⁶After he had taken leave of them, he went up the mountain to pray.

⁴⁷When evening had come, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and he was alone on the land.

⁴⁸Seeing them distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary to them, about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea, and he would have passed by them, ⁴⁹but they, when they saw him walking on the sea, supposed that it was a

ghost, and cried out; ⁵⁰for they all saw him, and were troubled. But he immediately spoke with them, and said to them, “Cheer up! It is I! Don’t be afraid.” ⁵¹He got into the boat with them; and the wind ceased, and they were very amazed among themselves, and marveled; ⁵²for they hadn’t understood about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. ⁵⁴When they had come out of the boat, immediately the people recognized him, ⁵⁵and ran around that whole region, and began to bring those who were sick, on their mats, to where they heard he was. ⁵⁶Wherever he entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might just touch the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched him were made well.

SESSION 4 READING

Mark 7–8 Who Is Jesus? · session on page 21**MARK 7**

Tradition and the Heart

¹Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered together to him, having come from Jerusalem. ²Now when they saw some of his disciples eating bread with defiled, that is unwashed, hands, they found fault. ³(For the Pharisees and all the Jews don’t eat unless they wash their hands and forearms, holding to the tradition of the elders. ⁴They don’t eat when they come from the marketplace unless they bathe themselves, and there are many other things, which they have received to hold to: washings of cups, pitchers, bronze vessels, and couches.) ⁵The Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why don’t your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with unwashed hands?”

⁶He answered them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

*‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me.*

⁷*But they worship me in vain,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’*

⁸“For you set aside the commandment of God, and hold tightly to the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and you do many other such things.” ⁹He said to them, “Full well do you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. ¹⁰For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother;’ and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.’ ¹¹But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban,” ’ ” that is to say, given to God, ¹²“then you no longer allow him to do anything for his father or his mother, ¹³making void the word of God by your tradition, which you have handed down. You do many things like this.”

¹⁴He called all the multitude to himself, and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵There is nothing from outside of the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out

of the man are those that defile the man. ¹⁶If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!”

¹⁷When he had entered into a house away from the multitude, his disciples asked him about the parable.

¹⁸He said to them, “Are you also without understanding? Don’t you perceive that whatever goes into the man from outside can’t defile him, ¹⁹because it doesn’t go into his heart, but into his stomach, then into the latrine, making all foods clean?” ²⁰He said, “That which proceeds out of the man, that defiles the man. ²¹For from within, out of the hearts of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, sexual sins, murders, thefts, ²²covetings, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

²⁴From there he arose, and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. He entered into a house, and didn’t want anyone to know it, but he couldn’t escape notice. ²⁵For a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet. ²⁶Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by race. She begged him that he would cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷But Jesus said to her, “Let the children be filled first, for it is not appropriate to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”

²⁸But she answered him, “Yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”

²⁹He said to her, “For this saying, go your way. The demon has gone out of your daughter.”

³⁰She went away to her house, and found the child having been laid on the bed, with the demon gone out.

³¹Again he departed from the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and came to the sea of Galilee, through the middle of the region of Decapolis. ³²They brought to him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. They begged him to lay his hand on him.

³³He took him aside from the multitude, privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue. ³⁴Looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said to him, “Ephphatha!” that is, “Be opened!” ³⁵Immediately his ears were opened, and

the impediment of his tongue was released, and he spoke clearly. ³⁶He commanded them that they should tell no one, but the more he commanded them, so much the more widely they proclaimed it.

³⁷They were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He makes even the deaf hear, and the mute speak!”

MARK 8

Bread, Blindness, and Peter’s Confession

¹In those days, when there was a very great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to himself, and said to them, ²“I have compassion on the multitude, because they have stayed with me now three days, and have nothing to eat. ³If I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint on the way, for some of them have come a long way.”

⁴His disciples answered him, “From where could one satisfy these people with bread here in a deserted place?”

⁵He asked them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven.”

⁶He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground, and he took the seven loaves. Having given thanks, he broke them, and gave them to his disciples to serve, and they served the multitude. ⁷They had a few small fish. Having blessed them, he said to serve these also. ⁸They ate, and were filled. They took up seven baskets of broken pieces that were left over. ⁹Those who had eaten were about four thousand. Then he sent them away.

¹⁰Immediately he entered into the boat with his disciples, and came into the region of Dalmanutha.

¹¹The Pharisees came out and began to question him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, and testing him. ¹²He sighed deeply in his spirit, and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Most certainly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation.”

¹³He left them, and again entering into the boat, departed to the other side. ¹⁴They forgot to take bread; and they didn’t have more than one loaf in the boat with them. ¹⁵He warned them, saying, “Take

heed: beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod.”

¹⁶They reasoned with one another, saying, “It’s because we have no bread.”

¹⁷Jesus, perceiving it, said to them, “Why do you reason that it’s because you have no bread? Don’t you perceive yet, neither understand? Is your heart still hardened? ¹⁸Having eyes, don’t you see? Having ears, don’t you hear? Don’t you remember? ¹⁹When I broke the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?”

They told him, “Twelve.”

²⁰“When the seven loaves fed the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?”

They told him, “Seven.”

²¹He asked them, “Don’t you understand yet?”

²²He came to Bethsaida. They brought a blind man to him, and begged him to touch him. ²³He took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village. When he had spat on his eyes, and laid his hands on him, he asked him if he saw anything.

²⁴He looked up, and said, “I see men; for I see them like trees walking.”

²⁵Then again he laid his hands on his eyes. He looked intently, and was restored, and saw everyone clearly. ²⁶He sent him away to his house, saying, “Don’t enter into the village, nor tell anyone in the village.”

²⁷Jesus went out, with his disciples, into the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples, “Who do men say that I am?”

²⁸They told him, “John the Baptizer, and others say Elijah, but others: one of the prophets.”

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

³⁰He commanded them that they should tell no one about him. ³¹He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He spoke to them openly. Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. ³³But he, turning around, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you have in mind not the things of God, but the things of men.”

³⁴He called the multitude to himself with his disciples, and said to them, “Whoever wants to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ³⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it; and whoever will lose his life for my sake and the sake of the Good News will save it. ³⁶For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? ³⁷For what will a man give in exchange for his life? ³⁸For whoever will be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him, when he comes in his Father’s glory, with the holy angels.”

SESSION 5 READING

Mark 9–10 The Way of the Cross · session on page 25

MARK 9

The Transfiguration and True Greatness

¹He said to them, “Most certainly I tell you, there are some standing here who will in no way taste death until they see God’s Kingdom come with power.”

²After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, and brought them up onto a high mountain privately by themselves, and he was changed into another form in front of them. ³His clothing became

glistening, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. ⁴Elijah and Moses appeared to them, and they were talking with Jesus.

⁵Peter answered Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let’s make three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁶For he didn’t know what to say, for they were very afraid.

⁷A cloud came, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.”

⁸Suddenly looking around, they saw no one with them any more, except Jesus only.

⁹As they were coming down from the mountain, he commanded them that they should tell no one what things they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰They kept this saying to themselves, questioning what the “rising from the dead” meant.

¹¹They asked him, saying, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

¹²He said to them, “Elijah indeed comes first, and restores all things. How is it written about the Son of Man, that he should suffer many things and be despised? ¹³But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they have also done to him whatever they wanted to, even as it is written about him.”

¹⁴Coming to the disciples, he saw a great multitude around them, and scribes questioning them.

¹⁵Immediately all the multitude, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and running to him, greeted him. ¹⁶He asked the scribes, “What are you asking them?”

¹⁷One of the multitude answered, “Teacher, I brought to you my son, who has a mute spirit; ¹⁸and wherever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and wastes away. I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they weren’t able.”

¹⁹He answered him, “Unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to me.”

²⁰They brought him to him, and when he saw him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground, wallowing and foaming at the mouth.

²¹He asked his father, “How long has it been since this has come to him?”

He said, “From childhood. ²²Often it has cast him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.”

²³Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.”

²⁴Immediately the father of the child cried out with tears, “I believe. Help my unbelief!”

²⁵When Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!”

²⁶After crying out and convulsing him greatly, it came out of him. The boy became like one dead, so much that most of them said, “He is dead.” ²⁷But Jesus took him by the hand, and raised him up; and he arose.

²⁸When he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we cast it out?”

²⁹He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing, except by prayer and fasting.”

³⁰They went out from there, and passed through Galilee. He didn’t want anyone to know it. ³¹For he was teaching his disciples, and said to them, “The Son of Man is being handed over to the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, on the third day he will rise again.”

³²But they didn’t understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

³³He came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing among yourselves on the way?”

³⁴But they were silent, for they had disputed with one another on the way about who was the greatest.

³⁵He sat down, and called the twelve; and he said to them, “If any man wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.” ³⁶He took a little child, and set him in the middle of them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷“Whoever receives one such little child in my name, receives me, and whoever receives me, doesn’t receive me, but him who sent me.”

³⁸John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone who doesn’t follow us casting out demons in your name; and we forbade him, because he doesn’t follow us.”

³⁹But Jesus said, “Don’t forbid him, for there is no one who will do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰For whoever is not

against us is on our side. ⁴¹For whoever will give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you are Christ's, most certainly I tell you, he will in no way lose his reward. ⁴²Whoever will cause one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if he were thrown into the sea with a millstone hung around his neck. ⁴³If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having your two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire, ⁴⁴'where their worm doesn't die, and the fire is not quenched.' ⁴⁵If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life lame, rather than having your two feet to be cast into Gehenna, into the fire that will never be quenched— ⁴⁶'where their worm doesn't die, and the fire is not quenched.' ⁴⁷If your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out. It is better for you to enter into God's Kingdom with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire, ⁴⁸'where their worm doesn't die, and the fire is not quenched.' ⁴⁹For everyone will be salted with fire, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. ⁵⁰Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, with what will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

MARK 10

Discipleship on the Way to Jerusalem

¹He arose from there and came into the borders of Judea and beyond the Jordan. Multitudes came together to him again. As he usually did, he was again teaching them. ²Pharisees came to him testing him, and asked him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

³He answered, "What did Moses command you?"

⁴They said, "Moses allowed a certificate of divorce to be written, and to divorce her."

⁵But Jesus said to them, "For your hardness of heart, he wrote you this commandment. ⁶But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. ⁷For this cause a man will leave his father and mother, and will join to his wife, ⁸and the two will become one flesh, so that they are no longer

two, but one flesh. ⁹What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

¹⁰In the house, his disciples asked him again about the same matter. ¹¹He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife, and marries another, commits adultery against her. ¹²If a woman herself divorces her husband, and marries another, she commits adultery."

¹³They were bringing to him little children, that he should touch them, but the disciples rebuked those who were bringing them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said to them, "Allow the little children to come to me! Don't forbid them, for God's Kingdom belongs to such as these. ¹⁵Most certainly I tell you, whoever will not receive God's Kingdom like a little child, he will in no way enter into it." ¹⁶He took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

¹⁷As he was going out into the way, one ran to him, knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

¹⁸Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except one—God. ¹⁹You know the commandments: 'Do not murder,' 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not give false testimony,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and mother.' "

²⁰He said to him, "Teacher, I have observed all these things from my youth."

²¹Jesus looking at him loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack. Go, sell whatever you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me, taking up the cross."

²²But his face fell at that saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one who had great possessions.

²³Jesus looked around, and said to his disciples, "How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter into God's Kingdom!"

²⁴The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answered again, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter into God's Kingdom! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into God's Kingdom."

²⁶They were exceedingly astonished, saying to him, “Then who can be saved?”

²⁷Jesus, looking at them, said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God.”

²⁸Peter began to tell him, “Behold, we have left all, and have followed you.”

²⁹Jesus said, “Most certainly I tell you, there is no one who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land, for my sake, and for the sake of the Good News, ³⁰but he will receive one hundred times more now in this time: houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹But many who are first will be last; and the last first.”

³²They were on the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going in front of them, and they were amazed; and those who followed were afraid. He again took the twelve, and began to tell them the things that were going to happen to him. ³³“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn him to death, and will deliver him to the Gentiles. ³⁴They will mock him, spit on him, scourge him, and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.”

³⁵James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came near to him, saying, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we will ask.”

³⁶He said to them, “What do you want me to do for you?”

³⁷They said to him, “Grant to us that we may sit, one at your right hand, and one at your left hand, in your glory.”

³⁸But Jesus said to them, “You don’t know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

³⁹They said to him, “We are able.”

Jesus said to them, “You shall indeed drink the cup that I drink, and you shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; ⁴⁰but to sit at my right hand and at my left hand is not mine to give, but for whom it has been prepared.”

⁴¹When the ten heard it, they began to be indignant toward James and John.

⁴²Jesus summoned them, and said to them, “You know that they who are recognized as rulers over the nations lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³But it shall not be so among you, but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant. ⁴⁴Whoever of you wants to become first among you, shall be bondservant of all. ⁴⁵For the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

⁴⁶They came to Jericho. As he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the road. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, and say, “Jesus, you son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸Many rebuked him, that he should be quiet, but he cried out much more, “You son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁹Jesus stood still, and said, “Call him.”

They called the blind man, saying to him, “Cheer up! Get up. He is calling you!”

⁵⁰He, casting away his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus.

⁵¹Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?”

The blind man said to him, “Rabboni, that I may see again.”

⁵²Jesus said to him, “Go your way. Your faith has made you well.” Immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus on the way.

SESSION 6 READING

Mark 11–12 Confrontation in Jerusalem · session on page 29**MARK 11**

The Triumphal Entry and the Temple

¹When they came near to Jerusalem, to Bethsphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, ²and said to them, “Go your way into the village that is opposite you. Immediately as you enter into it, you will find a young donkey tied, on which no one has sat. Untie him, and bring him. ³If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs him;’ and immediately he will send him back here.”

⁴They went away, and found a young donkey tied at the door outside in the open street, and they untied him. ⁵Some of those who stood there asked them, “What are you doing, untying the young donkey?” ⁶They said to them just as Jesus had said, and they let them go.

⁷They brought the young donkey to Jesus, and threw their garments on it, and Jesus sat on it.

⁸Many spread their garments on the way, and others were cutting down branches from the trees, and spreading them on the road. ⁹Those who went in front, and those who followed, cried out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

¹¹Jesus entered into the temple in Jerusalem. When he had looked around at everything, it being now evening, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

¹²The next day, when they had come out from Bethany, he was hungry. ¹³Seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came to see if perhaps he might find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

¹⁴Jesus told it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again!” and his disciples heard it.

¹⁵They came to Jerusalem, and Jesus entered into the temple, and began to throw out those who sold

and those who bought in the temple, and overthrew the money changers’ tables, and the seats of those who sold the doves. ¹⁶He would not allow anyone to carry a container through the temple. ¹⁷He taught, saying to them, “Isn’t it written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations?’ But you have made it a den of robbers!”

¹⁸The chief priests and the scribes heard it, and sought how they might destroy him. For they feared him, because all the multitude was astonished at his teaching.

¹⁹When evening came, he went out of the city. ²⁰As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away from the roots. ²¹Peter, remembering, said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which you cursed has withered away.”

²²Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. ²³For most certainly I tell you, whoever may tell this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and doesn’t doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is happening; he shall have whatever he says.

²⁴Therefore I tell you, all things whatever you pray and ask for, believe that you have received them, and you shall have them. ²⁵Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father, who is in heaven, may also forgive you your transgressions. ²⁶But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your transgressions.”

²⁷They came again to Jerusalem, and as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him, ²⁸and they began saying to him, “By what authority do you do these things? Or who gave you this authority to do these things?”

²⁹Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. ³⁰The baptism of John—was it from heaven, or from men? Answer me.”

³¹They reasoned with themselves, saying, “If we should say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’” ³²If we should say, ‘From men’—they feared the people, for all held John to really be a prophet. ³³They answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Jesus said to them, “Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

MARK 12

Questions and the Greatest Commandment

¹He began to speak to them in parables. “A man planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a pit for the wine press, built a tower, rented it out to a farmer, and went into another country. ²When it was time, he sent a servant to the farmer to get from the farmer his share of the fruit of the vineyard. ³They took him, beat him, and sent him away empty.

⁴Again, he sent another servant to them; and they threw stones at him, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated. ⁵Again he sent another; and they killed him; and many others, beating some, and killing some. ⁶Therefore still having one, his beloved son, he sent him last to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ⁷But those farmers said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ ⁸They took him, killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

⁹What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the farmers, and will give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰Haven’t you even read this Scripture:

*‘The stone which the builders rejected
was made the head of the corner.*

¹¹*This was from the Lord.*

It is marvelous in our eyes?’”

¹²They tried to seize him, but they feared the multitude; for they perceived that he spoke the parable against them. They left him, and went away. ¹³They sent some of the Pharisees and the Herodians to him, that they might trap him with words. ¹⁴When they had come, they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you are honest, and don’t defer to anyone; for you aren’t partial to anyone, but truly teach the way

of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?

¹⁵Shall we give, or shall we not give?”

But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, “Why do you test me? Bring me a denarius, that I may see it.”

¹⁶They brought it.

He said to them, “Whose is this image and inscription?”

They said to him, “Caesar’s.”

¹⁷Jesus answered them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

They marveled greatly at him.

¹⁸Some Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, came to him. They asked him, saying, ¹⁹“Teacher, Moses wrote to us, ‘If a man’s brother dies, and leaves a wife behind him, and leaves no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up offspring for his brother.’ ²⁰There were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and dying left no offspring. ²¹The second took her, and died, leaving no children behind him. The third likewise; ²²and the seven took her and left no children. Last of all the woman also died. ²³In the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be of them? For the seven had her as a wife.”

²⁴Jesus answered them, “Isn’t this because you are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God? ²⁵For when they will rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ²⁶But about the dead, that they are raised; haven’t you read in the book of Moses, about the Bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? ²⁷He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are therefore badly mistaken.”

²⁸One of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the greatest of all?”

²⁹Jesus answered, “The greatest is, ‘Hear, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one: ³⁰you 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.’ This is the first commandment. ³¹The second is like this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

³²The scribe said to him, “Truly, teacher, you have said well that he is one, and there is none other but he, ³³and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

³⁴When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from God’s Kingdom.”

No one dared ask him any question after that.

³⁵Jesus responded, as he taught in the temple, “How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? ³⁶For David himself said in the Holy Spirit,

*‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet.”*
,

³⁷Therefore David himself calls him Lord, so how can he be his son?”

The common people heard him gladly. ³⁸In his teaching he said to them, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk in long robes, and to get greetings in the marketplaces, ³⁹and the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts: ⁴⁰those who devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.”

⁴¹Jesus sat down opposite the treasury, and saw how the multitude cast money into the treasury. Many who were rich cast in much. ⁴²A poor widow came, and she cast in two small brass coins, which equal a quadrans coin. ⁴³He called his disciples to himself, and said to them, “Most certainly I tell you, this poor widow gave more than all those who are giving into the treasury, ⁴⁴for they all gave out of their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on.”

SESSION 7 READING

Mark 13–14

Watch and Stay Alert · session on page 33

MARK 13

The Coming of the End

¹As he went out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Teacher, see what kind of stones and what kind of buildings!”

²Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone on another, which will not be thrown down.”

³As he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴“Tell us, when will these things be? What is the sign that these things are all about to be fulfilled?”

⁵Jesus, answering, began to tell them, “Be careful that no one leads you astray. ⁶For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and will lead many astray.

⁷“When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, don’t be troubled. For those must happen, but the end is not yet. ⁸For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places. There will be famines and troubles. These things are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹But watch yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils. You will be beaten in synagogues. You will stand before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰The Good News must first be preached to all the nations. ¹¹When they lead you away and deliver you up, don’t be anxious beforehand, or premeditate what you will say, but say whatever will be given you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

¹²“Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child. Children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. ¹³You will be

hated by all men for my name's sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴But when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, ¹⁵and let him who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter in, to take anything out of his house. ¹⁶Let him who is in the field not return back to take his cloak. ¹⁷But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babies in those days! ¹⁸Pray that your flight won't be in the winter. ¹⁹For in those days there will be oppression, such as there has not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will be. ²⁰Unless the Lord had shortened the days, no flesh would have been saved; but for the sake of the chosen ones, whom he picked out, he shortened the days. ²¹Then if anyone tells you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there!' don't believe it. ²²For there will arise false christs and false prophets, and will show signs and wonders, that they may lead astray, if possible, even the chosen ones.

²³But you watch.

"Behold, I have told you all things beforehand.

²⁴But in those days, after that oppression, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, ²⁵the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out his angels, and will gather together his chosen ones from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the sky.

²⁸"Now from the fig tree, learn this parable. When the branch has now become tender, and produces its leaves, you know that the summer is near; ²⁹even so you also, when you see these things coming to pass, know that it is near, at the doors. ³⁰Most certainly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things happen. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³²But of that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Watch,

keep alert, and pray; for you don't know when the time is.

³⁴"It is like a man, traveling to another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, and to each one his work, and also commanded the doorkeeper to keep watch. ³⁵Watch therefore, for you don't know when the lord of the house is coming, whether at evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning; ³⁶lest coming suddenly he might find you sleeping. ³⁷What I tell you, I tell all: Watch."

MARK 14

The Anointing, the Supper, and the Arrest

¹It was now two days before the feast of the Passover and the unleavened bread, and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might seize him by deception, and kill him. ²For they said, "Not during the feast, because there might be a riot among the people."

³While he was at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster jar of ointment of pure nard—very costly. She broke the jar, and poured it over his head. ⁴But there were some who were indignant among themselves, saying, "Why has this ointment been wasted? ⁵For this might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and given to the poor." So they grumbled against her.

⁶But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for me. ⁷For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want to, you can do them good; but you will not always have me. ⁸She has done what she could. She has anointed my body beforehand for the burying. ⁹Most certainly I tell you, wherever this Good News may be preached throughout the whole world, that which this woman has done will also be spoken of for a memorial of her."

¹⁰Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went away to the chief priests, that he might deliver him to them. ¹¹They, when they heard it, were glad, and promised to give him money. He sought how he might conveniently deliver him. ¹²On the first day of

unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover, his disciples asked him, “Where do you want us to go and prepare that you may eat the Passover?”

¹³He sent two of his disciples, and said to them, “Go into the city, and there you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, ¹⁴and wherever he enters in, tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?”’ ¹⁵He will himself show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Get ready for us there.”

¹⁶His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found things as he had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

¹⁷When it was evening he came with the twelve.

¹⁸As they sat and were eating, Jesus said, “Most certainly I tell you, one of you will betray me—he who eats with me.”

¹⁹They began to be sorrowful, and to ask him one by one, “Surely not I?” And another said, “Surely not I?”

²⁰He answered them, “It is one of the twelve, he who dips with me in the dish. ²¹For the Son of Man goes, even as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had not been born.”

²²As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had blessed, he broke it, and gave to them, and said, “Take, eat. This is my body.”

²³He took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them. They all drank of it. ²⁴He said to them, “This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵Most certainly I tell you, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it anew in God’s Kingdom.” ²⁶When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

²⁷Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of me tonight, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ ²⁸However, after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.”

²⁹But Peter said to him, “Although all will be offended, yet I will not.”

³⁰Jesus said to him, “Most certainly I tell you, that you today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.”

³¹But he spoke all the more, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.” They all said the same thing.

³²They came to a place which was named Gethsemane. He said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I pray.” ³³He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be greatly troubled and distressed.

³⁴He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here, and watch.”

³⁵He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass away from him. ³⁶He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Please remove this cup from me. However, not what I desire, but what you desire.”

³⁷He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn’t you watch one hour? ³⁸Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

³⁹Again he went away, and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰Again he returned, and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they didn’t know what to answer him. ⁴¹He came the third time, and said to them, “Sleep on now, and take your rest. It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

⁴²Arise! Let’s get going. Behold: he who betrays me is at hand.”

⁴³Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came—and with him a multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. ⁴⁴Now he who betrayed him had given them a sign, saying, “Whomever I will kiss, that is he. Seize him, and lead him away safely.”

⁴⁵When he had come, immediately he came to him, and said, “Rabbi! Rabbi!” and kissed him. ⁴⁶They laid their hands on him, and seized him. ⁴⁷But a certain one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

⁴⁸Jesus answered them, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to seize me? ⁴⁹I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you didn’t arrest me. But this is so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.”

⁵⁰They all left him, and fled. ⁵¹A certain young man followed him, having a linen cloth thrown around himself over his naked body. The young men grabbed him, ⁵²but he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked. ⁵³They led Jesus away to the high priest. All the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes came together with him.

⁵⁴Peter had followed him from a distance, until he came into the court of the high priest. He was sitting with the officers, and warming himself in the light of the fire. ⁵⁵Now the chief priests and the whole council sought witnesses against Jesus to put him to death, and found none. ⁵⁶For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony didn’t agree with each other. ⁵⁷Some stood up, and gave false testimony against him, saying, ⁵⁸“We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.’” ⁵⁹Even so, their testimony didn’t agree.

⁶⁰The high priest stood up in the middle, and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer? What is it which these testify against you?” ⁶¹But he stayed quiet, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”

⁶²Jesus said, “I am. You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of the sky.”

⁶³The high priest tore his clothes, and said, “What further need have we of witnesses? ⁶⁴You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?” They all condemned him to be worthy of death. ⁶⁵Some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to beat him with fists, and to tell him, “Prophecy!” The officers struck him with the palms of their hands.

⁶⁶As Peter was in the courtyard below, one of the maids of the high priest came, ⁶⁷and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, “You were also with the Nazarene, Jesus!”

⁶⁸But he denied it, saying, “I neither know, nor understand what you are saying.” He went out on the porch, and the rooster crowed.

⁶⁹The maid saw him, and began again to tell those who stood by, “This is one of them.” ⁷⁰But he again denied it. After a little while again those who stood by said to Peter, “You truly are one of them, for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it.” ⁷¹But he began to curse, and to swear, “I don’t know this man of whom you speak!” ⁷²The rooster crowed the second time. Peter remembered the word, how that Jesus said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” When he thought about that, he wept.

SESSION 8 READING

Mark 15–16 The Cross and the Empty Tomb · session on page 37

MARK 15

The Crucifixion

¹Immediately in the morning the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation, bound Jesus, carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate. ²Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

He answered, “So you say.”

³The chief priests accused him of many things.

⁴Pilate again asked him, “Have you no answer? See how many things they testify against you!”

⁵But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate marveled.

⁶Now at the feast he used to release to them one prisoner, whom they asked of him. ⁷There was one called Barabbas, bound with his fellow insurgents, men who in the insurrection had committed murder.

⁸The multitude, crying aloud, began to ask him to do as he always did for them. ⁹Pilate answered them, saying, “Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” ¹⁰For he perceived that for envy the chief priests had delivered him up. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should release Barabbas to them instead. ¹²Pilate again asked them, “What then should I do to him whom you call the King of the Jews?”

¹³They cried out again, “Crucify him!”

¹⁴Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has he done?”

But they cried out exceedingly, “Crucify him!”

¹⁵Pilate, wishing to please the multitude, released Barabbas to them, and handed over Jesus, when he had flogged him, to be crucified. ¹⁶The soldiers led him away within the court, which is the Praetorium; and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁷They clothed him with purple, and weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on him. ¹⁸They began to salute him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ¹⁹They struck his head with a reed, and spat on him, and bowing their knees, did homage to him. ²⁰When they had mocked him, they took the purple off him, and put his own garments on him. They led him out to crucify him. ²¹They compelled one passing by, coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with them, that he might bear his cross. ²²They brought him to the place called Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, “The place of a skull.” ²³They offered him wine mixed with myrrh to drink, but he didn’t take it.

²⁴Crucifying him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots on them, what each should take.

²⁵It was the third hour, and they crucified him. ²⁶The superscription of his accusation was written over him, “THE KING OF THE JEWS.” ²⁷With him they crucified two robbers; one on his right hand, and one on his left. ²⁸The Scripture was fulfilled, which says, “He was counted with transgressors.”

²⁹Those who passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying, “Ha! You who destroy the temple, and build it in three days, ³⁰save yourself, and come down from the cross!”

³¹Likewise, also the chief priests mocking among themselves with the scribes said, “He saved others. He can’t save himself. ³²Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe him.” Those who were crucified with him also insulted him.

³³When the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

³⁴At the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is, being interpreted, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

³⁵Some of those who stood by, when they heard it, said, “Behold, he is calling Elijah.”

³⁶One ran, and filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Let him be. Let’s see whether Elijah comes to take him down.”

³⁷Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and gave up the spirit. ³⁸The veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. ³⁹When the centurion, who stood by opposite him, saw that he cried out like this and breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

⁴⁰There were also women watching from afar, among whom were both Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; ⁴¹who, when he was in Galilee, followed him and served him; and many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

⁴²When evening had now come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member who also himself was looking for God’s Kingdom, came. He boldly went in to Pilate, and asked for Jesus’ body. ⁴⁴Pilate marveled if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead long. ⁴⁵When he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶He bought a linen cloth, and taking him down, wound him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb which had been cut out of a rock. He rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. ⁴⁷Mary

Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joses, saw where he was laid.

MARK 16

The Resurrection

¹When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him. ²Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³They were saying among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” ⁴for it was very big. Looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back.

⁵Entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were amazed. ⁶He said to them, “Don’t be amazed. You seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen. He is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him! ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He goes before you into Galilee. There you will see him, as he said to you.’”

⁸They went out, and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had come on them. They said nothing to anyone; for they were afraid.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

Some of the earliest manuscripts of Mark end at verse 8, with the women fleeing the empty tomb. Verses 9–20 (the “longer ending”) appear in most later manuscripts and are printed in most Bibles, often with a note; a few witnesses have a shorter ending. The Gospel’s testimony — He is risen — stands either way. Verses 17–18, which speak of taking up serpents and drinking deadly things, belong to the longer ending. Many Christians therefore do not treat them as commands. Nothing in this study asks anyone to handle snakes or drink poison, and anyone who tries risks real harm.

⁹Now when he had risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. ¹⁰She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹When they heard that he was alive, and had been seen by her, they disbelieved. ¹²After these things he was revealed in another form to two of them, as they walked, on their way into the country. ¹³They went away and told it to the rest. They didn’t believe them, either.

¹⁴Afterward he was revealed to the eleven themselves as they sat at the table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they didn’t believe those who had seen him after he had risen. ¹⁵He said to them, “Go into all the world, and preach the Good News to the whole creation. ¹⁶He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who disbelieves will be condemned. ¹⁷These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new languages; ¹⁸they will take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it will in no way hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

¹⁹So then the Lord, after he had spoken to them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰They went out, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen.

AFTER THE LAST SESSION

Eight verses to carry

One verse from each session. Read them aloud once a week and they will stay with you.

1 “The time is fulfilled, and God’s Kingdom is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Good News.”

MARK 1:15

2 “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

MARK 4:41

3 “Jesus came out, saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things.”

MARK 6:34

4 “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.”

MARK 8:29

5 “For the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

MARK 10:45

6 “‘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.’ This is the first commandment. The second is like this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

MARK 12:30–31

7 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

MARK 13:31

8 “Don’t be amazed. You seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen. He is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him!”

MARK 16:6

WHAT COMES NEXT

Mark is step 2 of 4 on the **New Believer** path.

1 John → **2 Mark** → 3 Romans → 4 1 Peter

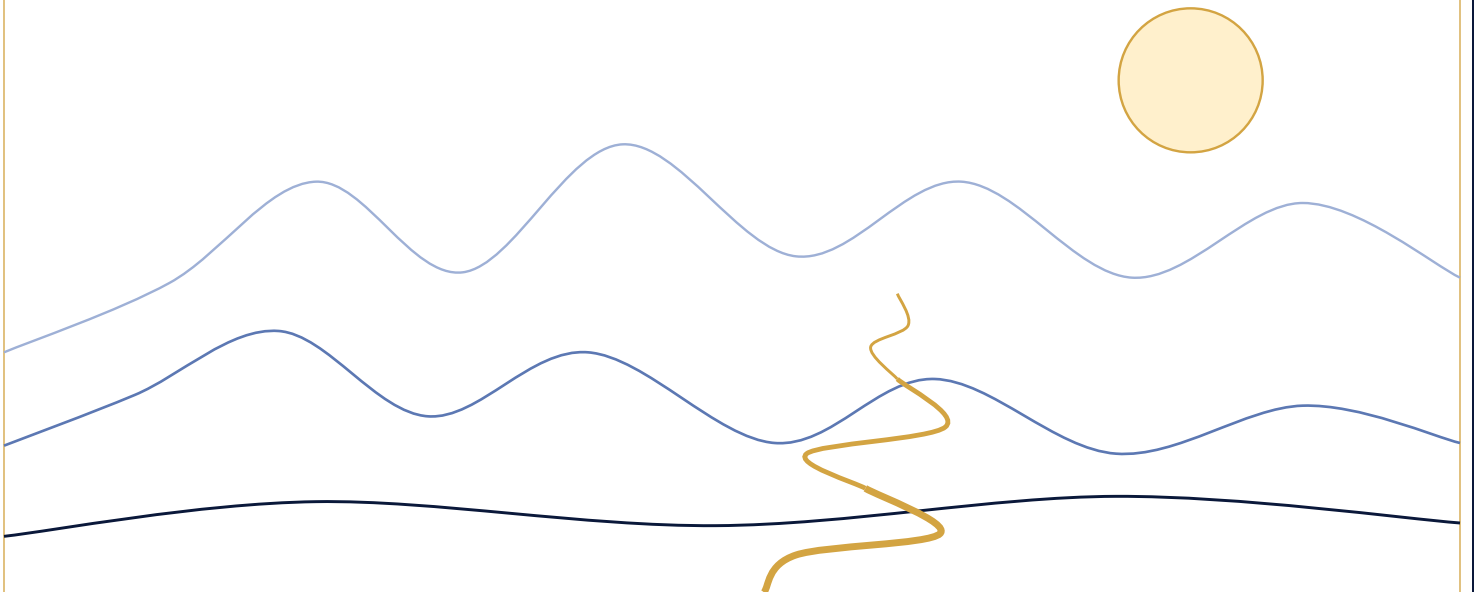
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PART FIVE

Take it with you

A worked example, a harder question for each session, a glossary, a Scripture index, and the pages that connect you to the people behind this study.



PART FIVE · BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What a good answer looks like

Most discussion questions do not have one right answer, but they do have good ones. Here is the second question of Session 5, a sample answer written the way a participant might write it, and the note a leader has beside it. Read all three once. That is what “doing the study” looks like.

2 How does Jesus redefine greatness for His disciples?

A SAMPLE ANSWER · WRITTEN IN THE MARGIN

The disciples argued on the road about who was the greatest (9:33–34). Then James and John ask for the seats at His right and left (10:35–37). So it comes up twice. Jesus doesn’t tell them to stop wanting to be great. He says “whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant” (10:43). What stays with me is that He puts a little child in the middle of them (9:36). A child can’t do anything for you. I think I would rather serve people who will notice. So the question I’m left with is who I would serve if nobody ever knew.

WHY IT IS A GOOD ANSWER

It stays in the passage. It uses words from the page (“who was the greatest,” “shall be your servant”) and names the two scenes where the question comes up.

It notices what repeats. The argument on the road (9:33–34) and the request for places in His glory (10:35–37) are the same wish. Seeing that is the observation.

It ends with the writer, not with a summary. “Who I would serve if nobody ever knew” is the writer’s own question. It does not recap the verses.

THE LEADER’S NOTE FOR THE SAME QUESTION · PAGE 64

The disciples had been arguing on the road about who was greatest (9:33–34). Jesus sits down and says, “If any man wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all” (9:35), and He puts a child among them. James and John later ask for places at His right and left (10:35–37). Jesus tells them that rulers lord it over others, and then says, “whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant” (10:43). Greatness in His kingdom is measured by service.

Getting the most from this guide

- **Write before you talk.** In a group, two minutes of silent writing before the first question gives quieter people time to find their words.
- **Ask “Where do you see that in the passage?”** Mark moves fast. Pointing to the verse slows the group down enough to see what the text actually says.
- **Do the recall page from memory first.** Guessing and then checking is how the passage stays with you.
- **Keep the one thing small.** The “One thing to live out” is meant to be done, not admired.

PART FIVE · FOR GROUPS THAT WANT MORE

Go deeper

One extra question for each session, for groups that have walked with Mark before. Each comes with a leader's note. Leaders can use one in the "Reflection and prayer" minutes if the room has the energy. This section is for leaders.

Session 1 · Mark 1–2

- Mark tells the reader who Jesus is in the first verse ("the Son of God," 1:1) and the voice at the baptism says it again (1:11). Yet the people in the story keep asking, "What is this?" (1:27) and "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (2:7). What does the reader know that the crowds do not, and what does that do to the way you read their questions?

LEADER'S NOTE

The reader is told in 1:1 and 1:11, and unclean spirits name Him in 1:24 ("the Holy One of God") and 3:11 ("You are the Son of God!"). The people in the scenes see the authority (1:22, 27) and ask what it means. Jesus does not let the demons speak, "because they knew him" (1:34). Good answers notice that Mark lets the reader watch the question build from 1:27 and 2:7 to 4:41 and finally 8:29. Do not press the group to explain why Jesus asks for silence. Readers differ on that, and the text does not say. Some early manuscripts lack "the Son of God" in 1:1, but the voice at 1:11 says it either way.

Session 2 · Mark 3–4

- Mark places the scribes' charge, "He has Beelzebul" (3:22), between two scenes with Jesus' own family. His friends (many translations read "his family") say "He is insane" (3:21), and then His mother and brothers stand outside (3:31). Who does Jesus say counts as family (3:35), and why might Mark have wrapped the two scenes around the scribes?

LEADER'S NOTE

Mark often tucks one story inside another so that each explains the other. Here the family who stand outside and the scribes who accuse from Jerusalem are both outside the circle around Jesus. Jesus says "whoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister, and mother" (3:35). Many readers take the line as widening His family, not rejecting it. Keep the conversation off 3:28–30 unless someone raises it. The leader page says how to handle that passage, and most readers hold that no one who fears they have crossed that line is the person it describes.

Session 3 · Mark 5–6

- ✚ **Jairus asks Jesus to come to his dying daughter (5:23), and Jesus is stopped by a woman who touches His cloak (5:25–34). Then a messenger says the girl is dead, and Jesus says, “Don’t be afraid, only believe” (5:36). What does Mark gain by putting these two stories together, and what does each person need from Jesus?**

LEADER’S NOTE

The woman has been sick twelve years, and the girl is twelve years old (5:25, 42). Mark lets the interruption hang over Jairus before the news comes. Jesus speaks to the woman as “Daughter” (5:34) and takes the girl by the hand (5:41). Good answers notice that both are made well, and that both stories end with touch and with Jesus noticing a person. Do not use 5:34 or 5:36 to suggest that sickness or an unanswered prayer means someone lacked faith. The leader page says so plainly.

Session 4 · Mark 7–8

- ✚ **Peter answers Jesus’ question with “You are the Christ” (8:29), and a few verses later Jesus tells him, “Get behind me, Satan! For you have in mind not the things of God, but the things of men” (8:33). What does Peter get right, what does he get wrong, and why does Mark put both in the same scene?**

LEADER’S NOTE

Peter has the title right. What he does not yet understand is the kind of Christ Jesus will be: one who “must suffer many things, and be rejected... and be killed, and after three days rise again” (8:31). Jesus speaks to the crowd and the disciples about the cost (8:34–35). Good answers notice that the confession is real and incomplete at the same time, and that this is where many readers find themselves. Do not turn Peter into a villain. The same Peter is still being taught.

Session 5 · Mark 9–10

- ✚ **A father says to Jesus, “...if you can do anything...” and Jesus answers, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes” (9:23). The father cries out, “I believe. Help my unbelief!” (9:24). What is the father asking for, and how does Jesus respond to him?**

LEADER’S NOTE

The father says both things in one breath: belief and unbelief. Jesus does not correct him and does not make the healing wait. He rebukes the unclean spirit and the boy is raised up (9:25–27). Good answers notice that Jesus meets honest uncertainty with help. Keep faith from becoming a technique the person must produce. Do not use this story to suggest that an unanswered prayer means someone lacked faith, or that seizures, deafness, or any disability point to a demon, and offer a private word to anyone for whom the story hurts. Some early manuscripts of 9:29 lack “and fasting”; the WEB includes it.

Session 6 · Mark 11–12

- A scribe asks, “Which commandment is the greatest of all?” (12:28). After Jesus answers, the scribe agrees and adds that loving God and neighbor “is more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices” (12:33). Jesus tells him, “You are not far from God’s Kingdom” (12:34). What has the scribe understood, and what might “not far” leave open?

LEADER’S NOTE

This scribe is not one of the opponents of 12:13–27. Mark gives no sign of a trap, and Jesus answers him warmly. He understands that the two commandments (12:30–31) matter more than the temple’s sacrifices. “Not far” can be read as praise, as an invitation, or both, and Mark does not say what he did next. Good answers keep to what the text says. This is also a good place to remember that Jesus, His disciples and the scribe are all Jewish. Do not let the confrontations of these chapters become a charge against Jews or Judaism.

Session 7 · Mark 13–14

- In chapter 13 Jesus says, “Watch, keep alert, and pray” (13:33). In Gethsemane He says, “Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation” (14:38). What does Mark show the disciples doing between those two commands, and what does Jesus do while they sleep?

LEADER’S NOTE

Jesus prays, “Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Please remove this cup from me. However, not what I desire, but what you desire” (14:36). He finds them sleeping three times (14:37, 40, 41), and then “They all left him, and fled” (14:50). Good answers notice that Jesus, not the disciples, is the one who watches here. “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (14:38) is said with understanding, not with scorn. Keep the discussion off end-times timelines and off shame.

Session 8 · Mark 15–16

- Some of the earliest manuscripts of Mark end with the women who “said nothing to anyone; for they were afraid” (16:8). Yet they had been told, “go, tell his disciples and Peter” (16:7). If the Gospel ends there, why might Mark leave it open, and what might it ask of the reader?

LEADER’S NOTE

Some of the earliest manuscripts end at 16:8, and verses 9–20 appear in most later manuscripts and in most Bibles. Christians differ on how to regard those verses, and this study does not ask the group to settle it. The text at 16:7 renews the promise of 14:28 (“after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee”) and includes Peter by name. Good answers notice that, if the Gospel ends at 16:8, the story is handed to the reader. Be careful to keep 16:17–18 from becoming a test of faith.

PART FIVE • FOR LEADERS

Objectives and questions, aligned

Every session names what it is for. This table shows which discussion (D) and reflection (R) questions carry each objective, so a leader who is short on time can cut a question without cutting an aim.

D = discussion questions on the session's second page; R = reflection questions on its third page. A dash means no question asks that directly. A star means a partial fit: the question touches the objective without asking it outright. A leader who wants a dashed objective covered can raise it from the passage or the leader page. The recall practice on each fourth page serves most objectives by retrieval.

	LEARNING OBJECTIVE	DISCUSSION	REFLECTION
1	Feel the urgency and pace of Mark's Gospel	D1	R1*
	See Jesus' authority over sickness, demons, and sin	D2	R2
	Hear the first call to repent, believe, and follow	D3	R1*
2	Understand the parables of the kingdom	D1	R1
	See opposition to Jesus beginning to build	D2	—
	Grapple with the question of Jesus' identity	D3	R2*
3	See Jesus' power over demons, disease, and death	D1*	R1*
	Notice the compassion driving His miracles	D1, D3	R2
	Watch the mission extend through the Twelve	—	—
4	Distinguish heart-religion from mere tradition	D1	R1
	See Jesus' grace reaching beyond Israel	—	—
	Reach the turning point of Mark: Peter's confession	D2*, D3	R2
5	Hold together the Transfiguration and His coming death	D1*	—
	Learn greatness as servanthood	D2	R1
	Understand the cross as a ransom	D3	R2*
6	See Jesus enter Jerusalem as King	D1*	—
	Understand His challenge to the temple and its leaders	D1, D2	R1
	Center the Law on love of God and neighbor	D3	R2
7	Hear Jesus' call to watchfulness	D1	R1
	Enter the passion narrative	D2, D3	—
	See devotion and failure side by side	D2, D3	R2
8	Walk through Mark's account of the cross	D2	R1*
	See the centurion's confession as a high point	D1	—
	Hear the news of the resurrection at the empty tomb	D3	R2

PART FIVE · WORDS MARK USES

Glossary

Short definitions of the words a first-time reader of Mark is most likely to stumble on. Chapter and verse point to where Mark uses them.

Abba

Aramaic for “Father.” Jesus’ word in Gethsemane (14:36).

Baptism of repentance

John’s baptism, a public sign of turning back to God and receiving forgiveness (1:4–5).

Beelzebul

A name for the ruler of the demons. The scribes from Jerusalem say Jesus casts out demons by him (3:22).

Blasphemy

Speech that insults or claims too much for oneself before God. The scribes use the word in 2:7, and the council uses it in 14:64.

Centurion

A Roman officer over about a hundred soldiers. The one at the cross says, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” (15:39).

Christ

Greek for “Anointed One,” the same as Hebrew “Messiah,” the King God promised. Mark opens with it (1:1), and Peter confesses it (8:29).

Corban

A word for something given to God. Jesus says some used it to avoid supporting their parents (7:11).

Council

The Jewish court that tried Jesus, with chief priests, elders, and scribes (14:55; 15:1).

Disciple

A learner and follower of Jesus. He appoints twelve “that they might be with him” (3:14).

Gehenna

The WEB’s word, from a valley outside Jerusalem, for the place of judgment (9:43). Christians understand what it describes in different ways.

Gentile

Anyone who is not Jewish. Jesus says the Son of Man will be delivered “to the Gentiles” (10:33), and the Syrophenician woman is a Gentile (7:26).

Good News

The message of Jesus: God’s Kingdom has come near (1:1, 14–15).

Herodians

Supporters of Herod’s family, who join the Pharisees against Jesus (3:6).

Hypocrite

Literally an actor. Someone whose religion is a performance, as in Jesus’ quotation from Isaiah (7:6–7).

Immediately

Mark’s favorite word, which keeps the story moving (1:10, 12, 18, 20, 23).

Kingdom of God

God’s rule, arriving in Jesus (1:15).

Leper

A person with a skin disease who was kept outside the community. Jesus touches and heals one (1:40–41).

New covenant

A fresh binding relationship God establishes. At the Last Supper Jesus speaks of “my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many” (14:24).

Parable

A short story from ordinary life that Jesus uses to teach about the Kingdom (4:2, 33–34).

Passover

The yearly feast remembering the exodus. Jesus’ last meal falls at Passover (14:12).

Pharisees

A group devoted to strict observance of the Law and its traditions. Jesus often argues with them (2:16; 3:6; 7:1–13).

Ransom

The price paid to free a captive. Jesus says He came “to give his life as a ransom for many” (10:45). Christians explain how the ransom works in different ways.

Repent

To turn around and change direction. The message of John and of Jesus (1:4, 15).

Sabbath

The weekly day of rest. Jesus says it was made “for man, not man for the Sabbath” (2:27).

Sadducees

A priestly group who said there is no resurrection (12:18).

Scribes

Experts in copying and interpreting the Law. Some oppose Jesus, and one is told he is “not far from God’s Kingdom” (1:22; 2:6; 12:34).

Son of David

A title for the promised king in David’s line. Bartimaeus cries it out (10:47–48).

Son of God

Mark’s title for Jesus in 1:1 and at the cross (15:39). Some early manuscripts omit “the Son of God” in 1:1, and the WEB includes it. The voice at the baptism and on the mountain says “my beloved Son” (1:11; 9:7).

Son of Man

The title Jesus most often uses for Himself. Many readers hear Daniel 7 behind it. It speaks of authority (2:10), suffering (8:31), and coming glory (14:62).

Tax collector

A Jew who collected taxes or tolls for Rome or its local rulers, and was often seen as a traitor and a cheat. Jesus eats with them (2:15–16).

Temple veil

The curtain in the temple, torn in two from top to bottom when Jesus dies (15:38).

Transfiguration

Jesus is changed in appearance on a high mountain, and a voice says, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him” (9:2–7).

Twelve

The apostles Jesus appointed and sent (3:14), a number many readers hear as echoing Israel’s twelve tribes.

Unclean spirit

Mark’s common phrase for a demon (1:23, 27; 5:2).

PART FIVE • WHERE EACH PASSAGE IS USED

Scripture index

Every passage cited by chapter and verse in the sessions, the reference pages, the leader's guide, and this Part Five, with the pages where it appears. The full text of Mark is in Part Four, pages 76–96.

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PART FIVE • YOUR TURN

Tell me what helped.

You've just spent some hours in this study. Before you put it on the shelf, I'd like to know how it went: the part that landed, the part that lost you, and the part you'd fix if it were yours.

Three questions. No account needed. Name and email only if you want me to write back.

1 What helped? A session, a question, a line you underlined.

2 What confused you, or slowed you down? Be blunt. If a question didn't make sense, that's my writing, not your reading.

3 What would you add, cut, or change?

What you write helps shape the next edition of this study.

— Ron Givens

Founder — Executive Director, Clear Path Bible Studies



SCAN TO ANSWER

clearpathbiblestudies.com/s/mark/feedback

Opens the three questions with this study already selected.

Jotted your answers above? Type them into the form when you're ready. Nothing on this page is sent anywhere until you do. Hand it to your group leader, too, if you'd rather say it out loud.

PART FIVE · FOR EVERYONE WHO LEADS, AND EVERYONE WHO SHARES

Care in the room

People say real things in a Bible study, and that's the point. These four agreements keep the room safe. The lines at the bottom are for the moments that are bigger than a study.

Four agreements

What's said here stays here. Names, stories, and struggles don't leave the room, not even as prayer requests somewhere else. The one exception is safety: if someone is in danger, or a child is being hurt, you get help.

No one has to speak. Silence is fine. A person who listens for eight sessions has still done the study.

The text comes first. The leader isn't the last word. When we disagree, we go back to the page together.

Disagree, but don't scorn. A question is never a threat. No mocking, no interrupting, no fixing people.

Mark has passages that land hard on real people in the room: 3:28–30, 4:11–12, 5:1–20, 6:14–29, 7:24–30, 8:34, 9:14–29, 9:42–50, 10:2–12, 10:17–31, 12:13–17, chapter 13, the cross in chapter 15, 15:11–14, and 16:9–20. The leader pages say how to handle them. Read those notes before you gather.

If someone shares something heavy

Thank them. Don't rush to a verse. Say, "That took courage. Can we talk after?" and then do. If what they shared involves danger to them or to someone else, now or at home, the help lines below come first, and, if they want it and it is safe, you stay with them while they call.

If a child is being hurt, call Childhelp, below, any hour, and report to child protective services or the police as your state requires. Reporting laws vary by state, and in some states every adult is required to report. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

A study isn't counseling. Before you ever need it, know the name of one counselor, one pastor, and one help line, so you can hand them over without scrambling.

Help lines · United States

Emergency — call 911.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call or text 988, any hour. For anyone thinking about ending their life, in a mental-health crisis, or worried about someone who is. Veterans and service members: call 988 and press 1, or text 838255.

National Domestic Violence Hotline — 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788. Danger or fear at home.

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline — 1-800-422-4453. A child who is being hurt, or an adult who suspects it.

SAMHSA National Helpline — 1-800-662-4357. A treatment referral and information line for substance use and mental health; it is not a crisis line.

National Human Trafficking Hotline — 1-888-373-7888, or text 233733. Forced labor or forced sex.

RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline — 1-800-656-4673. Free and confidential.

Verified October 2026. The current list, with lines for other situations, is kept at clearpathbiblestudies.com/help. These pages are not a substitute for a doctor, a counselor, or a pastor who knows you.



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