

Confirmation and Crisis
Mark 1:9-12

Mark gospel is swift moving and short. Scenes are like those of a movie. Historical evidence shows that Mark's gospel was his **recollection of what Peter had taught**. He took time to record Peter's teaching and wrote it down as a response to those Christians who had made a request for copies of his writings.

If the gospel of Mark is truly **Petrine** in origin, then we know that it was this **same Peter who confessed Jesus as the Christ..the Messiah...the Son of the Living God!** It was this same Peter who left everything to follow Jesus. Mark's gospel in this first chapter makes the **Lordship of Jesus** evident.

CONFIRMATION

John's Preaching

John the Baptist revealed himself and preached repentance after spending most of his life in the wilderness. John said that his **role was simple...he was the voice of one** crying in the wilderness "make straight the way of the Lord."

John said this of Jesus..."**One is coming** after me whose sandals I am not fit to **stoop down** and loosen" he said One is coming after me who is greater than I because he **existed before me!**

HOW? When Elizabeth was 6 months pregnant and Mary came to visit and was with child, John leapt in his mother's womb. John was confirming the **identity and preexistence of Jesus!**

John's Baptism

John began baptizing in the **Jordan River**. Many were coming to him and *confessing their sins*. John's baptism was with water. His baptism was unique because it **signaled something greater** than the **ritual washings** that the Jews traditionally did.

John's baptism had a **moral/ethical** element to it. The **repentance and the confession** signified that the one being baptized was *turning from their wicked ways!* There was no political or ritualistic

Knowing that John was preaching repentance for the forgiveness of sins makes it very **odd that Jesus would come** from the region of Galilee and come to John for baptism.

John **refused initially**. "You should be baptizing me." But Jesus said to John, "Permit (**IMPERATIVE**) it at this time so that through us, all righteousness will be fulfilled."

Jesus **had no sin** and no need to repent so why was he here to be baptized?

It was part of his confirmation. John 1:31 “I did not know him, but so that He might be **manifested** (*passive voice*) to Israel, I came baptizing with water.

Jesus *coming to be baptized* along with the crowds did **two things**: 1. It **created a public witness** to what was going to happen after his baptism and 2. It **identified him with the crowds**...there were people coming from everywhere to be baptized by John (**Luke 3:21** when ALL the people had been baptized...Jesus was also baptized)!

HE DID NOT NEED IT BUT HE WAS BEING OBEDIENT TO THE FATHER WHO HAD A PLAN.

The Spirit Confirms

So Jesus is immersed and comes up out of the water and something miraculous happens. Mark says in **verse 10 READ**

The Holy Spirit **took the form of a dove** so that He could be **visible** to those who were around. The dove is a symbol of God's **compassion**; God's **peace** and God's **purity**. It was fitting.

The other gospels write this passage such that it is the **onlookers or John** who **see the Spirit**. Mark writes it differently Verse 10, “**HE saw the Spirit like a dove descending on Him.**” Mark makes it clear that **it was Jesus who saw this happening** to Himself!

The Spirit **coming down from heaven CONFIRMED** to Jesus (100% human) that He was **indeed the Son of God;**

ALSO **confirmed to everyone** watching...He was **MANIFESTED to Israel in this moment!**

God the Father Confirms

Verse 11

We see a great illustration of the concept of the **Triune God** as work. The **Spirit and the Father confirming the Son's mission** and work!

“You are **MY beloved Son.** IN YOU I am well pleased”

God the Father here is confirming the identity of Jesus AND IS PLEASED...but Jesus had not done anything yet (wow!!)

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

When you **hear this confirmation from all these sources...YOU WOULD THINK THAT THE KING WAS ABOUT TO ATTEND HIS CORONATION...but that is not what happens.**

What we see AFTER the confirmation is a CRISIS!! It does not make sense but it has a purpose!

THE CRISIS

Verse 12, 13A

IMMEDIATELY THE SPIRIT IMPELLED (to lead with an **irresistible** force) Jesus to go out into the wilderness.

40 days he was in the wilderness being tempted by the devil!

We have read this account. It is in **all of the synoptic gospels!** The other gospels have more details but the **premise is the same.** This **crisis is contradictory to the calling** that Jesus just witnessed. **HOW CAN THIS BE THE SON OF GOD?** There was a **reason** for this!

The **40 days** represented the **40 years** that the Israelites spent in the wilderness! The **DIFFERENCE** is, **Jesus got it RIGHT!**

The bible says in **Isaiah 49:3** “You are My Servant, Israel, in whom I will show My Glory.” This prophetic word is from the **Father to the Son...**

JESUS *did NOT MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES* that Israel made!

He did not **grumble!**

He did not **complain!**

GOD IS **RESETTING HISTORY** WITH **JESUS** AS THE **PRIMARY PLAYER** TO **DEMONSTRATE THE OBEDIENCE** THAT GOD DESIRES!

He is tempted by Satan for **40 days** and yet He did not yield! The **crisis did not break Him...IT WAS USED AS COFIRMATION!** There is **confirmation in the crisis!**

Jesus is here **reliving the desert experience** but there is no failure this time! **Jesus is true Israel**, He is what Israel could never be!

How can this be? Because God always has an agenda and in this case, God is setting up salvation through the Son..the one who can sympathize with us in our weakness BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN TEMPTED IN EVERY WAY!!

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Many of us have a hard time reconciling our crises with God's calling on our lives.

Let me tell you that THE **CRISIS IS NOT SEPARATE** FROM THE CALLING...IT IS A PART OF THE CALLING!

Jesus Christ is the *author and finisher of our faith* and so the same blueprint that Jesus laid, we follow!

Baptism

We are **baptized into his death** so that we now **walk in the newness of life**. The baptism of the believer is an **outward sign** to those who witness it that **WE IDENTIFY WITH JESUS CHRIST!**

Spirit

We are **confirmed by the Spirit of God!** Paul says in **Ephesians 1:13** that we are **sealed in Christ with the Holy Spirit** of promise and that the **Spirit was given to us as a pledge** (down payment) of our inheritance with a view towards redemption!

Paul says again in **Romans 8:16** that the Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are **children of God!** We are not the Son of God but we are sons of God...the Spirit confirms that!

God

John 1:12 says as many as received them, Jesus gave US THE RIGHT to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name...who were **born not of blood** not the will of the flesh not the will of man but the will of God!

God calls us into fellowship with Himself through Jesus. **John 6:37** Jesus says "All that the Father gives me will come to Me and the one who comes to Me ***I will certainly not cast out!*** We are hidden in Christ in GOD!

WHERE IS OUR CRISIS?

Those who are in Christ will be confirmed by crisis! Paul says in **Acts 14:22**, through **much tribulation** we MUST enter the kingdom of God!

ALL WHO SEEK TO LIVE A GODLY LIFE IN CHRIST WILL BE PERSECUTED!

We are constantly engaged in warfare with the enemy of our souls. He is tempting and testing all the time! **Confirmation comes when the pressure is on!**

Our words under pressure will demonstrate what is IN us. Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks!

Under pressure, we *spea*k the WORD just as Jesus spoke the WORD. We *believe* the WORD Just as JESUS believed the word. We *resist* the devil just as Jesus resisted the devil!

The crisis does not mean that God is absent! The Holy Spirit did not abandon Jesus to the wilderness...He was there the WHOLE TIME! Don't you know that He is with you and IN YOU!?

There is a reward for perseverance!

Verse 13B

God will confirm you and comfort you in your crisis!

He did it for Jesus, we are sons and daughters of God (joint heirs), we are His children, He will do the same thing for us!

Introduction

Religious: from several terms in the bible...James Thompson defines the word religion or religious in the New Testament as stemming from three Greek roots;

As used in Acts 17:6 it could mean superstitious; as used in Acts 26 or James 1:26, the rituals and customs of Jewish worship; As used in the pastoral letters, it refers to godliness or piety...a reverence for God.

James says in James 1:27 that true, undefiled religion that is accepted by God our Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

This is not the definition of religion that I want to deal with today; rather I want to deal with the “customs” and “traditions”, many of which are set forth by men. The exacting standards set forth by men that complicate what it really means to follow the Lord.

Many have fled the church because it has become too “religious”. I don’t mean religious in the sense of godliness, but religious in the sense of creating legalistic codes and expectations that many of those who created them don’t even follow!

Relationship

On the flipside of religion is what God is truly seeking and that is relationship! God wants to be in intimate, personal relationship with man as evidenced by Him coming to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus was not a “religious man” although He kept the WHOLE LAW...he was a relational man (John 1:18 [He came to explain the Father to us]; Isaiah 7 [call Him Immanuel, God with us]). Jesus was different from the religious leaders of the time because he defied the boundaries that they had set. He defied the rules because He is greater than the rules. Jesus showed what it meant to be in relationship with the Father!

Relationship is not performance or rules centered but love centered!

What does it mean to be in relationship with God?

What it means to be in relationship with God is to understand that we cannot work our way to Him. We cannot make Him love us any more than He already does. We cannot control Him. We must accept His grace as He freely gives it and not because we earned it or deserve it.

Jesus is our bridge to relationship with God and yet, He was rejected by those who were supposed to know God.

PRELUDE

The text shows Jesus in the synagogue but the events that preceded this are important because they help to highlight this encounter. In Mark 2, after Jesus heals the paralytic, He shows that He is interested not in the elite of the society but in those who have been marginalized.

He called Levi (Matthew) from his tax booth [tax collectors were despised because, although Jewish, they worked for the Roman establishment] and not only that, He went to Matthew's house, reclined at the table and MANY tax collectors and sinners (i.e. irreligious Jews) were dining with Him.

The relational nature of Jesus comes through when He overhears the conversation of the scribes...they were asking "why is He eating with tax collectors and sinners? Mark 2:17 Jesus said to them, it is not the healthy who need a physician but the sick; I did not come to call the righteous but sinners!

IRONY: THE WHOLE OF HUMANITY IS SICK...but Jesus will only sit down to eat with those willing to admit it!

1 Cor 5:10 Paul said- I wrote to you not to associate with immoral people but I did not mean people of the world...if that was the case you would have to go out of the world! Paul, in this letter,

was talking about immoral BROTHERS i.e. religious folks who refused to repent, who sit in the church as cover!

It is not about not associating - that could lead to a relationship if we are being influential and not being influenced—Jesus was building relationships and He showed by calling Mathew as a disciple that He will take those who have been castout!

The church operates too much in religiosity. We think only perfect people should be allowed in. The church is a hospital where the sick come to be healed! Let them in and then let us demonstrate through our words and our actions HOW TO LIVE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!

Leading up to this scene, Jesus was also questioned about fasting. His answer showed the relational nature of His character. He says to his critics, MARK 2:19- Here Jesus is claiming to be the “bridegroom” and we are His bride. What is more intimate than that!?

Jesus shows that the religious leaders are not ready for relationship...they are old wineskins and He is bringing new wine that they are unable to contain! Therefore, He must use new wineskins to give this new message of relationship!

SABBATH

One constant sticking point during the ministry of Jesus was the Sabbath: God rested on the 7th day creation and thus instituted the Sabbath. The Jews “rested” sundown Fri- sundown Sat. as the Sabbath.

The issue was not the Sabbath but the burdensome rules that regulated the Sabbath! Warren Wiersbe writes that there were 79 different rules regarding the Sabbath [recall ONE commandment!! Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy...]

Jesus and his disciples were walking through the grain fields and the disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The religious leaders were upset because they were “breaking” the Sabbath and yet Jesus did not chide His disciples, he chided the religious leaders!

He recounted the story of David [1 Sam 21] eating the consecrated bread [reserved for priests] and said, the Sabbath was made for man, man was not made for the Sabbath. He says, The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath...i.e. I have authority over the Sabbath.

What Jesus shows in this instance is the freedom that comes along with following Him! Religion says that if you have to starve on the Sabbath, you starve...but being in relationship with

God says, “if I have prepared the grain...you can eat the grain, Sabbath or not!”

SHOWDOWN in the Synagogue

Here in the Synagogue, in the text, we see the difference between religion and relationship.

There was a man with a withered hand there and you know that these tense moments usually end up being moments of profound revelation.

Religion is both critical and hypocritical (verse 2)

They were “watching” Jesus! He knew that they were watching Him. Contrary to what they thought, He did not break the Law; He broke their rules...in protest. He worked on the Sabbath because He is God and it is His prerogative!

Jesus was there on the seventh day of creation!! He instituted the Sabbath so surely He knew what was permissible and what was not!

What Jesus did, He did out of His relationship to God (John 8:29- I always do what is pleasing to Him (Father))

The Rabbinic teachings said that only God could work on the Sabbath...Jesus said in John 5:17 after healing the man at the pool of Bethesda, My Father is WORKING until now , AND I Myself an WORKING. He said the SON can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Fatherdoing!

Religion is silent when confronted with the truth! (verses 3,4)

Jesus asked questions to probe where the relationship of the Pharisees was relative to God. When Jesus asked them about John's baptism, Jesus asked "was John's baptism from God or from man? IF man then John was not a prophet; if from God, why didn't you listen to him?" They answered "I don't know"...but Jesus knew... Because it cramped their religion!

RELIGION is "knowing" the correct answer BUT DOING something else. Are we merely concerned with appearances or are we concerned with God?

"Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or do evil? To save or to kill?" The answer to this question will determine if we are about religion or about relationship?

Religion is hard hearted but relationship is compassionate (Verse 5)

RELIGION is concerned ONLY with what people see! The people in the temple did not know the hearts of the religious leaders; they only knew what they saw. JESUS KNEW THEIR HEARTS!

That's why Jesus said to the people later in this gospel, They "pile up heavy burdens on others and yet they will not lift a finger", they do not take care of their parents when they are in need, they strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. He said do everything that they SAY but do not do what they do!

The HARD HEARTEDNESS of the Pharisees was frustrating and grievous to Jesus! Burge puts it plainly, "they practiced outward forms of religion for public viewing, but failed to pursue the inner values that the law promoted!

GRIEF: Sun-loo-peo "grieving because of another's misfortune..." He was grieving at their condition...literally feeling sorry for them because of the misfortune of their being so trapped in their traditions that they could not experience the freedom of God!!

Isaiah 1:14-18 READ I am not interested in your sacrifices or your offerings [RELIGIOSITY]...they don't mean anything to you they are only to satisfy your urge to believe that you've done something special! STOP BEING RELIGIOUS AND COME reason with Me, let me reveal your sins to you and let me wash you as white as snow!

Matthew's gospel (matt 12:13) makes a salient point Talking about the Sabbath laws and the teaching, Jesus quotes Hosea

6:6..."I desire MERCY, not sacrifice." There is no "mercy" in religion because it is dominated by the traditions of men and not by the love of God!

He healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath- He broke the Sabbath to DO GOD'S WORK!

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus only gave two commands: love the Lord, love your neighbor as yourself

It should be about Jesus and not traditions or religiosity!

Do we throw people out? NO, Jesus did not throw us out! We teach them about being in relation with God. We let the Holy Spirit convict and not us!

Question is: Am I to speak the truth in love? How? Speak the word of God! 2 Tim 3:16,17- as long as I stick to God's word and not what my mind says; then I am in a position to help people build a relationship with God.

No Child Left Behind
Mark 3:13-15

INTRODUCTION

There was a great multitude following Jesus

JEWS and GENTILES (Locations from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea beyond the Jordan and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon... These HEARD of all that He was doing

The crowd was so large that the disciples were asked to keep a boat ready (he was preaching on the shore)- Folks wanted to touch Jesus, touch the fringes of His garment! There is power in Jesus!

I can see Jesus **standing on the shores of time and those who hear the word either coming to Him or running away from Him...one day, time will be no more and those of us who have made the decision to follow Jesus will be with HIM on the other shore!**

Song: we shall **behold the lamb of God, **sitting** on the throne, no more crying, no more weeping, troubles will be gone...Hallelujah! There will be JOY forever more, when we reach the other shore!**

CALLING THOSE WHOM HE WANTED

Jesus had built a relationship with His disciples. He stayed at Peter's house. He ate dinner at Matthew's house...He walked with them...they were able to see His ministry up close and personal! There came a time during His ministry that Jesus singled some out from the crowd

Verse 13- Jesus **summoned** [proskaleo] he called for Himself...those whom He wanted or desired.

He did not simply call them...He **WENT UP** on the mountain... **AND HE SUMMONED THEM.** **Anyone know that there is a HIGHER CALLING in Jesus!** **BEING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS MEANS MOVING UP!** It means forsaking all else and **FOLLOWING HIM!**

It means PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK OF THE UPWARD CALLING OF GOD IN JESUS!

He bid them to come...**not in the imperative voice!** He **did not FORCE them** to come! He **let them respond** to His call...that's why it says, **"they came to Him."**

I know that **those who were at the base of the mountain** were **wondering** why these were singled out...

It says **whom He DESIRED** (WANTED, PURPOSES)

Here is where we can **get into a mess**. Some might interpret this as some sort of **divine election** or use it as a pedestal for predestination...but *Jesus did not call these disciples to the exclusion of the crowd*...He called them for the benefit of the crowd!

There was a purpose behind Jesus singling these men out. There was **nothing special** about these men within themselves...nor is there anything special about any of us! It is GOD's call, not man's call that matters!

What purpose does Jesus have in mind?

Verse 14a... He **APPOINTED** 12

Symbolic purpose

Here Jesus is calling 12... Hosea 1:11 the prophet says in "the **Sons of Judah** and the **Sons of Israel** will be **gathered together**, they will **appoint from themselves one leader**... [God appointed Christ...but their acceptance of Him is also implied here]

Symbolically, Jesus has already **crossed the Jordan** when He was **baptized**...He **relived the desert experience**, **40 days** being

tempted by the devil...and **NOW** He is **symbolically reassembling Israel under His Lordship!**

Matthew 19:28, Jesus tells the disciples **YOU who have followed me**, in the **regeneration** *when* the Son of man will sit on His glorious throne, **you also shall sit on 12 thrones** judging the 12 tribes of Israel!

Jesus, speaking to His disciples in **Luke 22:29,30** says that you are those who have **stood by me in My trials**; just as my Father has **granted me a kingdom**, **I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom and you will sit on 12 thrones...judging 12 tribes of Israel...**

This was **pleasing to God...it had a purpose** **BUT** the purpose is **not exclusionary!** **ALL WHO STAND WITH JESUS** WILL RULE WITH HIM in the COMING AGE!

Revelation 2:26 “He who **overcomes** and he who **keeps** my deeds until the end, **TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY** OVER THE NATIONS!

Revelation 3:21, He who **overcomes** I will **grant** Him to **sit down** on my throne!

I don't know about you but I want to be on the right side of Jesus so that I can rule with Him!

Practical Purpose

There was also a practical purpose here! **Verse 14b..**

Ephesians 4:11 says that He (**Jesus**) gave **some** to be **apostles, prophets, evangelists** and some as **pastors** and **teachers** **FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS** **FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE** to the **BUILDING** of the body of Christ!

Do you see the practical purpose?

1. **To be with Him** (*every Godly leader MUST have a close relationship with Jesus!*) They were **with Jesus** to **learn**, to **grow** into Christian leaders, to **soak up** everything that He had to teach **so that** they could **BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST!**

Jesus was laying the foundation of the church!

2. **To be sent out to preach!** The **definition** of **apostle** is "**one who has been sent**". Jesus was **converting** them **from** disciples to apostles!

Conditional (subjunctive) [**might-** recall **Judas:** **with Him** BUT **wasn't with Him...**could've preached but loved money more than God...]

He sent them out to be **heralds**, **proclaiming the GOOD NEWS!** Preaching the **gospel of God**, the same as **John** had preached and that **Jesus** was preaching...

Peter, Andrew, John and James were **WITH** Him when He preached! Jesus preached that the **kingdom of God is at hand**, repent and believe in the good news!

Jesus preached that **God was intervening in history** and **making it HIS-Story!**

The promise to make them **fishers of men** was now being fulfilled!

3. **They were given authority to cast out the demons!** Here, Jesus was **putting an army together** to **COME INTO DIRECT CONFLICT** with **Satan** and his demonic hordes! The authority **belongs to Jesus**, it is **on loan** to the apostles!

Jesus delegates authority but ALL POWER IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH BELONGS TO HIM!!

By delegating authority, these men were now representatives of the Kingdom of God!!

It is important to understand that this authority MUST come from Jesus! The seven sons of Sceva found out when they tried to cast out demons—they said in Acts 19, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches and the demon says, I recognize Jesus, I know of Paul but who are you?! The demon whipped them and sent them running naked! Some are like Simon the sorcerer thinking they can buy the Holy Spirit and the power that He gives...

BUT IT IS ONLY BY THE FINGER OF GOD THAT DEMONS ARE CAST OUT...THE SICK ARE HEALED...THE OPPRESSED ARE SET FREE!! WE CAN'T BUY THIS AUTHORITY, IT MUST BE GIVEN TO US FROM ABOVE!

Wrap up

What we see is that Jesus did not exclude the crowd, He did leave any child behind...he prepared his disciples to MULTIPLY His church!

Multitudes followed, disciples called out, appointed and sent out to preach and cast out demons [power in deputation-there was a singular mission] – they were called out to go back into the multitudes and make more disciples!

Jesus has a purpose for each and every one of us! It is not the will of God that any should perish but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth...do you know who the truth is? JESUS CHRIST!

EVERYONE DOES NOT HAVE THE SAME PURPOSE but if Jesus calls, and you respond, believe that He will put you to work AFTER YOU'VE BEEN WITH HIM!

Jesus is not hasty about sending us

We have to be RESPOND to Him

We have to FOLLOW Him

We have to be WITH Him

And then He will send us out to work in His Vineyard!!

The same thing is true of His salvation! There is no special election, Christ is elect! Those who respond to His call are elect in HIM!! The SUMMING UP of all things is in Jesus Christ! In HIM we have redemption, in HIM we obtained an predestined inheritance according to HIS purpose, in HIM we were sealed with the Holy Spirit! In HIM we were created for good works! In HIM we are seated in the heavenly places!!

Just like He called 12 up the mountain, He's still calling!!

How do I know?

Revelation 7

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb,

**clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;
10and they cry out with a loud voice, saying,**

**“Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the
Lamb.” 11And all the angels were standing around the throne
and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell
on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12saying,**

**“Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and
honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever.
Amen.”**

**CLOSE: Then I saw a multitude too great to count! When the
saints go marching in, I want to be in that number!**

**A House Divided
Mark 3:20-29**

In the text, the family of Jesus has gotten concerned because He was at home and a great crowd has assembled. They were pressing on each other...good thing that Jesus was not claustrophobic!

Verse 21 says that His people thought He was CRAZY...HE HAD LOST HIS SENSES!

This was not the first time that someone accused Jesus of being insane...many thought that he was possessed because many of his statements were so radical!

Anyone know that Jesus can make radical claims because we serve a radical God who can do radical things? Radical may be too strong...how about miraculous?! Jesus said things that seemed impossible to men and yet with God all things are possible!

THE ACCUSATION

Verse 22 READ

This was the scene this house...the scribes from Jerusalem were trying to insult Jesus! I can imagine the tension in the house. I

can imagine the debate...here are scribes from the hdy city, well respected...arguing with Jesus and **accusing him of being in COLLUSION WITH SATAN!**

THE COMEBACK VERSE 23

He **called them to Himself...**almost like “Come here...” and then yelling... **ARE YOU SERIOUS?!**

DOES THAT EVEN MAKE SENSE WHAT YOU JUST SAID?

Obviously the religious leaders **underestimated the arrogance of Satan** and they **have no clue about the power of God!**

GOD DOES NOT NEED SATAN TO HELP JESUS ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM IN THE EARTH [**let's play nice and let me beat up on you...**] **Satan is too arrogant to cooperate...**not to mention, he has **no fellowship** with God!

His destruction is imminent and the war is real!

[divided] Not Alabama and Auburn living under the same roof

This is a **supernatural war** that has been waged from the beginning of time!

There are **two rival kingdoms** that exist, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the air.

VERSE 24-26 THE IMPLICATIONS OF DIVISION

There are practical, logical implications of division

Division will destroy any institution! Any **church** cannot stand with division, **families** cannot stand with division; this is a **simple parable with profound implications!**

Look at the **progression** (Greater to lesser)

Kingdom (Satan does actually have a kingdom here (**Luke 4:6**[**all handed over to me**] → **House** → **Satan** [**Application of parable**])

IF SATAN IS FIGHTING AGAINST HIMSELF, HE IS FINISHED!

ANYONE KNOW HE'S FINISHED ANYWAY BECAUSE JESUS IS THE DESTROYER OF SATAN'S WORKS! HE IS FINISHED ANYWAY BECAUSE JESUS IS ALPHA AND OMEGA!

Jesus asked this **question in Matthew's gospel**: "**If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?**"

We should **recall another encounter in John 8** when Jesus was **arguing with the religious leaders** in John 8 and he told them point blank, **IF YOU ARE ABRAHAM'S CHILDREN, WHY DO YOU SEEK TO KILL ME?**"

HE SAYS, **YOU ARE OF YOUR FATHER THE DEVIL** AND YOU WANT TO DO THE DESIRES OF YOUR FATHER!

Jesus makes is clear, I do not cast out demons out by Beelzebul but by the finger of God! **Because of that**, the kingdom of God has come upon you!!

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DIVISION VERSES 26,27

A house divided has two different agendas! Christ has the **agenda of life** and Satan, the **agenda of death!** Polar opposites!

THE **ENEMY** COMES TO **STEAL, KILL AND DESTROY** BUT **JESUS** CAME TO GIVE **ABUNDANT LIFE!**

Isaiah 49:25 – the **tyrant is bound...I CAME TO UNDO THE TYRANT'S WORK**; to set the captives free; to set the oppressed free; **I came to bind up the strong man and ROB HIS HOUSE!**

WE DO NOT WORK TOGETHER, WE ARE IN CONFLICT! WE'VE **BEEN in CONFLICT** SINCE HE SAID “**I WILL MAKE MYSELF LIKE THE MOST HIGH GOD**”!

UNPARDONABLE SIN VERSES 28-30

The attitude of the scribes **brings us to a chilling moment** in this scripture. Many have wrestled with this verse of scripture that is recorded in all three of the synoptic gospels...

To **set this up**, let's **rewind to verse 20 READ...**

NOW, **verse 22 READ...**

See **distinction**, his **family** is coming to rescue him and they say..."He is out of his mind..." they **spoke ill of their own brother!** They **spoke a word against the Son of Man...** [**Matthew**]

Compare with the scribes: "He is possessed; casts out demons by **Beelzebub**"

Now verse 29, any blasphemies uttered (forgiven); anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit (no forgiveness)

blasphemy or speech meant to injure- mostly used in reference to God → **speech meant to injure God.**

Out of the **overflow of the heart**, the mouth speaks! Their **WORDS revealed** what they believed in their hearts!

1 Corinthians 12:3 says No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Spirit; No one who has the Spirit can say Jesus be accursed.

Acts 7:51 – Stephen spoke to a similar group and said "**you ALWAYS resist the Holy Spirit**"

Vine describes the condition of their hearts as “beyond divine illumination” if they were witnesses to the works of the Holy Spirit and **STILL REJECT Jesus Christ!**

Their blasphemy was a symptom of the disease of persistent unbelief!

They took the work of the finger of God and credited it to the hand of Satan...all in an attempt to destroy Jesus and discredit His ministry!

It is not that God CANNOT forgive...**BUT WE HAVE TO** first **BELIEVE** that Jesus is LORD and **THEN HUMBLE OURSELVES TO ASK** for forgiveness!

ATHEISTS OF TODAY

What these scribes said is similar to the arguments that atheists make every day. They made excuses for their unbelief AND they continued to reject His Lordship!

The unpardonable sin is not ONE sin, it is a pattern of unbelief and a constant rejection of Jesus Christ!

It is only unpardonable because the one who needs pardoning will NOT accept the ONE who is able to pardon!

1 John 5:16, there is a sin that leads to death...

What is that sin? Is it suicide? Is it murder? Is it homosexuality...no, it is unbelief and rejection of Jesus Christ!

Hebrews 10:28,29- [Paraphrase] anyone who breaks the Law of Moses dies without mercy based on the testimony of two witnesses, **how much greater punishment** is there for one who has **trampled underfoot the Son of God, regarded his sacrifice as unclean AND insulted the Spirit of Grace?**

CLOSE:

Satan was busy trying to tear down the kingdom of God before the first brick was ever laid!

He caused **Herod's wife** to hate John the Baptist and eventually had Him beheaded

He **tempted Jesus** in the desert for 40 days

He **wanted Jesus to worship him...**but Jesus said that you are to worship the Lord your God only!

He was busy trying to tear down God's kingdom **from the time God said** let us make man in our own image!

He immediately **sought to destroy the creation...**because he **couldn't hold a candle to the creator!**

He was **coming at Jesus, the king** of the kingdom of God...from **every angle**

He **tried to use Peter** to keep him from Calvary

He **thought He was using Judas** to set Jesus up...but Judas was simply a means to an end!

What he meant for bad, God used for the good of the whole world!

The **devil was busy** BUT Jesus said...**upon this ROCK, the rock of MY IDENTITY, THE ROCK OF MY STATUS AS THE CHRIST, I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT!**

Satan **understood that the kingdom** of God would be **established through the blood of the lamb** and he was even at the foot of the cross telling Jesus to come down!

Satan was so busy, he had the **soldiers roll a heavystone** in front of the tomb...but **death was associated with Satan** and **Jesus has NO association with him...**

so **Jesus did not stay in the realm of the dead...**no, to **PROVE** that **light and darkness have no fellowship, HE SWALLOWED UP DEATH, HE TOOK THE STING OUT OF DEATH AND ON THE 3RD DAY HE GOT UP WITH ALL POWER IN HIS HANDS!**

Prepositions
Mark 4:3-9

Why begin a sermon with grammar? Why go back to **elementary school**. Why? It is vital to see this from the perspective of the writer. Writers use many trick to make points and Mark here is no different. His **gospel used to be looked over** because of the bad Greek grammar until scholars learned to appreciate his writing style.

What is a preposition? **A preposition is a part of speech that denotes location**. Think of a **rabbit and a log**. The rabbit can be on the log. He can be alongside the log. He can be in the log...etc. Here in this text, the prepositions used make all the difference in the world.

To understand the parable, we need to **rewind to chapter 3:**

READ 3:35- This is the classic **Markan sandwich**...there is a story in the middle and two stories around it that make the meat make sense.

Two stories being told: Recall, **family was stricken with unbelief** and therefore divided over the identity of Jesus; The **scribes** had **accused Jesus of being in collusion with the devil** so this parable that Jesus told has **connections to the story** in chapter 3- the **illustrations of the types of ground** were **ALL PRESENT** in that crowded house:

LISTEN TO THE PREPOSITIONS: ALONG, ONTO, AMONG and INTO

His **family** could be considered the **roadside or even rocky ground**; **some** in the house were **rocky ground** with no depth; but there **HAD to be others who were in the house that the Word went down IN-TO!**

Jesus uses an **agricultural example** to strike a chord with the people. In this parable, we can see that not only were his **family and the scribes an illustration** but these **different soils are also used to illustrate the condition of the WORLD!**

1. ALONG the ROADSIDE:

We know the roadside! We have been those who have **kept our distance from Jesus!** Jesus says that the sower sowed seed and some **FELL ALONG** the roadside...*happenstance*, no chance for taking any root.

Jesus says in **verse 15 READ**; the roadside is where the **CROWS hang to snatch away the WORD!**

Matthew's gospel sheds light on this. He says in Matthew 13:19 that when anyone **hears** the word and **does not understand**, what they have is taken away from them.

Here is a point of controversy! **That's not fair?** Well, we need to **look closer-** the word understand in the **Greek** is **Su-niemi**, it is an **active verb-** is means to **"put together"**

So the **ROADSIDE FOLKS DO NOT PUT IT TOGETHER.** The **WORD** is sown, it **FALLS ALONG** the roadside and the ones there **DON'T EVEN BOTHER TO PICK IT UP!**

That's why the **CROWS** can come and eat it up! That's why Satan can come in and snatch it away...**because it's not being held onto anyway!**

2. ONTO Rocky Ground

Jesus says that the seed that is sown on rocky ground springs up quickly but when heat is applied, it is scorched. **It's not the scorching that kills it, it is the lack of a root!** The ground **"looks rocky"** i.e. there is something **deceptive** going on here!

There is **soil on top** but **underneath it is rocky** so the roots have nowhere to go!

The result is a long sprout with a short root! We should **seek DEEP ROOTS** then we can be **like a tree planted by the rivers** of water whose **leaves don't wither** and who **brings forth his fruit** in due season!

Look what happens: Verse 16,17 READ

Christians are like teabags..you don't know what's in them until you put them in a little hot water!

ROCKY SOIL means the mouth says the right things but the heart is still a heart of stone!

The *mouth boasts great things* BUT WHEN THE PRESSURE IS ON, when *sickness* comes, when *persecution* comes...where is the faith!?

ROCKY GROUND receives the word with joy UNTIL we REALIZE that the *WORD has to take ROOT and the WORD has to UPROOT* those old things that separate us from God!

When the feel-good is over, are we still willing to stay with God?

Oswald Chambers wrote in My Utmost for His Highest, "It doesn't take grace to weather a storm, it takes grace to weather a storm and remain a disciple of Jesus Christ!"

3. AMONG the THORNS

Verse 7-

DO we have a **Mary spirit or a Martha spirit?** Mary sat at the feet of Jesus while Martha was “distracted” with all of her preparations!

The **thorns** of life and **busyness** will **choke the life of the believer!** We get **so caught up that we cannot get caught up!** **Everyone in here has been in the weeds before!**

Verse 18,19 READ

The **WORRIES of the world**...trying to keep up with the **culture**, trying to **assimilate**, trying to follow **what's trending**...Jesus said in **Matthew 6:33** to **seek FIRST** the KINGDOM OF GOD!

Chasing the dollar, the “**DESIRE for other things**” **CHOKES THE WORD OUT** and make it unfruitful!

The **seed has been sown** but the **weeds of life KEEP IT FROM BEARING ANY FRUIT!** The **word** is **turned into a “fast food meal”** when it is **meant to be savored!**

4. INTO GOOD SOIL...

This **should be the desire of every Christian**, to be good soil! Good soil has to be tilled! The sower **usually sowed on freshly plowed ground.**

If we look at this through **spiritual eyes**, the **PROPHETS PLOWED THE GROUND FOR JESUS TO COME IN AND SOW THE SEED**. **Matthew 13:16** says that many prophets and righteous men longed to see what the disciples were seeing and hear what they were hearing!

Good soil **is not good on its own**, good soil **has to be tilled by the Holy Ghost!** Good soil has to be **watered by the heavenly Father!** Good soil has to be **prepared when the Word of God breaks into it!**

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Good soil is distinctly different from the road side! The ones on the **roadside don't bother to pick up** the seed! The ones who are considered **good soil "understand" or "put together"** what the WORD IS saying.

THEY RESPOND TO THE WORD! They put the facts together and say...**THIS APPLIES TO ME!**

They **hear the words**, **we are all sinners in need of a savior** and they **say...YES, that's me**

They hear the words, **repent and be saved** and they say...**YES, that's me**

“ “ **ONLY Jesus can forgive your sins** and they say “**I can live with that!**”

Good soil doesn't invent excuses NOT TO BELIEVE; Good soil does not have preconceived notions about WHO JESUS IS! GOOD SOIL ACCEPTS JESUS ON FACE VALUE!

Jesus says good soil produces fruit! Good soil ACCEPTS the word! When we ACCEPT the WORD and we don't look for loopholes, the WORD CAN ACTUALLY PRODUCT FRUIT IN OUR LIVES!

CLOSE:

The beauty of Jesus is this...HE IS CONSTANTLY TILLING THE GROUND! ROCKY SOIL DOESN'T HAVE TO STAY SHALLOW; WEEDS CAN BE CUT DOWN; THOSE ON THE ROADSIDE CAN BE BROUGHT IN!

EXAMPES:

Paul was by the roadside...holding coats while Stephen was stoned!

One day, Paul was traveling the Damascus road and a bright light shone down from heaven, blinded him, let him know that he was BAD SOIL, ROADSIDE SOIL and out of that light he heard a voice...Saul, Saul why do you persecute me? Who are you Lord? I am Jesus CHRIST!

I came to turn your bad soil into good ground!

Peter seemed like good ground but he was as shallow as a kiddie pool from Wal-Mart! He heard the word, he jumped up...but

when he got into Pilate's outer court, and a little slave girl called him out for being "one of them"...when his speech betrayed him...all of his talking, boasting and bragging came to an end when he denied Jesus three times!

But this same Peter, who walked on water and sank down! Who thought he would go to the cross with Jesus! Preached at Pentecost and 3000 people were saved! That rocky soil was sifted by the devil and Jesus said, when you have turned again...strengthen your brethren!

The woman at the well was one who was in the weeds of life. They were choking the life out of her. Man after man, she went! Marriage after marriage she went...until she met a man named Jesus! She put her water jug down and said, come see a man who told me everything that I have ever done! Jesus cut the weeds down in her life and she was never the same!

The question to day is which preposition describes you? Are you "along" the roadside, are you "on" the rocks? Are you "among" the thorns? OR is the word going down INTO good soil?

You know what makes good soil, a heart that says, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God! I believe that Jesus Christ died at Calvary for my sins! I believe with all my heart that God raised Him up from the dead! I believe that He now sits at the right hand of God the Father interceding for me!

Verse 25: This is not unfair...IF we are ACCEPTING the WORD and ALLOWING it to produce fruit, FRUIT glorifies God! We will receive MORE!

"The Right Response"
Luke 5:1-11

The calling of the disciples is recorded in each of the four gospels but Luke adds details that Matthew and Mark omit. Here in Luke's gospel, there is a rich account of the calling of Peter, James and John who would later become the inner circle disciples of Christ. In the text, Jesus had been living in Capernaum.

The way that Luke writes this, Jesus met Peter prior to the encounter that we will deal with because he left the Synagogue with him and went to his home. He also healed his mother-in-law so Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ.

There were some other things that happened at Peter's house...there were sick people from all over being brought to Jesus. Jesus did not seek refuge, he was right there in the thick of it all...anyone know that's who Jesus is. He feeds the hungry, clothes the naked and cares for the poor and the broken of society!

Peter had to hear the demons that were driven out—they bible says they came out shouting, "you are the Son of God!" He got a ringside seat to witness the finger of God working!

So now, Jesus is teaching on the shore and the crowds were mobbing Him so he gets into Peter's boat. The fishermen were washing their nets but they were within earshot of the Word being taught. This is where we can see two things at work: We see the response to Jesus the man and we see the response to Jesus the Master.

Jesus gives Peter two commands in the text:

Command 1: Verse 3...There is a cordial response...the response of human goodness...

Anyone with a conscience would do the same thing. We are all born with a conscience. We all "know the right thing to do" so the cordial response is human...but there is also what I call, the "right" response.

This is not just a mere man we are talking about, this is Jesus. The one who the bible says is the firstborn over all creation, in whom the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, the Word made flesh so he not only demands a human response, but the "right" response.

Command 2: Verse 4, Push out to the deep water and let your net down for a catch

We must respond to His authority Verse 5 [BUT]

This takes faith; Jesus says drop your nets again; The human response is skeptical...I've done this before, we have been fishing all night; I already know what the result will be!

Then Peter says...BUT I will do as you say and drop the nets. The right response is obedience to the authority of God! That's called FAITH! Follow even if contrary to your human intuition.

Peter calls Jesus MASTER (Greek- - Epistata- commander, chief) he recognizes the authority of Jesus... This term is particular to Luke's writing and is ONLY used of Jesus. Peter is indicating that he will take orders from Jesus- His authority was unquestionable- He commanded the demons, he taught with authority and he spoke with authority!

Verse 6,7 READ He let down the net and caught more fish in a few minutes than he caught all night. Don't you think that while Jesus was teaching, the fish were gathering? I believe that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and everything in it! I believe that he owns the cattle on a thousand hills!

He was setting Peter up for this moment because His plan was more than simply going out in Peter's boat, He was about to call Peter to faith! The houseguest was now standing at the door to Peter's heart and waiting to be invited in!

Jesus got into Peter's boat in order to get into His life! He invaded Peter's profession in order to get Peter's confession!

Jesus will seek us out, but it is up to us to push the boat away from the shoreline!

The right response always yields a blessing: Verse 6 (the haul was great...Faith is always rewarded!) Hebrews 11:6 says without faith it is impossible to please God...so the converse of that MUST be true, WITH faith, it is POSSIBLE to please God!

Faith in God means that we can say to the mountain, be thou cast into the sea and the God of heaven and earth will pluck the mountain up and cast it into the sea!

We respond to the authority of God with faith and obedience!

We must respond to His holiness Verse 8

Peter's response to God's holiness- REVERENCE (LORD-Kurios)- "I don't deserve to be in your presence"

Note Peter's actions...he bowed down to Jesus! This was the same way that Isaiah reacted. He says in Isaiah 65 "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

The word Kurios (Lord) can be general or it can be specific...Here Luke is using the term to denote the deity of Jesus Christ. Peter would later preach at Pentecost (also written by

Luke) that the Father has made Jesus BOTH LORD and CHRIST! Jesus told the Gerasene demoniac, after his exorcism, Go and tell your family what good things the Lord has done for you! He is our LORD and Savior!

I am certain that Peter heard the demons that were driven out of the people who came to his mother-in-law's house—they bible says they came out shouting, "you are the Son of God!" He got a ringside seat to witness the finger of God working!

Recall, Jesus was unceremoniously rejected in Nazareth's synagogue; the same synagogue that it was His custom to read in on the Sabbath;

Scenario: [Quoted Is 61 (Luke 4); Physician heal yourself; Nazareth was hardened with unbelief—this is Joseph's son...we know them, where is he getting all of this stuff from? Knowing their unbelief, Jesus says...undoubtedly you will say to me, "physician heal yourself!" Prove that what you were doing in Capernaum is for real!

They took Jesus to the edge of the city intending to push Him over the cliff...but He passed through them...

We cannot afford to be a city full of unbelief...the bible says that he did not do [not could not do] many miracles there because of their unbelief!

The synagogue said to Jesus, YOU ARE NOT WORTHY to be here because you called our sins out! We don't respect you as Lord or Master!

Peter says to Jesus, I AM UNWORTHY because of my sins- Jesus did not have to say anything!

Here is the difference in one who would believe versus one who will not- coming to grips with the sinfulness of our condition and the holiness of God!

The right response is to recognize our sinfulness before Jesus. The bible says 'not one is righteous'! Peter's response showed his understanding of his broken fellowship, his brokenness before God.

That is what God desires...Psalm 51:17 says the sacrifices of God are a broken heart and a broken and contrite spirit..he will not despise either of these!

Here is the beauty, God's response to our brokenness - - God says in Isaiah 1:18, though your sins are as scarlet, they will be white as snow!

We must respond to His grace Verse 9-11

Jesus's response was not the same as it was in the Synagogue at Nazareth. It was different, He says to Peter and the others because of their amazement (fear), don't be afraid..from now on you will be catching men.

The fish were only a glimpse of the evangelistic power that would characterize Peter's ministry. The fish were symbolic of what Christ was going to accomplish through these men!

God's grace is free to all but especially to those humble enough to admit we need it! He opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble! To the one with the broken heart, he will bind up, the one in prison or oppressed, Jesus will set free, the one who sits in darkness, Jesus is a light- all He is looking for is the right response!

Verse 11 READ

The proper response to His grace is to leave everything behind and follow Him! There was risk involved, Jesus' ministry was

itinerant, he traveled around the region of Galilee, his life would be sought by the religious leaders...and so would thiers!

The cost of discipleship is high, but the reward is even higher! Matthew 19, later in His ministry, Peter says to Jesus...'we've left everything to follow you; what will be for us?' These men were business owners, married men with much to lose...but following Jesus we also have much to gain!

Jesus says in Matthew 19:29 that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne...when everything has been set right, everyone who has left everything (houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms) for Christ's name sake will receive many times as much and will inherit eternal life!

I heard a song that said, I've counted the cost, I count it ALL loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Paul said it a different way, he said (paraphrase)- - I had it all, but I count it all rubbish for the sake of knowing Christ!

Our hearts must be set on following Jesus! Our minds must be set on following Jesus!

There is a reward for the right response! What is the right response? Look to Jesus for the answer:

Fixing our eyes on Jesus who is the author and the finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the Father!

We should respond just like Jesus responded! The Father sent Jesus as the propitiation for our sins, Jesus' response was Calvary!

The Father gave Jesus the power to lay His life down, Jesus' response was being laid in a borrowed tomb.

The Father gave Jesus the power to pick His life up again...Jesus responded on the third day by getting up with all power in His hand!

The right response will always yield a blessing! Are you ready to respond today?

Put in perspective[the right response to pain will yield wisdom and strength; the right response to adversity will bring us closer to God; the right response to Jesus will bring eternal life!]

SPEAKING IN PARABLES

Here in the text, Mark emphasizes Jesus teaching in **parables**. A parable is a saying used to communicate a spiritual truth using a real-life example. Whenever Jesus speaks **parabolically**, it is to veil the meaning to those listening such that **THE REVELATION OF THE MEANING MUST COME FROM GOD!**

Anyone know that in order to get revelation concerning the things of God, we must seek His wisdom.

Paul prayed for the Ephesian church that the **eyes of their hearts might be enlightened**. **James** advises that if **ANYONE lacks wisdom**, let him ask God who **gives to all freely** without reproach.

Jesus would **speak in parables in public and teach his disciples in private** what the parables meant. The ones who **followed Jesus closest** were **able to get understanding**.

NOT AN EARTHLY KING

Here, Jesus **re-introduces** us to the phrase, **"the kingdom of God"**. As **John the Baptist** prepared the way for Jesus, he preached, **"repent for the kingdom of God is at hand"**. When

John went to prison and Jesus began preaching, He did not deviate!

This would mean different things to different people, depending on what they were looking for. Those who were looking for a military and political solution to the problem of Roman oppression would interpret this as meaning: “We’re free!”

Jesus didn’t come to be an earthly king- he said to Pilate (John 18:36)- “my kingdom is not of this world..”

HOW MANY KNOW that Jesus came to establish the KINGDOM of God on earth using earthly subjects!

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

Used interchangeably with the “kingdom of heaven.” It simply means a kingdom of which God (Jesus) is the head.

There are two kingdoms operating simultaneously- God’s kingdom and Satan’s kingdom. We are either subjects in one kingdom or the other.

Colossians 1:13 says that the believer has been rescued from the kingdom of darkness and TRANSFERRED to the Kingdom of

God's beloved Son, and in the SON we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

One kingdom is marked by sin and the **other kingdom is marked by the blood of Jesus** Christ and the forgiveness that comes along with His blood.

HOW DOES IT GROW?

Contrary to what many who are "**dominoinists**" claim, **God does not need us to establish His kingdom, Jesus already did that!** We are subject to His rule and His authority!

Jesus came to **initiate/ establish the God's kingdom** on earth **SO THAT GOD'S WILL be done on earth as it is in heaven!**

As souls are added, the kingdom grows!

Verse 27 [parable is used to illustrate the mystery of God and how He works!]

The seed sprouts and grows- how, he himself does not know. Here **the farmer is NOT God** because **God does not sleep** **nor is he ignorant** to how His kingdom increases. **IT IS GOD WHO GIVES THE INCREASE!**

Verse 28

Through God's power and through what God has placed into the soil, we see that **God brings the crops to maturity**. **The farmer is not the one who does this i.e. it is not by human effort** but by God's grace.

Two Pictures

1. We see how the believer comes to maturity. None of us begin sanctified, we are being sanctified. We all start off as sprouts. We mature as we live and walk and are conformed to the image of Christ.

It is **UNKNOWN to others HOW this happens** BUT...Jesus said one who is born again is **like the wind**, you hear it but you **don't know where it comes from or where it is going**..so it is with one BORN OF THE SPIRIT!

Philippians 1:6, I am confident that the **ONE who BEGAN a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ!**

2. We see how God builds His kingdom, slowly and gradually. **IF GOD WANTED TO**, He could breathe and set all things right!

God is not slow as some count slowness, but He is patient toward us not wishing that anyone should perish.

Our assignment: live as citizens of God's kingdom, controlled by His Spirit, glorifying Jesus Christ at every opportunity, letting our light shine so that men might see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven!

Partial Fulfillment versus Complete Fulfillment

Many often use **the presence of evil in the world** to say that God is not in control. They say, well **I can only see Satan's kingdom** operating and therefore God must not be in control.

Satan even bragged to Jesus that all of the earth and the kingdoms of the earth were his to give to whomever he wished. **WHAT HE DOES NOT SEEM TO REALIZE IS THAT THIS "DOMAIN AND ITS GLORY" ARE PASSING AWAY!** His kingdom is **ONLY TEMPORARY!**

John says in **1 John 2:15** **"Do not love the world OR the things in the world"** He says later that the **WORLD IS PASSING AWAY!**

Jesus refused the offer because He knew that HIS KINGDOM IS AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM!

Daniel 7:13,14 READ

PARTIAL vs COMPLETE

What we have to **understand** is Partial fulfillment vs complete fulfillment

Isaiah 9:6, 7 READ

This prophecy was **partially fulfilled when Jesus Christ was born of a virgin in a stable, with animals.**

The rest of the story HAS NOT BEEN TOLD YET!

When it says the “**government will rest on His shoulders**”...it is **not resting there now**, but the bible says that He will rule the nations with an iron scepter!

His **name will be called** “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace!

He will **uphold** justice and righteousness!

We **cannot believe everything that our eyes see**- what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal!

It **might LOOK like Satan is winning** but **the devil is defeated!** It **might look like the world is winning** but let me tell you, **the devil is a liar!**

CLOSE: THE REAPING

Verse 29

When the harvest is right, **the farmer puts in the sickle!** What does this mean? This parable has an **eschatological** meaning as well.

TO understand it better, Matthew says that ***by night, an enemy went in and sowed tares where the wheat was growing!*** He tried to **sabotage** out the crop...and the **farmer says, let's not take the tares out** lest we take out some of the wheat too...let them grow UP together and we separate at the harvest!

Joel 3:13, 14 “**PUT IN THE SICKLE FOR THE HARVEST IS RIPE.** Come, **tread**, for the wine press is full; the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. **Multitudes, multitudes** in the valley of decision! **For the day of the Lord is near** in the valley of decision.”

It **looks bad** sometimes with Ebola; ISIS; cancer; death; sickness; poison coming from the pulpits of churches; churches being FORCED to perform homosexual marriages; beheadings..it LOOKS BAD!

BUT THE HARVEST IS COMING! The LORD WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS! He is not sleeping, He sees what’s going on and He is going to set it all right!

Revelation 14:14

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand!

Verse 15 READ

Introduction

Jesus and the disciples decided to go over to the “other side”. They get into the boat and other boats are with them headed over to the Gerasenes. **It was Jesus’ suggestion.**

He was **not one to sit in one spot**. He said in **Mark 1:38**, let us go somewhere else, to towns nearby so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.

Everything was **calm**. The trip was so smooth that Jesus fell asleep on a cushion in the stern of the boat. They were all set for a **sunset cruise** but that was soon **interrupted!**

What caused the storm?

The Sea of Galilee is known for its **violent storms** which can come up **suddenly**. [**680 feet below sea level**] It is bounded by hills, especially on the east side where they reach 2000 feet high. These heights are a source of cool, dry air.

The cooler air masses from the surrounding mountains collide with the warm air in the lake’s basin. The most violent storms are caused by the fierce winds which blow off the Golan Heights

from the east. One such storm in **March 1992** sent 10 ft. waves crashing into downtown Tiberias.

WHEN TURBULENCE COMES, WE NEED JESUS IN THE BOAT!

BEING IN THE BOAT WITH JESUS IS THE SAFEST PLACE ON EARTH!

1. We need Jesus in the boat because we are not exempt from trial (verse 37)

Storm popped up **out of nowhere!** This was a **REAL storm**, complete with **thunder clouds**, **gusts of wind** about **40 mph**, floods of rain...

Aristotle referred to these types of storms as **whirlwinds that came up from below!** *WE KNOW WHO OPERATES FROM BELOW!*

Spiritual Significance of the Storm

I believe this storm was an **ambush from the enemy**. It happened when Jesus was “**sleeping**”. In light of where Jesus and the disciples were headed, to an **encounter** with a man who had **2000 or so demons** possessing him, I believe that Satan wanted to take Jesus out!

TURBULENCE AND TROUBLING OF THE WATERS ARE SATAN'S SPECIALTY!

CONFUSION AND FEAR ARE HIS CHOICE WEAPONS BUT GOD IS A GOD OF PEACE!

God is **not the author of confusion** and when Satan stirs the waters up, **Jesus calms** them down!

Psalm 89:8,9 “O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty Lord? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. *You rule the swelling of the sea;* when its waves rise, you still them.”

Every now and then we will get these **spontaneous storms** in our lives! Our boats will get rocked! **Just because Jesus is in the boat** does not mean that it will always be **smooth sailing!**

We will face trouble in this life! We will face **loss** in this life!

BUT IF JESUS IS IN THE BOAT, HE IS SHELTER FROM THE STORM.

Anyone know that **THE NAME OF THE LORD IS A STRONG TOWER** and the righteous can run into it and be safe!

Thank God that **whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High** will **abide** in the shadow of the **Almighty!** He will be our **refuge**, He will be our **fortress**, He is our God in whom **we trust!**

2. We need Jesus in our boat to know that He cares for us 38

The bible says that we are to **cast our cares upon Jesus because He cares for us!** **The disciples did the best thing they could do...they went and got Jesus!** They **cried out** to Jesus!

He was **sleeping!** I thank God that *even when we panic*, He remains calm!

It may have caught the disciples by surprise but **NOTHING catches Jesus by surprise!**

They **ask Jesus if it concerns Him** that they were perishing. Many have made this text to seem as if Jesus was in some lower level of the boat. This was an uncovered boat, not a luxury liner so Jesus must have been exhausted to remain sleep during this storm!

This is a **picture of the humanity of Jesus...but also a great illustration of the peace that Jesus had and His FAITH!** He **never worried** whether the Father would take care of Him, He said in

John 8:29 “And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

When they asked if Jesus CARED...he showed them. Verse 39

We talked last week about how the kingdom of God is being **gradually set up** **BUT** every now and then God will **ACT IMMEDIATELY-**

He will speak to a situation immediately and say **PEACE BE STILL!!** The sleeping Jesus woke up and did what **ONLY GOD COULD DO!**

The **storm was a combination of the wind AND the water** so Jesus **REBUKED** the **wind** [curbed the wind's ferocity] and **said HUSH, be still to the water!**

AND there was a GREAT calm!

Here is **a great application** of this text: **IF WE WANT A COMPLETE RESOLUTION TO A SITUATION, GIVE IT TO JESUS!**

We need Jesus in our boats so that we can LEARN more about who He is (verse 40)

The **more time we spend with Jesus**, the more we realize what a mighty God we serve!

He says, **Why are you afraid?** Do you still have no faith? As the disciples of Jesus Christ, **we walk by faith**. We **live by faith**. We do not base our lives on what our eyes see.

It is **easy to lambast the disciples** but everyone in this room would have been screaming and hollering trying to wake Jesus up! **Their faith was being BUILT!**

They had **seen** Jesus **cast out demons**, they had seen him **handle the religious leaders** but **THIS WAS ANOTHER DIMENSION** that they had not witnessed!

Every storm is an opportunity to know more about WHO JESUS IS!

Look at their response (Verse 41)

Who then is this (what manner of man is this) that **EVEN** the wind and the sea obey Him?

Not only is the Son of Man LORD, he is LORD OF ALL! The wind, the sea, the world and everything in it! **He is the CREATOR who controls His CREATION!** **John 1:3** "All things

came into being through Him and apart from Him, nothing came into being that has come into being.”

The **storms of wind and rain are no match for Jesus!** Jesus created the wind and the rain.

CLOSE:

Storms are **not** always weather-related!

What about when your **eyes are raining tears** and the **winds of life are blowing?** **THESE ARE NO MATCH FOR JESUS EITHER!**

WHEN THE **STORM CLOUDS ROLL IN**, JESUS IS **IN THE BOAT WITH US!**

WHEN THE **WAVES OVERTAKE** OUR BOAT, ONLY JESUS CAN **GIVE US THE PEACE TO SAY IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL!**

When **peace** like a river, attendeth my way,
When **sorrows like sea billows roll**;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to *know*,^a
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

JESUS IN OUR BOATS IS GREATER THAN ANYTHING OUTSIDE OUR BOATS!

We need to understand that **Hope in Jesus is an anchor for the soul!**

That anchor can **hold our boats down when the winds blow against it!**

I heard a **song that says**

The anchor holds, though the ship is battered!

The anchor holds, though the sails are torn!

I have fallen on my knees , As I face the raging seas

The anchor holds, despite the storm!

Imagine what those other little boats were experiencing!

Introduction

In the text, we see Jesus returning from the Gerasenes. He was unceremoniously booted from the region after healing a man with a legion of demons possessing him. Jesus sent this man to evangelize in the Decapolis and is now returning to the east side of the Sea of Galilee.

Here we see something that is common. For every atheist there is someone whose faith is for real. Where some will gladly dump Jesus to worship idols or believe in nothing, there will be some who embrace Jesus for who He is!

Jesus is treasure that some folks treat as trash...we ought to treasure Jesus no matter who does not believe!

Contrary to what happened on the east side, the west side welcomed Jesus with open arms. There were so many people that Jesus decided that he would not leave the sea shore. But something happened that caused him to move.

There was a man with a crisis who came to seek Jesus out! This situation is odd however because there are two people whose lives are about to intersect. They BOTH have a crisis that they are dealing with and they are both about to meet the Great Crisis Manager!

There are many contrasts in this story: rich/ poor; important (Jairus has his name mentioned)/ marginalized; sickness [death]/ sickness [chronic]; immediate healing/delayed healing

With all of these contrasts, there is one constant- Jesus is able to deal with each of us regardless of what our problems are!

Jesus can manage our crises; there can be multiple storms occurring at the same time and yet Jesus is the master over all of them!

He is our crisis manager! Whenever we have a problem, we can bring it to Jesus! How do we handle our crisis, whatever it may be?

1. Worship GOD for who He is (5:22; 5:27, 28)

We are to be in a posture of worship! Prostrate before the Lord. Our burdens can be laid at the feet of Jesus if we are near the feet of Jesus!

Jairus bows down at the feet of Jesus. His crisis brought him to the realization that there was only one solution to his problem! Surely he had heard of Jesus. As mighty and important as he was, he came to Jesus in humility and worship!

The woman was also in a position of humility! There was a great crowd pressing on Jesus and in verse 27 it says that the woman

came up behind Jesus and touched his cloak. Verse 28 READ- IF I JUST TOUCH HIS GARMENTS!

Jesus wore a cloak with a tassel hanging from each corner, one blue thread to remind the wearer to obey the law- that tassel was close to the ground and the woman had to at least CRAWL through the crowd to get to cloak! She had to humble herself before Jesus!

Both knew that they had to submit themselves to God, to draw near to God and God would draw nearer to them!

2. Be desperate enough to take a holy risk (5:22,23; 5:25,26)

NOTE: “make well”- both say this; root

Jairus means “whom Jehovah enlightens” God enlighten him, open his eyes and send him to Jesus!

He took a major risk! He was a RULER in the synagogue! He was am man of high status. He had much to lose. He risked alienation; ostracized from the synagogue

but this man understood that those who would ostracize him had NO POWER TO HELP HIM!

The bible says that anyone who acknowledges the Son of Man, Jesus will acknowledge them before the Father!

Jairus had a crisis that the synagogue could not deal with, the religious leaders could not solve and man could not handle! His money and his power could not bring his daughter back! ONLY JESUS could help him!

The woman took major risks- she was unclean because of her hemorrhage [menstrual], she initiated contact with a man who was not her husband, she risked ridicule and derision but she knew that the risk was necessary in order for her to have a true encounter with Jesus!

The doctors were unable to assist her. She had nothing left and NOTHING TO LOSE!

Although she was unclean, she could not make Jesus unclean. In this culture, uncleanliness was like a DC current- it only traveled in one direction- and anything clean would become unclean by contact!

Thank God that Jesus is an alternating current! That means that the circuit can travel in both directions! This woman could take

her uncleanness to Jesus but instead of it transferring to Him, Jesus could in-turn, transfer His cleanness to her!

Jesus has done that for each and every one of us!

He gave some of us beauty for ashes. He gave some of us joy for sadness! He gave all of us FORGIVENESS FOR JUDGMENT!

Being desperate does not mean blind faith- what it means is I know Jesus is the SOLUTION and I will not take my eyes off the solution!

Psalm 42 says that as a deer pants for the water, my soul pants for you, O God! Psalm 40, I waited patiently for the Lord and He inclined His ear to me and heard my cry!

We cannot casually seek God and expect the miraculous! I am preaching to myself!

3. Do NOT panic (5:25; 32,33)

This is a great illustration of the patience that faith requires and the patience that faith produces!

A. The woman shows up and interrupts the processional towards the house. Jairus was unmoved. It was a momentary

**interruption but Jesus had not changed His plans. Verse 24
READ [and He went off with him...]**

B. After the woman gets healed, there is a second interruption [verse 35, see verse 36- Jesus' response to the interruption is Crisis Management at its best...DO NOT BE AFRAID ANY LONGER, ONLY BELIEVE-]- I am sure that Jesus sensed the tension building within Jairus and he reassures him..do not be afraid!

C. There is a 3rd interruption, the paid mourners- Jewish custom required 2 flute players and one professional mourner; the mourners are already at work! [verse 38, 39]

Jairus never panicked, he never took his eyes off Jesus! Here is where we are today and what we must do in crisis! Keep our eyes focused on Jesus. Keep our minds focused on Jesus. Stay in the presence of Jesus! There is perfect peace beyond all human understanding in Jesus!

4. God will reward the diligent (5:29-33; 40-43)

Sometimes it is immediate; sometimes it is delayed but it is ALWAYS on time! IT ALWAYS WHAT WE NEED WHEN WE NEED IT! Hebrews 11:6 says without faith it is impossible to please God- we must believe that He exists and He rewards those who diligently seek him!

She understood that TOUCHING his garment would be enough. The garment and the tassel were indicative of the authority of the wearer so she reasoned that if she just touched the part of the garment associated with the authority of Jesus that whatever spiritual blessing was in Jesus, she could benefit from it!

VERSE 40 the people went from crying to laughing because they figured, Jesus had a screw loose. Anyone thank God that it is Jesus who has the last word?! He IS the WORD and whenever the WORD goes forth, it cannot return void!

Jesus with His inner circle and the girl's parents go into the house! He touched her hand, again showing that He cannot be made unclean, even by death! He SAID to her- "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"

Two things happened immediately: 1. She got up and 2. Her parents were astounded

We also see that throughout ALL of the interruptions, the power proceeding out from Jesus never diminished! He is the eternal One with eternal Power!

That's why we can rejoice with others when Jesus is working in their lives because WHATEVER HE HAS DONE FOR OTHERS, HE HAS ENOUGH POWER TO DO THE SAME FOR US!

He has an unlimited supply of power and an unlimited supply of grace!

God will reward those who are faithful enough to seek Him out! We MUST UNDERSTAND that we are to seek God out in EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE, good or bad, disaster or success; sunshine or rain it is JESUS WHO HAS THE SOLUTION FOR THE PROBLEM, IT IS JESUS WHO GETS THE GLORY WHEN THE PROBLEM IS SOLVED!

A crisis for us is not a crisis for Jesus! How is it that we can all present our petitions to Jesus and He hears them all? Because He is the everlasting God!

Does not take a whole lot of faith, just enough to believe that Jesus can fix it! Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication present your request to the Lord!

Mark 11:34 "Have faith in God! Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain be cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his

heart but believes what he says is going to happen, it will be granted to him!

Therefore, I say to you ALL things that you pray and ask for, believe that you have received them and they will be granted you!

Both Jairus and the woman had one goal..."to get well"- both used this word, Jesus used it in verse 34; which comes from the root, sozo, which is where we get our word salvation from! Both needed something that only God could give. Only God can deliver from death! Only God can save! Only God can deliver from physical affliction AND spiritual affliction!

“Scotch Tape”

Mark 6:45-52

Thought: You may not see Him but you KNOW He's there

I remember doing an **introduction for a preacher when I was little and my mother wrote what I should say.**

One of the lines said that **this particular preacher was like scotch tape...you may not see him but you know he's there.**

I **need to let you know today that Jesus is like scotch tape... You may not see Him but you KNOW He's there!**

Unlike Scotch tape which **degrades, loses its stickiness over time, Jesus does not degrade! **HE IS THE SAME YESTERDAY, TODAY AND FOREVER.****

If not for an **UNSEEN Jesus **HOLDING** things together for us, **we'd all be lost!****

IF it had not been for the **UNSEEN** grace of God...

IF it had not been the **UNSEEN HOPE** of a resurrection, **WHERE WOULD WE BE?**

Why are we talking about Scotch tape? Because it is **fitting for this situation in the text.**

SCENE: 5,000 fed, major **miracle**, **KEPT giving**, everyone ate and was satisfied...it got late and **Jesus is still TEACHING His disciples about Himself.**

MAJOR POINT: He sent them away, on a boat, without Him.

They were **separate from one another** which **hadn't happened up to this point.** He **dismissed** the people and **WENT UP** on the mountain to pray, the disciples got into the boat and proceeded to Bethsaida on the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

Scotch tape...**why**, because **sometimes it sees you before you see it...**

**1. HE SAW THEM EVEN WHEN THEY DID NOT SEE HIM –
VERSE 46,47,48A**

Focus: **separation** YET He SAW THEM [John says they were 3 miles out]

Anyone know that Jesus sits HIGH but he looks low? He sits in glory but He's concerned about what happens here!

Isaiah said in the year that **king Uzziah** died I saw the LORD **HIGH and lifted up!**

Ezekiel says that he looked and saw **four living beings** and **ABOVE them** was an **expanse** and **ABOVE the expanse** was a

THRONE and **it was HIGH** and **on the throne** was one like that of a MAN...

[**the man was sitting HIGH-** the **MAN IS JESUS-** the man who is **GOD-** who is **the radiance of the God's glory** and the **exact representation** of His likeness...who **SITS HIGH AND LOOKS LOW!**

2 Chronicles 16:9 says that the **eyes of the Lord roam to and fro** about the earth **looking to SHOW himself STRONG TO THOSE WHO ARE COMMITTED TO HIM [HEARTS BELONG TO HIM!]!**

3-4 miles out, late at night in **low visibility** *they could not see Jesus...*

HE'S IN THE MOUNTAINS PRAYING but His **disciples are on His mind!**

HE'S NOT IN THE BOAT but **His disciples are in His heart!**

THEY ARE NOT CLOSE TO HIM BUT THEY ARE IN HIS HANDS!

They couldn't see Him but **I believe that He was interceding** on their behalf while He was on the mountain!

Jesus is like scotch tape, WE MIGHT not SEE HIM BUT WE OUGHT TO KNOW HE'S THERE!! We ought to know that He is interceding for US.

HEBREWS 7:25 [HE lives FOREVER TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THE SAINTS!]

Though Satan has demanded permission to sift us as wheat, **JESUS HAS PRAYED FOR US** THAT OUR FAITH WILL NOT FAIL!

HE HAS SEALED US UP, HE HAS HIDDEN OUR LIVES WITH GOD IN HIM AND HE'S INTERCEDING EVEN WHEN WE DO NOT FEEL HIS PRESENCE!

2. HE CAME ALONGSIDE THE BOAT "INTENDING" TO PASS THEM BY SO THAT THEY COULD SEE HIM V48B,C, 49

What He saw them doing says a lot about the character of Jesus! Verse **48A** says he saw them **STRAINING AT THE OARS**...the wind was against them, they were **struggling in yet another storm** on the Sea of Galilee [recall the first storm]...

He was sitting high but he was not unaware of their problems!!

We see that Jesus understood the difficulty of the situation! **If He did not see the difficulty, He would NOT HAVE COME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN!**

Mark makes a point to highlight that they were separate! **When He's out of the boat**, the **logical** and most probable occurrence will be **struggling!**

BUT THEN He shows up at the fourth watch, between 3am and 6am. The *darkest part of the night...* is when Jesus showed UP!!

PASSING BY OR TESTING??

He saw them straining **BUT INTENDED TO PASS THEM BY**. That word **“pass by”** in the Greek **could also mean** that He meant to pass **alongside** them!

Why did he intend to pass them? ***HOW CAN A LOVING JESUS PASS BY A STRUGGLING DISCIPLE?***

Was this some sort of cruel joke? Well, we see **another instance of Jesus intending** to “go further” on the **Emmaus road** in **Luke 24:28**. As He was *walking* with the men the bible says that He **acted** as if He would go further...**to test the men**. **Jesus wanted to see if they WANTED HIM to stay!**

WHEN THEY INVITED HIM IN, HE OPENED THEIR EYES!

Another test: The **question about the bread to Philip in John 6**; He **KNEW** that there were only five loaves and two fish **BUT** John writes that He asked Philip the question **“to test” him**.

THE INTENTION OF JESUS TO “PASS BY” THE DISCIPLES WAS A TEST OF THEIR FAITH!

Would they **recognize Jesus as their help?**

Would they **ask the same question from the first time** they were in a storm? “Master, do you care that we are perishing?”

WHAT WOULD OUR REACTION BE?

THE BEAUTY OF HISTORY AND THE SCRIPTURES

THE SCRIPTURES ARE WRITTEN FOR OUR BENEFIT! I believe that **Mark detailed the failures** of the disciples for our for our instruction!

1 Cor 10:11 (paraphrase) says that what is written as **examples** are intended to be **warnings for us** [Paul's context was different but the concept is the same].

ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD BREATHED...

The **disciples did not yet understand Jesus**, the miracle...any of it! But **God's Word is written FOR US** to **BUILD OUR FAITH!** **John 20:31**, John says that he wrote so that those who read **WOULD BELIEVE** and have life!

FAITH BEING BUILT?

HE SAW THEM STRUGGLING AT THE OARS BUT HE DID NOT JUMP IN RIGHT AWAY.

From a **spiritual perspective**, that struggle was necessary for the disciples. They **needed to understand** that **faith**, just like a muscle must be exercised!

They also **needed to see Jesus SHOW UP** AT the darkest part of the trip!

Just like **struggling with a heavy weight builds** physical muscles, struggling with a faith issue builds spiritual muscle!

He **did not just rescue them**; he **ALLOWED THE TEST TO REACH A CLIMACTIC POINT** so that whatever He was trying to teach them would be learned!

A COMPLETED TRIAL ALWAYS RESULTS IN A MORE MATURE SAINT [WITNESS]!

URGENCY

How do we know Jesus cares? He took the MOST DIRECT PATH to get to them! He defied all physical laws and walked on the surface of the water. Either the water was **EXTREMELY SALTY** or this is **GOD in the FLESH!**

They SAW but they did not SEE Verse 49

Repetitive use of this verb means something- same tense, same voice...two different outcomes

Jesus **SAW them on the water struggling** and began walking towards them; he recognized them, their struggle

BUT WHEN HE GOT THERE they did not recognize Him- maybe it was the **wind or the water in their faces** but the bible says **they "SAW"** him eido-

They physically saw Him but they thought He was a ghost!

It makes sense physically. How can a human being walk on water- **was there some physical phenomenon at work?** OR was the MAN NAMED JESUS **ABLE TO DEFY THE LAWS** OF THE UNIVERSE!

This man named Jesus is **able to WALK ON** what is trying to take us out!

CAN I HELP SOMEONE TODAY?

Jesus allowed them into a **situation where they had two choices-** cry out in **FEAR** or cry out in **FAITH**. They **chose fear-** they were **not at a level of spiritual maturity** where they **automatically responded** in faith!

There MUST come a time in our walk with Christ where our automatic response is faith! Fear is a natural emotion but we MUST overcome fear with genuine faith that the Son of the Living God is the ONLY SOLUTION!

When we start straining at the oars of life, our first response MUST be Jesus! When we turn it over to Him, the pressure is no longer on us!

3. He SPOKE TO THEM to ensure that they KNEW it was Him v 50, 51

He realized that they did not recognize Him. SOMETIMES we NEED TO KNOW that Jesus is near us! He knows when we are in distress! He knows when we are at our wits end...therefore He will SPEAK to US!

He's been watching, He came close and NOW HE SPEAKS!

Anyone know there is peace that surpasses all understanding in His voice!

He says TAKE COURAGE [Present tense IMPERATIVE Active voice]

I AM (it is I) - when we hear I AM we can rest knowing that I AM WHO I AM about to get into the boat!

DON'T BE AFRAID [Imperative]

When they heard the voice of Jesus, that **should have been enough** but that experience took a toll on them.

They were **utterly astonished**- they were **shaken up to the point where they were beside themselves.**

The **reason** that they were out of their senses was because they were **still learning** Jesus (**verse 52**). They did not “put the pieces together”

He **took five loaves and two fishes** and he KEPT GIVING until everyone was full!

He **stepped onto the bow of the boat BEFORE** and talked directly to the elements and they obeyed!

He **cast out demons** and **put life into dead bodies!**

YET they were dull of understanding.

They still did not get it, that they were walking with GOD in the flesh! **We don't always get it...BUT** Jesus will show Himself mighty IF WE HAVE THE FAITH TO BELIEVE HIM AND TAKE HIM AT HIS WORD!

Again, **history is on our side...the scriptures bring Jesus into focus for US.** If He's coming alongside us WE OUGHT TO

INVITE HIM IN AND HAVE OUR EYES OPENED THROUGH THE INTIMACY THAT JESUS DESIRES TO GIVE!

CLOSE:

SOMEONE IS IN A SITUATION RIGHT NOW!

You might not see Jesus, You might not FEEL Jesus but you can rest assured that HE IS THERE!

EVEN IF HE IS NOT IN THE BOAT, YOU CAN STILL CALL ON HIS NAME!

He might not be in the boat physically but the Spirit of the Living God is WITH US and IN US

Jesus said I will not leave you comfortless

He said I'm sending the helper

The boat might SEEM empty BUT I AM THERE!

He might not be in the boat but HE KNOWS WHAT'S GOING ON in our lives!

Jesus is LIKE SCOTCH TAPE...you MIGHT not see HIM but HE IS ALWAYS THERE!

“Church Folks”
Mark 7:1-8

Key points: God desires mercy/obedience and not sacrifice; God desires a heart after Him and not a heart of stone

Background:

Religious leaders show up to **interrogate** Jesus. His ministry was **popular**; this is also **near the pivot point** in the ministry of Jesus according to Mark’s gospel. His **clashes** with the religious leaders are going to become more and **more volatile**.

They **viewed Jesus with contempt**; 1. He was **sincere** and therefore knew when tradition was overriding God’s commands
2. He **did not mind telling** the religious leaders when they were in error!

These men were **“religious”**, they were **exacting** but they were also **hypocritical**!

They were **what I call “church people”**.

People who **can see everyone else’s faults** but **refuse to see their own**.

People who **hold on to tradition so tightly** that they **cannot grasp God**!

People who **persist in hard heartedness** but **put on the appearance of being “changed”**!

Can we bring this **up to date**? **WE OUGHT NOT WANT TO BE “CHURCH PEOPLE”**. We ought not want to be **so rigidly religious that we are blind guides** who will lead others into a **ditch**.

Jesus said of the Pharisees that they would **search the whole world for one proselyte** and when they finish with them they make them more a son of hell than they are!

So what are church people? People with this same **Pharisaical attitude!**

1. CHURCH PEOPLE JUDGE OTHERS BASED ON THE EXTERIOR

Verse 1,2,5

Mark says here that the Pharisees **took great pains to wash their hands**; they did not eat without washing their hands; they cleansed themselves; they washed pitchers and cups.

A similar encounter as recorded by Matthew gives us great insight into what Jesus thought of these practices. He said that they wash the outside of the cup when the inside was filthy!

They were **worried about the exterior issues**. **The washing of the hands can only remove physical dirt but what about the dirt on the inside?** All the washing in the world cannot cleanse the soul!

Luke 11:37 records that **Jesus did not wash His hands** before eating when a Pharisee invited Him to dinner [and the Pharisee was surprised]!

We often **make the mistake** of **looking at the exterior of a person** and **trying to deduce the status** of their relationship with Jesus based on that.

We see **tattoos**, we see different styles of **clothes**, we see a person that **doesn't necessarily LOOK churchy** and **WE ASSUME THAT THEY ARE SOMEHOW DEFILED!** THEN we see the **devil in a suit masquerading** as an angel of light and we get **led astray!**

We **forget that God sees past the exterior** and see the inner parts of a person!

2. CHURCH OBEY GOD WHEN IT IS CONVENIENT FOR THEM

Verse 6-9

ALL the Jews and Pharisees washed meticulously according to the tradition of the elders...**why don't your disciples** (who are **Jews too**)?

Harsh rebuke from Isaiah's writings; hypocrites [**judge under i.e. putting on mask while judging others!**] **demonstrates** that He knows the Law and the Prophets!

Much emphasis on ritual

Isaiah 29:13 these people praise me with their lips but **they remove** their HEARTS far from Me! Their reverence (fear) for me consists of tradition learned by **rote!**

When **TRADITION becomes a replacement** for God, it's time for the tradition to be removed! Whenever the **ritual** takes **precedent** over God, the **heart is no longer yearning for God!**

When I do this because this is THE tradition OF the elders did...MY RELATIONSHIP IS NOT PERSONAL WITH GOD.

These men were **so focused on their traditions that they had totally lost sight of God!**

[Deut 6:9] Remember that they were to have the **law written on their doorposts**, they wore **phylacteries** on their foreheads BUT IT WAS NOT INSCRIBED ON THEIR HEARTS!

THEREFORE THEIR REVERENCE WASN'T BASED ON WHO GOD WAS BUT IT WAS BASED ON THE COMMANDS OF MEN.

How can this be avoided [they **passed down** the Law to the younger generations but those generations still lived in error!]?

What we teach needs to be **based on God's WORD AND LIVED OUT!** We cannot teach one thing and do something else! That is confusing to all!

There is no value in the commandments if they are **only human documents learned by rote** but **IF THEY ARE PERSONAL THEN HAVE VALUE!!**

This is why in Verse 14 in Isaiah 29- God says I will deal marvelously with them[I will shake them out of their stupor] so that they will KNOW ME FOR WHO I AM!

Shown the ERROR

Jesus gives **two examples [verse 9 again]** of how the Pharisees, as meticulous as they were, were in violation of the Law themselves; they obeyed God when it was expedient for them:

1. Violate the law by dishonoring [**make them light, not give them their due**] their parents [punishable by death- Deuteronomy 22, stoned outside the gate]
2. violate the law by speaking ill of their parents [death is the punishment]

Verses 10-12

(MOSES said this...BUT you say)

If a **vow was made and a man had to give a sacrificeto God-** once something was set aside as Korban (i.e. given to God), the **Pharisees kept that person bound to the vow even if it was obvious that the parents were in need!**

The vow somehow **removed the responsibility of the person to assist** their father or mother!

Rather than breaking a man-made vow they would **set the commandment aside** and cause the one who made the vow to live in disobedience...**not even realizing that the sacrifice is not honored because it is not given with a pure heart!**

IT'S OK FOR ME TO DO THIS BECAUSE WE'VE ALWAYS DONE IT!

3. TOTALLY MISS THE POINT

Not a finger pointing indictment. Not calling anyone out because we are all sinners who come short of the glory of God.

BUT when sin and disobedience is NOT a struggle but a lifestyle, when **hypocrisy is the NORM** [**WALKING AROUND WITH LOGS HANGING OUT OF OUR EYES**] then **everything else becomes a show!**

MATT 23 **Doing a lot:** **Long** robes, long beards, **large** phylacteries, **loud** prayers, **preferred seating** in the synagogue, blue tassels on their robes to remember the law...**BUT also DISREGARDING JUSTICE AND THE LOVE OF GOD!**

TO IMPRESS MEN! **Having a “form of godliness” but denying its power!** Denying the ability of God to truly convert! Denying God's desire for sincere worship! Denying God's desire for intimacy!

The rituals can be manipulated to remove God from them
replace God with the rules of men!

What really makes us clean?

We are not made clean by external washing but by the WORD that Jesus speaks [you are already made clean...]!

They were **clean just by virtue of their association** with Him.

He was unable to be defiled and therefore, anyone who believes in Him is unable to be defiled by ceremonial uncleanness.

HE TOLD PETER, WHAT I HAVE MADE CLEAN, NO LONGER CALL UNCLEAN! HIS CLEANNESS IS IMPUTED UNTO US! Jesus Christ has purified ALL WHO CALL HIM LORD!

RATHER THAN BEING RIGHTEOUS IN THE EYES OF MAN, WE ARE BETTER OFF BEING RIGHTEOUS IN THE EYES OF GOD!

The ceremonial rituals were **only a shadow** of what was to come!
Jesus is the substance!

We have to ask ourselves if we want to be church people or if we want to be Christians sold out to Christ!

NOT PERFECT...but NOT HYPOCRITICAL!

Do we want to have a **renewed mind** (constantly renewed by the Holy Spirit)?

Do we want to have a **renewed heart** (constantly renewed by the Holy Spirit)?

Do we want to **be loving** as Christ commanded?

Coming to church, putting on a show, doing rituals and doing STUFF is not what pleases God. Faith pleases God!

CLOSE:

Jesus gives us here the diagnosis and the solution:

Verse 15 [dealing with ritual purity, ritual cleanliness]

What is the problem? THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE EXTERIOR ONLY TELLS PART OF THE STORY!

Verse 18-23

IT IS NOT WHAT A MAN EATS, IT IS NOT THE EXTERNAL THINGS THAT DEFILE BUT WHAT COMES OUT OF THE MAN THAT DEFILES HIM.

The **character and fruit of a man** is **recognized** by the **overflow** of the heart. **OUT OF THE OVERFLOW OF THE HEART THE MOUTH SPEAKS!**

This is why Jesus **stressed to Nicodemus the need to be born again!**

This is why **renewal is so important to the Christian life.**

This is why a **person MUST put off the old self**

BECAUSE IF THE HEART IS NOT CHANGED, the **attitude** will not be changed, our **priorities** won't be changed;

we can do a lot of things EXTERNALLY without ever surrendering our hearts to God to be transformed!

WHO SHALL ASCEND INTO THE HILL OF GOD? WHO WILL STAND IN HIS HOLY PLACE? HE WHO HAS CLEAN HANDS AND A PURE HEART!

WE MUST ALLOW GOD TO EXCHANGE OUR SOFTWARE I.E. CHANGE OUR HEARTS TO HEARTS THAT BEAT FOR HIM

BOTTOM LINE: Whatever we do externally does not trump what God is trying to do internally!

God says that He can take our heart of stone and turn it into a heart of flesh!

As a deer pants for the water, so our souls pant for You O God!
Our souls thirst for the living God, the living God!

Let us not seek to flatter you God but to sincerely worship you!

Let us not forget your mighty works!

Let us not set aside your Word for the words of men!

Let us not worship you in vain, by rote tradition or with false reverence!

LET WHAT WE DO AND SAY BE FOR REAL!

Jesus, the **Lion** now heads to the region of **Syrophoenecia**. This was a **Roman province** about **20 miles from Capernaum**. This was a **remote** area that scholars say Jesus may have seen as a **getaway**. In light of his encounters with the religious leaders earlier, he probably wanted some **solitude**.

The Bible says that he comes to this **region of Tyre and Sidon** and he tries to remain **undetected**. He enters a house and did not want anyone to know it. **BUT THERE WAS A WOMAN THERE WHOSE DAUGHTER HAD AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT.**

These **Gentile regions seemed to attract unclean spirits.** **UNCLEAN SPIRITS LIKE UNCLEAN HOUSES!** That's why it is **IMPORTANT TO LET JESUS SWEEP THE HOUSE CLEAN** and then take up residence!

WORSHIP FIRST, PETITIONS SECOND!

What she does says something about her **character** and what she **already knows** about God. **She FALLS DOWN AT HIS FEET!**

The man with the **legion** fell because the demons who drove him there were **afraid!**

This **woman** fell at the feet of Jesus because she desired to experience the **grace** of Jesus!

BEFORE SHE EVER ASKED FOR ANYTHING OR MADE A PETITION, SHE WORSHIPPED HIM. Matthew's gospel even says that she called Jesus by His messianic title, SON OF DAVID!

She knew something about Jesus and she knew that He was worthy to be worshipped!

HE IS WORTHY OF ALL OF OUR WORSHIP! ALL OF US SHOULD FALL AT HIS FEET AND WONDER AT HIS GREATNESS!

The woman comes in and she approaches Jesus. She initiates contact with Him. Matthew's gospel records His silence when she approached! Silence from God can be a disturbing thing!

1. Grace in Action transcends obvious boundaries

Verse 26- Syrophenecian, Greek/ Syrian- Gentile

Mark makes a point to highlight the race of this woman. She was a GENTILE so "theoretically" she was outside of the ministry of Jesus.

Mark talks much about the Gentiles. Mark's gospel was written from Rome to Gentiles and here Mark shows the Gentiles that there is hope for US in the redemptive plan of Jesus Christ!

ISRAEL'S CRUMBS

Her race was a strike against her! She had **NO CLAIM TO JESUS-** we know that the Bible teaches that **Israel** are God's chosen people But I need to let you know this morning that **ISRAEL LEFT A TRAIL OF BREADCRUMBS** that would be the very thing to **bring the gentiles into the kingdom of God!**—

God chose Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans- God **set them apart physically** by **circumcision**;

God tried to **set them apart spiritually** by giving them the **exclusivity**, calling them out of darkness, showing them **favor** **YET they rejected God and stiffened their necks!**

God **sent them Moses, Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, the kings, the prophets** and **YET they stiffened their necks!** They **killed the prophets** and then built their graves!

God **DELIVERED THEM FROM THE HANDS OF THEIR ENEMIES** time after time **YET they had a short memory!**

God in His wisdom and sovereignty was **silent for 400 years** after the last prophet spoke- the **silence was broken in Bethlehem** when the **KING OF KINGS CAME TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS!**

The **silence was broken when Jesus Christ came to seek and save that which was lost!**

BUT He came to His own and His own did not know Him.

JESUS IS THE FINAL SOLUTION AND THE ONLY HOPE FOR THE WORLD...

God sent manna from heaven but He knew that the bread of life was what they really needed!

Water flowed from the rock but God knew that living water was what they really needed!

God sent a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to lead Israel

BUT God said, I will lead them from the INSIDE, I will put the Light of the world in their hearts and FILL THEM WITH THE FIRE of the Holy Spirit...THAT'S WHAT THEY REALLY NEED!

BUT the light of the world was rejected because men loved darkness!

LIGHT COMES TO GENTILE TERRITORY

SO Now the light shows up in this dark place with those who were NOT His people!

Those who were estranged from God!

Those who were far off!

Those who were doing evil deeds, hostile in mind towards God

BUT Jesus shows UP AND CROSSES THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN SO-CALLED CLEAN AND UNCLEAR!

Anyone thank God for crossing the boundaries and showing up in my dark place?!

Grace in action OPENS DOORS! Verse 27

Keep in mind that this is **Gentile territory**

This woman has approached Jesus directly- **a rare, direct encounter of Jesus with a Gentile...she comes asking for healing for her daughter but JESUS RESPONDS BY CALLING HER A DOG!**

Scholars debate the significance of this passage ad nauseam! **Puppy, little dog...etc.** However it is **still insulting** no matter how we look at it.

This was the **prevailing attitude** of the Jews regarding the Gentiles at the time!

Was Jesus being racist? Was He being exclusionary...NO HE WAS STICKING TO THE PLAN!

He says "**FIRST**"- let the children be satisfied...

He did not say that the Gentiles would never eat! It just was not time!

There was a mission to the Jews FIRST then to the Gentiles! This is no different than what He told His own disciples!

However, where Jesus differs from the cold-heartedness of the tradition hounds is this- He did not send this woman away empty handed- he did not stick so rigidly to His plan that he excluded this woman from His grace!

Anyone who is actively seeking God will NEVER be turned away!
That is a testament to the GRACE of God!

Tone of voice?

If Jesus really wanted to get rid of this woman, He could have done so but there had to be something to keep her there. How in the world can Jesus calling her a dog keep her there?

Gary Burge writes that we cannot get the tone from the text. We don't know if Jesus was smiling when He said these words or whether his tone (voice inflection) INVITED HER TO PURSUE but she did not leave!

She could've run away offended but she recognized that in the eyes of Jews I am a dog; I recognize I do not have a right to any of their bread!

But she ALSO recognized that even though Jews despised dogs Greeks had dogs as pets...NOW THE DOOR WAS OPENED! She took advantage of this OPENING!

VERSE 28 “Yes Lord (authority) but even the dogs feed on the crumbs [recognizes low position]-

Before we think that Jesus is arrogant- let us all remember **we are fearfully and wonderfully made**, we are made in the image of God

BUT WHEN IT COMES TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS;
WHEN IT COMES TO **HAVING A RIGHT TO THE BREAD OF LIFE**

WE TOO ARE NO BETTER THAN DOGS EXCEPT the GRACE of GOD OPENS THE DOOR!

SLOPPY EATERS

Trail of breadcrumbs...

“**Children’s crumbs**”- she recognizes that they ARE the children- but **let me add this...CHILDREN sloppy eaters**, they **drop crumbs**; food from the table all the time;

Analogous to how Christ was treated- rejected, fell from the table [Pharisees questioned Jesus about not washing His hands but their sins were GREATER than that!]

If we come to Jesus in humility and faith, God will open doors out of His grace. Her **humility and her faith** meant that she understood where she was with respect to Jesus and where He is with respect to her!

Her faith said that she understood that I am unable to get to God any other way except to TRUST HIM!

DESPERATE FAITH

Verse 28

God honors faith but **faith cannot be used to manipulate God.**

Jesus **wouldn't have shown up in Tyre** if it was not His will to show up!

WHATEVER GOD DOES, HE DOES AFTER THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL! **Faith is the way we are connected to God!** **BY faith we are telling God we believe that YOU are able to do it!**

We **cannot be double minded** because James says that we would receive anything from God! We must be ready to take God at His word!

THIS WOMAN BELIEVED THAT JESUS COULD HEAL HER DAUGHTER! She **showed faith** by **asking for His** help **AND staying when the situation looked grave** and because of this, her faith was rewarded!

Do you see the **lesson** for us here? The **character of God** is such that He will not refuse us anything that we NEED!

Our character must be like this woman- there are times when we must be **DESPERATE ENOUGH** TO HOLD ON TO GOD IN SPITE OF WHAT OUR EYES SEE AND WHAT OUR EARS HEAR!

3. Grace in action says that God will honor our persistence according to His will!

Verses 29-30

BECAUSE OF THIS...IN Matthew's gospel Jesus says "Woman, your FAITH IS GREAT!

Mark deals with this **issue of belief and unbelief** and it is **USUALLY THE ONES CATCHING THE CRUMBS WHO HAVE THE GREATEST FAITH!**

THE ONES WITH THE LOAF ON THE TABLE DON'T EVEN RECOGNIZE THE LOAF FOR WHO HE IS!

Faith is honored! She was persistent (kept asking)- **Matthew 7:7** says "'Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

CLOSE: God's Grace and REDEMPTION

- **ANYONE WANT TO THANK GOD THAT WE DID NOT HAVE TO EAT CRUMBS FOREVER!**
- Jesus Christ died for **ALL**

- Jesus Christ died for the sins of the **WHOLE WORLD**
- Jesus Christ died so that **WHOEVER** wants to eat from the bread of life can eat and be full!
- **That trail of breadcrumbs led from Bethlehem ALL THE WAY TO CALVARY!**
- This is **not Hansel and Gretel**...they **did not lead us to a bad place but to the CROSS** where we could bow at the feet of Jesus and call out to the Son of David to help us!
- **BECAUSE OF WHAT THE LORD DID THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, THE BREAD IS FREE TO ALL!**
- **BECAUSE OF THE LORD'S PLAN, THE PLAN SET FORTH IN ETERNITY TO SAVE US FROM THE POWER AND PENALTY OF SIN...THE BREAD IS FREE TO ALL!**
- **IS 49:6** It is **TOO SMALL A THING** to simply send you to raise up the tribes of Jacob, I will also make you a light to the nations so that **MY SALVATION MAY REACH TO THE END OF THE EARTH!**

The Work of the Messiah
Mark 7:31-36

In the text, Jesus still in Gentile region of Tyre and Sidon. He is near the Sea of Galilee within region of the Decapolis. Recall, the Decapolis is a network of 10 Greek cities. We talked last week about Grace in Action. His grace would be on display again here in this situation.

V32 **They** brought to Him one who was deaf and had difficulty speaking and they “implored” Him to lay His hand on him.

[thank God for **THEY**...all of us have a **they**...someone who understands that there's no place like the arms of Jesus]

Man had **two infirmities**, **both** of which fell under the mission of the Messiah [Isaiah 35:3-6]

3 Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;

4 say to those with fearful hearts,

“Be strong, do not fear;

your God will come,

he will come with vengeance;

with divine retribution

he will come to save you.”

5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

6 Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.

Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.

[Isaiah's prophecy is **eschatological** **but** this incident is a **partial fulfillment**- this incident shows Jesus previewing what the end of His mission will be]

WHEN JESUS SHOWS UP, THINGS MUST CHANGE! He can come into a **desert** and make **springs come up!** He can **speak to a fearful heart** and give it **courage!** He can **control the elements** and make them behave!

The **WORK** of the Messiah can only be done by Jesus who **IS** the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God. What do we see in this text regarding the work of the Messiah?

1. The work of the Messiah is intimate Verse 33 (touching ears, saliva)

Verse 33 Jesus took him aside (privacy- also **probably not to stir up frenzy.**)

We see **throughout** the gospels **Jesus publicly working** and publicly **preaching-** publicly **rebuking** the religious leaders...

but there are also times when we see Jesus have intimate moments with individuals!

It is a blessing to know that we serve a God who **cares for us INDIVIDUALLY!** WHO KNOWS THE NUMBERS OF HAIRS ON OUR HEADS!

So...**THEY** brought the man but **THEY** couldn't stay. Jesus had to **be alone with the man.**

This is the **nature of relationship.** It's **not about** what we do with the **crowd** around us **but** what we do **when we are all alone!**

Being alone with Jesus creates intimacy!

He would often talk to large crowds but then He would talk to His disciples privately. **The bible says that all is laid are before His eyes!**

Now that they are alone, **Jesus can begin to deal with this man.** ...when we are alone with Jesus we CAN hear from Him.

TOUCH

They asked Jesus to **lay His hand on the man** because they knew that there was **power in His touch.**

In this case, **Jesus touched his ears** to **let him know** what He was getting ready to do. **This man was deaf**, he could not hear anything and so **Jesus COMMUNICATED** with him in a way that **he could understand!**

SPITTLE

Touched his tongue with the saliva- **again, Jesus is letting this man know**, “I am going to **FIX this**”; **saliva was believed to have medicinal properties.** [**Mark 8:23**, spit on a man’s eyes]; **John 9** made clay from saliva and mud...

In this case, **scholars say** that Jesus used His own saliva to **moisten the man’s mouth**, to **lubricate** his parched tongue

2. The work of the Messiah is effective Verse 34,35

Jesus **looked up**---**surely this man could track His head.** Jesus **looked UP to the Father as He always** did during His ministry!
ALL OF HIS HELP CAME FROM THE LORD!

He not only did this as part of His ministry, He did it as a model! Whenever we need anything, we ought to look UP to God! The object of our prayers is more important than the prayers themselves!

GROAN –...(noun only 2 times; verb only 6 times; this word in particular ONLY used here) same ROOT word - **stenazo**

(meaning: to groan because of pressure of being exerted forward [like a grunt]; figurative sense, it is an internal sigh brought on by the “pressure” of a situation [can be pleasant or anguishing])

Have you ever had one of your children bring you some bad news? You listen to them and when they finish, you sigh...and begin to comfort them...

Two ways to see this:

1. Jesus speaking in a language to God that only they understand

Romans 8:26 says that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. We don't know what to pray for and the Holy Spirit intercedes with groans too deep for words!

The TRIUNITY of God is such that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit do not operate in opposition to one another.

What The Son does, the Holy Spirit and the Father have already agreed to! What the Son speaks, He speaks from the Father through the Holy Spirit.

The Son and the Spirit are ONE in essence, both equally God and therefore speak the same language to the Father!

There are some prayers that only Jesus can pray! The BEAUTIFUL thing is that He knows what we need BEFORE we even ask!

When they came down the mountain after the transfiguration and the disciples had been wrestling with that stubborn demon-

JESUS CAST IT OUT and said this kind **only comes out by fasting and prayer!**

God (the Father) always answered and heard Jesus (the Son)! He said in **John 11:42** that the **Father ALWAYS hears Him!** He says in **John 10:30** **“I and the Father are ONE”!**

While they were **alone**...Jesus spoke in the man's native language [not shocking that Jesus knows many languages, He **IS** the **WORD- Logos**...]

[It is **“possible”** that the man was not a Gentile; **Mark's readers WERE Gentiles** so he translates this word for them]

Amazing: He can talk to God in a language **ONLY** they understand and yet He can talk to us in a language that **WE** understand!

He said a word **Ephphatha** [**be completely opened!**] that, according to **John Grassmick**, that **could be easily lip read** by the deaf man.

2. Groaning in exasperation at the condition of the world- sins effects on the creation are grievous! **Romans 8:23** says that we **groan inwardly**, the world groans outwardly because the world is

suffering under the effects of sin! We long for God to come back to make everything right!

The **effectiveness of the Messiah's work and HIS power over the effects of sin** are illustrated by **THREE WORDS** here:

His ears were **OPENED** and the impediment of his tongue **REMOVED**...and he began speaking (Imperfect- continued action in the past) **PLAINLY!**

JESUS CHRIST IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE TREATMENT FOR ANY AND ALL ISSUES that we might face! **THEY** knew it...

We have to know that there is nothing too big for Him!

Deaf persons talk with difficulty because they cannot hear how their words sound! Here, **Jesus gives** this man his **hearing** back and also his **ability** to speak properly back.

Right hearing will result in right speaking! This is the same on the spiritual level. When we **HEAR** the right things, we will **SPEAK** the right things!

OPEN EARS

This text also has some **symbolism** in it! **Jesus opens the ears to hear the gospel!** IT is symbolic that **THIS region** would be **OPENED** for the gospel to be preached! **IT IS JESUS WHO GIVES US EARS TO HEAR!**

It is Jesus whose words, once we hear them, should come out of our mouths.

FAITH COMES BY HEARING AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD!

3. The work of the Messiah cannot be kept quiet verse 36

Jesus came into this region **hoping to avoid detection** **BUT THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD CANNOT BE HIDDEN!** The more he told them to keep quiet, the more they spread the news!

They **openly proclaimed** what had been done.

It's **hard to keep quiet about the goodness of Jesus.** When He has done marvelous works we cannot simply keep quiet about it!

4. The work of the Messiah is always excellent verse 37

Jesus **completely heals this man.** He opens his ears and clears up his speech and the people are astonished.

There is no halfway with Jesus, He does ALL THINGS with excellence!

Psalm 150:2 “Praise Him for His mighty deeds; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.”

Oh Lord, how excellent...IS THY NAME!

**Praise Him! praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
Sing, O earth, His wonderful love proclaim!
Hail Him! Hail Him! highest archangels in glory,
Strength and honor give to His holy name!
Like a shepherd, Jesus will guard His children;
In His arms He carries them all day long.**

**Praise Him! praise Him! Tell of His excellent greatness!
Praise Him! Praise Him! Ever in joyful song!**

“Bad Bread”

Mark 8:11-21

Here in the text, Jesus and the disciples are having a moment of dullness. The disciples and Jesus are **coming off another major miracle**. This time they had fed **4000 Gentiles**. They picked up **7 whole baskets** [these baskets were **large enough to hold a man** as opposed to the small baskets that were used for the 5000]

There was **no reason for the disciples to question Jesus** about anything concerning resources. He had **shown them twice that he could give them whatever they needed** even under the harshest circumstances.

Many times, we are the same way. We **question** the Lord, we **doubt the Lord’s Word and His power!** Jesus reminds us that we ought not to doubt the Lord but to pray and the Lord will provide!

Mark 11:24 “Therefore I say to you, all things which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be yours.” **Not a blank check**, if we need anything in the service of the LORD, He will not deny it to us!

Jesus was **a little exasperated with His disciples** and Mark’s gospel shows it. They were leaving Dalmanutha because Jesus had been tested by some Pharisees. He did not even stay in the region.

Verse 13,14

Why did they leave in the first place?

Verse 11-12

The Pharisees **demanded a sign!** They wanted a sign from heaven! **They did not bring anyone for Him to heal.** They were seeking some way to trap him! **They were TESTING Jesus!**

THIS WAS NOT ABOUT FAITH AT ALL BUT ABOUT PRIDE AND ARROGANCE!

1. Bad Bread begins with bad bakers! [verse 15]

Who were the **characters** that Jesus is referring to?

A. The **Pharisees:** This was one sect of the Jewish culture who were **religious purists** [**not in a good way**];

Their **name means “one who is separate”** and they **had an arrogance that went along with that separation** [**prayer of the tax collector and Pharisee** [lord, I thank you that I am not like other men...]]

They were also **enemies of Jesus because of their disagreement on how He interpreted moral law:**

THEIR FLAW: **hypocrisy and preoccupation with outward show!**

They were **concerned with their dress, cleaning cups, washing hands; they were judgmental without holding themselves to the same standard!** That is what you call a hypocrite!

B. The **Herodians**: supporters of the rule and policies of Herod; They worked together with the Pharisees to try to trap Jesus! They asked Jesus about paying taxes to Caesar;

Herod had John the Baptist beheaded; he lay with his brother's wife; he was afraid of Jesus thinking that he was the reincarnation of John the Baptist!

Judging from the fruit on is tree, it is no wonder that his followers wanted to do away with Jesus.

Jesus was warning his disciples to beware of their leaven...

2. Bad bread begins with spoiled ingredients Verse 15

Well wait, that's good bread...right? Maybe in taste and texture, but symbolically the leaven is a sign of corruption!

What is leaven? Leaven is the remnant of dough from a previous batch of bread that had already fermented.

Fermentation happens when the yeast begins to convert sugars into alcohol.

Glucose is broken down into its most basic elements, ethanol being one of them!

In reality, fermentation is actually a sign of decay! Leaven was not allowed in any bread that was presented in the temple of the Lord. The use of leaven was strictly forbidden in all offerings made to the Lord by fire! [Lev 2:11; Num 6:15]

Recall on the **flight from Egypt, they baked unleavened bread** because they were leaving haste! The fermentation process would have taken too long!

Obviously, **leaven has a symbolic meaning**. It can mean any **pervasive or destructive teaching!** There is plenty of that going on! Jesus **WARNS HIS DISCIPLES** to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

Jesus knows that even the most devout disciple stands the chance of being corrupted by the leaven!

What does leaven mean for us?

DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD OR THE THINGS IN THE WORLD! LUST OF THE FLESH, THE LUST OF THE EYES AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE!

A. Leaven of the world: there is a **pervasive attitude** in the world that **WE MUST ADOPT THEIR WAYS** in order to fit in.

They **keep asking us to be more tolerant**, **I WOULD ARGUE THAT WE OUGHT TO BE MORE DISCERNING!** Jesus said for us **to be as wise as serpents but as innocent as doves!**

The world is **singing a siren's song** saying: do whatever you want do, as long as it feels good to you!

The world is **trying to erase gender** [calling little boys and girls **"purple people"** and **trying to ignore the distinction** that God created between MALE and FEMALE [men wanting to use the LADIES ROOM...really??]

B. Leaven in the church: The church has taken the leaven of the world and now we are baking bad bread!

We are teaching the Oprah theory of God...”there are multiple ways to get to God.”

NO, there is BUT ONE WAY AND HIS NAME IS JESUS CHRIST! I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE...NO MAN COMES TO THE FATHER BUT THROUGH ME!

WE are being pressured into redefining marriage and there are some “preachers” who are cow-towing to the demands of the LGBT community and trying to placate them!

“Sure, we will marry you in God’s house.” MAY IT NEVER BE! NO ONE CAN CHANGE WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY SPOKEN!

We are being pressured into thinking that more people in the seats means that the church is doing well.

IF the church is crowded but everyone is still leaving sick, the same way that they came in...the church has failed in its mission to create disciples of Jesus Christ!

3. Bad bread is bad all the way through

1 Cor 5:6 “A little leaven leaven’s the whole lump. Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.”

Context, sexual immorality in the church and the church did nothing about it...became prideful and arrogant. **That attitude is pervasive and would contaminate the entire congregation!**

4. Bad Bread is not what it appears

Leaven makes bread rise...but if the **loaf is shiny and pretty** and sits high, that does not mean that God has provided the increase!

THE PHARISEES DEMANDED A SIGN FROM JESUS...

1 Corinthians 1:22-24 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, **BUT TO THOSE WHO ARE THE CALLED, BOTH JEWS AND GREEKS, CHRIST THE POWER OF GOD AND THE WISDOM OF GOD.**

Signs are not designed to generate faith!

They wanted a “say-mi'-on” in the Greek. Given especially to confirm, **corroborate or authenticate;**

Used dozens of times in the NT for *what authenticates the Lord and His eternal purpose*, **especially by doing what mere man can not replicate or take credit for...**”

Signs were **definitely used to authenticate the identity of Jesus** **BUT** those who saw them were often **ALREADY BELIEVING THAT HE COULD DO WHAT HE SAID!**

The **woman with the issue of blood** came knowing that Jesus could heal her! She didn't ask for a sign first!

Jairus came KNOWING that Jesus could heal his daughter!

FAITH and SIGNS do not go hand in hand!

John 12:37 says that even after Jesus had performed MANY signs in their presence, the Pharisees refused to believe!

John 12:42 “Many of the rulers “believed” in Jesus but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Jesus for fear that they would be put out of the Synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God”

Atheists ask these questions like: “Could God give an **amputee** new legs or IF God is all powerful **why doesn't He heal everyone instantly...**”

IF GOD DID, THAT WOULD NOT CHANGE THEIR MINDS!
THEIR MINDS ARE MADE UP ALREADY THAT THEY WILL NOT BELIEVE NO MATTER WHAT GOD DOES!

Those who ask for a sign LACK FAITH; Faith does not require a sign! Faith already knows that God is who He says He is!

Why does God not simply rely on signs?

Revelation 13:11-14

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. **12**He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. **13**He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. **14**And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in

the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

Pharaoh's magicians performed signs! The devil can perform signs! BUT THOSE SIGNS DO NOT GLORIFY GOD, THEY GLORIFY THE ONE PERFORMING THEM...SO THAT THEY RECEIVE WORSHIP!

Jesus did miracles so that THE FATHER WOULD RECEIVE WORSHIP! Mark even uses the word “**dunamis**” when describing the deeds of power that Jesus did and not merely “sign”

Matthew 24:24 [speaking of the last days] “For **false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.**”

Signs can deceive but faith NEVER DECEIVES!

The sign of Jonah

It is interesting that Jesus mentions these groups [in Matthew's gospel he adds the Saducees]...**these three groups ALL conspired to kill Jesus!**

Mark 3:6 “the **Pharisees and Herodians conspired together to destroy Jesus!**”

VERSE 12 READ Mark omits something here because of his listening audience. But Matthew includes this message from Jesus!

Matthew 16:4 “an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it except for the sign of Jonah.”

What does Jesus mean? What is the sign of Jonah?

A. Repentance of lack thereof

Luke talks about the **Ninevites** seeing Jonah as a **sign...THEY REPENTED OF THEIR SINS WHEN JONAH PROPHESED!**

B. The true sign of the Messiah

Matthew 12:40 “Just as **Jonah was in the belly of the fish 3 days and nights**; so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth!”

HERE IS THE SIGN OF THE MESSIAH!

He will **NEVER DIE BUT HAS THE POWER** OF AN INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE [Hebrews 7:17]

The bible says in **Psalm 16:10** that soul of the “Holy One” would not be abandoned to Sheol nor would it undergo decay.”!

IF YOU WANT A SIGN...here it is, I will go down into the belly of the earth, I will stay there for three days, and on the third day I will get up with ALL power!

His death was because of the righteousness of God...to do away with the power of sin; His resurrection was because of the POWER of God who was satisfied with the sacrifice!

Romans 4:25 says “he who was delivered over because of our transgressions and was raised because of our justification! His death was sufficient for ALL, His resurrection PROVED that it was sufficient for all!

He IS THE GOOD BREAD, NOT THE BREAD CONTAMINATED WITH THE LEAVEN!

“God is not Finished Yet”

Mark 9:12-13

The scribes had studied scriptures. They did not receive Jesus because Jesus did not fit into the box that they had carved out for the Messiah.

The disciples were a bit perplexed because they had seen Elijah on the mountain during the transfiguration and were wondering if this is what the scribes were writing about.

They also knew about Herod’s fear that Jesus was John the Baptist who had come back from the dead.

Jesus **understands their perplexity** and seeks to clarify for them what all of this means.

To understand this particular passage of scripture, we will study it backward. The scripture is written, future, present and past.

1. PAST (Verse 13) READ

Who is this that Jesus is speaking of as “Elijah”? **It is NOT the prophet Elijah rather it is John the Baptist.** **John admitted** that he was **NOT the Christ** **nor** was he the Prophet **Elijah**.

We know that Isaiah prophesied that John the Baptist would be the one who would prepare the way of the Lord.

Luke 1:17 tells the **story of Gabriel and John’s father** Zechariah...the bible says that **John** would be **filled** with the Holy Spirit, He would

turn the hearts of the people back to God, he would **go before Jesus** as a forerunner

AND HE WOULD DO SO IN THE “SPIRIT AND POWER OF ELIJAH-
to make ready a people prepared for the Lord”.

Jesus said of John **IF you are willing to accept it, John is Elijah.**

What is Jesus saying? Is Elijah somehow resurrected?

NO, **IF you accept that John is the ELIJAH who comes before the
messiah, THEN YOU WILL ACCEPT ME AS THE MESSIAH! He who
has ears to hear, let them hear!**

Jesus says again in **Matthew 17** that Elijah **already came** AND **THEY
DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM** BUT THEY DID with him as they
pleased.

John was imprisoned and beheaded!

2. PRESENT Verse 12b

Why do I have to suffer? John came just as the prophets prophesied
and yet they did with him as they pleased.

“**It has been written**” is in the **perfect tense** which indicates that it
was **ALREADY WRITTEN** and if you want to get to the heart, it was
WRITTEN IN ETERNITY because **NO PROPHECY** ever originated
with man but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God!

Where is it written that the Son of Man must suffer many things at

their hands? **EVERYWHERE!**

Is 53 says that Jesus is a **man of sorrow**, acquainted with grief!

Zechariah 13:7 says “**Strike** the Shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.”

Daniel 9:26 says that after 62 weeks **the Messiah will be cut off** and have nothing!

Psalms 22:6,7 “**But I am a worm and not a man**, A reproach of men and despised by the people. All who see me **sneer** at me; they separate with the lip, they **wag the head saying** “commit yourself to the Lord; **let Him deliver you**; let Him rescue him because he delights in Him.” [the cross fulfilled this]

The bible is filled with references to what must happen to Jesus.

This is when it is important to know **WHY** it happened.

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!

1 Peter 3:18- Christ **also died for sins ONCE for ALL**, the JUST for the UNJUST!

Colossians 1:20 says that Jesus reconciled man back to God through His death, and the cross is where **PEACE WITH GOD WAS MADE** through his blood!

HIS DEATH MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR EVERY SINNER WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF JESUS, WHO PUT THEIR TRUST IN JESUS,

WHO CONFESS HIM AS LORD AND SAVIOR TO BE JUSTIFIED, RECONCILED BACK TO GOD...TO BE SAVED FROM THE POWER AND PENALTY OF SIN!

Through Jesus, God is both just AND the justifier!

STILL TREATED WITH CONTEMPT

Even now, that same attitude prevails. Many STILL DO to Jesus whatever they wish!!

- **Some have turned Jesus into an ATM (65 million...JET!)**
- **Some have turned Jesus into a Liar (I can STILL live like this and call myself a Christian; WHEN JESUS SAID WE ARE TO DENY OURSELVES)**
- **Some have turned Jesus into an option- there are multiple ways to get to the Father, you can be a Christian Buddhist, all roads lead to the same God...there is only ONE road and it is NARROW!**

Isaiah 35:8 [Highway of holiness, the unclean will not travel on it; BUT IT WILL BE FOR THE ONE WHO WALKS THAT WAY...FOOLS WILL NOT WANDER ON IT, There will be no lion there, no vicious beast...but the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the LORD will return...”

Those who are not there are not there by choice! Grace is free to all, but not all will take advantage of it! The unclean will not travel on it because the unclean wishes to stay unclean!

[**context**: Israel returning from exile...the same way the LORD brought all of us sinners out of exile...he brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light!]

What are we to do?

WE CANNOT TREAT JESUS WITH CONTEMPT!

We must contend earnestly for the faith once handed down.

We must BE WILLING to **correct wrong thinking about Jesus** and **be willing to**, as **Jude says**: **have mercy on some** who are doubting, **save others but snatching them out of the fire**; and **on others**, **have mercy with fear** hating even the garment polluted by the flesh!

3. FUTURE (verse 12a)

Elijah DOES come first and restore all things.

Partially fulfilled in the person of **Elijah** the prophet
Partially fulfilled in the person of **John the Baptist** [worked in the spirit and power of Elijah]

HOWEVER, you can see from the present state of the world that **ALL things have not yet been restored!** SO what does Jesus mean here?

Parable of the landowner

A landowner had a **vineyard that he rented out**. He **sent slaves to collect**...each time **they were either beaten or killed**. **FINALLY** he **sent his son** saying, **“they will respect him”**...but they killed the son thinking they could rob him of his inheritance!

After relaying this parable which described his situation [God sent the prophets...then He sent the Son who they KILLED], Jesus asks what do you think the father will do? He will take vengeance and give the vineyard to others!

Luke 11:47 "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them"

What does Jesus mean that Elijah will come?

We need to look at **Malachi 4:5** "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD..." [debate, if this is JB or is this Elijah]

Revelation 11 speaks of two witnesses who will be given authority to prophesy, who will be the lampstands that stand in the presence of the Lord of the earth [OT reference to this in Zechariah 4]

The bible says that if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth!

Who are these two witnesses? Many interpretations...**ONE OF THEM IS ELIJAH!** **Rev 11:6** says that one of these two witnesses has the power to shut up the sky [recall, Elijah prophesied that no rain would come]!

So Elijah does come; Jesus is speaking in future terms!

THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS WILL BE PRECEDED BY THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ANTICHRIST!

The **great and terrible day of the LORD** is only terrible for those who have not accepted Jesus Christ!

Luke 21:28 ““But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.””

Close:

IN response to those who continue to treat Jesus with conrempt...
Who continue to do to him whatever they wish...
Who would crucify Him a second time if they could...

We don't have to “defend” Jesus. We will have to defend our faith. Peter says to “sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, *always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you*, yet with gentleness and reverence...”

BUT Jesus Christ can defend Himself.

His enemies will be dealt with

REV 19:11-16

He is going to slay the wicked with the sword of His mouth!

The government will be upon His shoulders!

The mountains will fall into the sea!

The sun will refuse to shine!

The Father SAID to the Son, Sit down at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool unto your feet!

The Son has received a more excellent name...and AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!!

YOU MAY HAVE DONE TO HIM WHATEVER YOU WISHED BUT NOW the GREAT AND TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD IS UPON YOU!

"I AM"
Mark 9:1-9

In **John chapter 8**, Jesus was in a **heated argument** with some religious leaders. Their argument **stemmed** from **Jesus refusing** to condemn a young woman who they caught in adultery.

Jesus let them know that **He was the LIGHT of the world** and that anyone who followed Him would not walk in darkness but would have the light of life!

He says **I am HE** meaning that **I AM the one who the Father sent** into the world to bring light into darkness!

The **argument continues** and they get on the **subject of Abraham**. They **claimed their right as Abraham's children** **BUT** Jesus **reminded** them that **IF they were Abraham's children, they would KNOW GOD!**

He **reminded** them that they were **children of the devil**...they were **carrying** out his deeds by trying to kill Him!

Jesus said that **Abraham rejoiced to see "My day"** and He saw it and was glad.

Here, the enemies of Jesus were **puzzled** and they said to Jesus, you are **not even 50 years old**...**HOW HAVE YOU SEEN ABRAHAM?**

Jesus answered in **John 8:58** “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM.”

They did not believe Him and **picked up stones** to kill Jesus!

I submit to you this morning that He IS the great I AM! We MUST believe that!

I AM is all encompassing! I AM transcends time! I AM transcends generations...HE IS EVERYTHING THAT WE NEED!

Does anyone know the I AM? Has He been what you needed when you needed it?

Has Jesus been your **doctor**? Has He been your **advocate**? Has He been your **friend** who sticks closer than a brother? He's a **father** to the fatherless, a **defender of the weak...HE IS the GREAT I AM!**

The revelation [Mark 8:30]

Jesus has just had a **conversation** with His disciples who, **through divine revelation from the Father**, proclaimed Him to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Jesus **agreed** and **warned** the disciples not to tell anyone.

Here, we have a bit of a **dilemma**. Jesus is talking about taking up the cross, going to be killed and YET He agrees that He is the Christ!

Many get it **CONFUSED** because **we hear these great claims and we look for more!** This is how many get **hoodwinked** into the false religions because we **long for more**.

We **long** for the **comfort** but we **do not long for the comforter**. We **seek** the **riches** but we **don't seek the One who supplies the riches**.

We want the glory but we don't want the story!

Following Jesus and taking up the cross is **not an easy life**. He has called us to **forsake the world** and the things of the world and follow Him wholeheartedly. Jesus has asked us to **put our hands to the plowshare** and plow a straight line.

In the text, I believe that **Jesus realizes that his disciples NEEDED REASSURANCE [NOT A SIGN, they already BELIEVED]!** **How can we be sure that He is this Christ?**

We **don't have the benefit of walking with Him physically** like the disciples did **BUT** we do have the benefit of the **WORD of GOD!**

John 20:31 says that **these things have been written so that you may BELIEVE that JESUS IS THE CHRIST, the SON OF GOD and that believing you may have life IN HIS NAME!**

WE HAVE TO HAVE FAITH THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS THE TRUTH!

1 Peter 1:8 says that although **we haven't seen Him, we love Him;** although we do not see Him now, **but believe IN HIM,** we greatly rejoice with **unspeakable and glorious joy** **because our faith will result in our salvation** [when Jesus comes!]

Here, the **disciples were about to get this reassurance!** Here, **we can study this text and be reassured too that Jesus IS!**

VERSE 1 READ

Jesus says that they would **SEE the Kingdom of God having come with power**

The way that this is written in the original language indicates: **[He would show them]** the **MIGHT** of the kingdom of GOD! **AND that this power has ALWAYS existed!**

[Verse 2] In order to do so, Jesus takes Peter, James and John- His inner circle, up on a high mountain and the bible says that He was transfigured **BEFORE THEM.**

He **allowed them to BEHOLD HIS GLORY!**

This is known as a **horama-** **an observable supernatural event; a spiritual seeing!**

No different than **Cornelius** seeing this **vision** of an angel

Ananias seeing/hearing from Jesus in a vision of what he was supposed to say to Saul of Tarsus.

HOW DOES THIS EVENT PROVE THAT JESUS IS THE I AM?

1. The Transfiguration shows the GREATNESS of JESUS (verse 3)

Garments became **radiant and whiter** than any launder on earth could get them.

This was the **glory of Jesus being revealed to His disciples. Transfigured** means a **metamorphosis**; it is **ALMOST AS IF THE SHELL OF THE HUMANITY OF JESUS WAS BURST OPEN AND HIS TRUE GLORY WAS SHOWN!**

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

Hebrews says that Jesus is the **radiance of God’s glory!**

He came from glory!

John 17:4-5 “I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work which You have given me to do. **NOW, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself with the glory which I had with you BEFORE THE WORLD WAS!**”

Just as MOSES face shone with glory so much so that He had to cover his face when he came down the mountain from being in God's presence- - Jesus Christ and the Father are ONE, SHARE THE SAME GLORY and thus Jesus SHONE brightly.

Paul says that the Father lives in UNAPPROACHABLE LIGHT! Jesus CAME FROM that light, He came to be a light to us!

That's the good news to all believers that Jesus stepped OUT OF GLORY to come and save us!

He WAS RICH but He BECAME POOR FOR OUR SAKES so that through His poverty we might become rich!

2. The Transfiguration shows the Eternality of Jesus

John 1 says that *in the beginning was the Word* and the Word was with God and the Word WAS God!

Verse 4

Elijah and Moses standing there talking to Jesus shows God's progressive revelation of Himself through history. Moses representing the Law, Elijah representing the prophets and Jesus representing the LAST WORD who existed before it all!

There is more to this that just the clothing of Jesus turning white- showing His true identity- but there is an element of historical fulfillment.

They **went up a mountain**, just as Moses went up a mountain to receive the **10 commandments**.

The **glory of the Lord was on the mountain** in **Exodus 24** just as **HERE** the **glory of the Lord was manifested through the Son!**

They **waited 6 days before they went up** which brings to mind the period of **6 days** that Moses waited before He was summoned **into the glory of the Lord!**

What were they talking about?

Again, we see this element of God fulfilling His word...**Luke 9:31** says they were **SPEAKING OF HIS DEPARTURE** that He would make at Jerusalem...**[GK EXODON]**

Both **Elijah** and **Moses** know something about **departures...****Moses LED the exodus out of Egypt**, **Elijah was taken into heaven on a chariot of fire...**

BUT JESUS CAME TO LEAD AN EXODUS UNLIKE ANY OTHER.

Jesus would **LEAD HIS PEOPLE OUT** OF THE DESPAIR OF A **SPIRITUAL EGYPT**

OUT OF THE CLUTCHES OF A PHARAOH NAMED SATAN WHO KEPT US ENSLAVED

PART THE SEA of SIN and INIQUITY SO THAT ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM CAN WALK ACROSS TO SALVATION ON DRY LAND!

HAS ANYONE HERE FOLLOWED JESUS TO FREEDOM?

JESUS LED AN EXODUS THAT BEGAN IN ETERNITY, WAS INITIATED IN BETHLEHEM, WAS OPENED UP TO ALL WHO WOULD BELIEVE AT CALVARY!

Ephesians 4:8 says that **WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES** AND GAVE GIFTS TO MEN!

Tabernacles?

Peter was **so overcome with awe** that He did not really know what to say so he said in **verse 5, 6**

3. The Transfiguration shows the HUMILITY of JESUS

Verse 7,8 READ

Here we see an Old Testament **reference: God the Father manifests Himself as a cloud.**

He says to the disciples, **“This is MY BELOVED SON, listen to Him!”** He says this in the **imperative!**

The I AM confirms the identity of the IAM! John 8:18, I am HE who testified about myself and the Father who sent me testifies about Me!

In light of this, we see the humility of Jesus. He CAME FROM GLORY, He CAME FROM ETERNITY YET he CHOSE to wrap Himself in flesh because HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD BE THE LAMB WITHOUT SPOT OR BLEMISH!

He took all of that glory and wrapped it up in a human body without ever losing HIS Godhood!

He *took the light and shrouded it* such that the only ones who could see it were the ones who desired to have their eyes opened!

Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus is the **author and finisher** of our faith, who **HAD THE JOY OF HEAVEN, THE HOLY ANGELS, THE GLORY OF THE LORD SET BEFORE HIM...**

YET HE ENDURED THE CROSS, despised its shame...**YET HE** humbled Himself anyway!

Philippians 2:8 “being found in appearance as a man, **HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF** by becoming obedient to the point of death, **even death on a cross.**”

The **most embarrassing, shameful** and inhumane punishment, a punishment reserved for criminals...**YET Jesus humbled Himself**

because He understood that there was no other way! He ALSO understood that this wasn't the last stop...THIS WAS AN **INTERRUPTION** ON HIS WAY BACK TO GLORY!

CLOSE:

Verse 9 Why wait? BECAUSE THE RESURRECTION IS THE FINAL TESTIMONY THAT JESUS IS!

- The **empty tomb** is the **FINAL WORD** against death, hell and the grave!
- The **empty tomb** is the **FATHER'S COMMAND** to the Son to get up on the 3rd day with all power in His hand!
- **Jesus getting up on the 3rd day says without a shadow of a doubt that HE IS ALL IN ALL!**
- The **resurrection** says “you can **trust me**, you can **believe me**, **I TOLD YOU** that I was going to **Calvary**, **I TOLD YOU I had to die** **BUT I ALSO TOLD YOU** that **ON THE THIRD DAY I WOULD BE RAISED UP!**
- **What does this mean for me? WE CAN TAKE JESUS AT HIS WORD...PETER SAYS THEY WERE EYEWITNESSES**, THEY RECORDED THEIR EXPERIENCES SO THAT WE WHO COULD NOT SEE JESUS WOULD KNOW THAT HE IS!!

“Stay in the Game”
Mark 9:20-24

Main points: 1. Belief vs unbelief [i.e. believing THAT God can vs doubting that God can] 2. Mark doesn't count unbelief as atheism but as doubt

In the sports world, you hear this phrase all the time “stay in the game”. Coaches tell it to their players when the game is on the line. It simply means, don't give up. Don't throw in the towel because there is more to come!

It means in Bible terms, PERFECT PEACE if we keep our minds stayed on Jesus.

It means in BIBLE TERMS, they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength!

It means don't give up on God because ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD...TO THOSE WHO LOVE THE LORD AND HAVE BEEN CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE!

Here in the text, Jesus and the disciples are coming down from the mount of transfiguration and the immediately run into a commotion.

The crowd sees them coming down and the people were running to Jesus to greet Him. The other 9 disciples were down at the base of the mountain also.

This **one man, a concerned father** came to Jesus because he had **a problem**. Have you ever had a problem that persisted to the point that you did not think there was an answer for it?

Can I give you some **advice**? **TAKE IT TO JESUS!** Before we get to his problem, we need to analyze his situation!

Here is a man who was down to his last option. **Ironically, Jesus was up on the mountain** with Peter, James and John and the **man could not get to Him**. The next best thing was to take his problem to the disciples but they were struggling!

What was the Problem?

Verses 16-18

Mute; seizes him and slams him to the ground; foams at the mouth; grinds his teeth; stiffens out

Many say that this boy was **epileptic**

I told your disciples to cast it out and **they could not do it!**

Jesus KNEW the REAL issue

Jesus sensed that there was some unbelief in His disciples and he rebuked them [they had cast demons out before!]

Verse 19 [how long shall I put up with you?]

WORKING FAITH VS BELIEVING FAITH

When Jesus says “unbelieving generation” he is **not talking about atheism...**

We have to distinguish here between what I call “**working faith**” and “**believing faith**”.

BELIEVING FAITH is **Romans 10 faith**, confessing with your mouth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, **Believing** that the LORD raised Him from the dead.

Believing faith is **Acts 4:12 faith** “there is **salvation in no one else**; for there is **no other name under** heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.

WORKING FAITH is faith in practice. This is **Hebrews 11 faith**, the **substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen**.

This is **Ephesians 3:20 faith** that understands that **God is able to do exceedingly and abundantly** above all we can ask or think according to His power that works in us!

Working faith is developed by enduring hardship and trials-

It is **SHIPWRECK faith**...[**Acts 27**, **floating over** on a piece of wood]

It is **James 1 faith**- it is **count it all joy faith**...knowing that the testing of our faith develops perseverance!

Mark uses the **same word in the Greek for faith (believing or working)**

In **THIS SITUATION**, there are **believers who have confessed Jesus as their savior but their WORKING FAITH needed some work!**

THIS IS WHY THEY WERE HERE: THEY HAD TO STAY IN THE GAME SO THAT THEIR FAITH COULD BE DEVELOPED!

YOU have to stay in the game so that your faith can be developed!

WE have to stay in the game so that OUR faith can be developed!

WHO IN THIS SCENARIO NEEDS TO STAY IN THE GAME?

A. FATHER

When they brought the boy to Jesus, **the spirit got upset** and threw the boy into a convulsion. He started rolling around on the ground and foaming at the mouth.

Here we see the humanity and omnipotence of Jesus at the same time.

Verse 21-22

Jesus asked a question. Whenever He asks a question, we should get ready for something miraculous to happen.

Jesus, **in the middle of this seizure**, starts **holding a conversation** with the father. He **did not seem as if he was in a hurry**. Many times **we want the LORD to be in a hurry...we get in a hurry** when

we feel panicked but **the LORD never panics!!** We panic when we don't know the answers but **Jesus ALREADY KNOWS THE ANSWER!!**

The man says to Jesus **"IF YOU CAN"**...when we address the LORD of all with the words **"IF YOU CAN"** **that means that we need to stay in the game.**

We're **not at the point yet** where we can say "When you do" or "I know YOU CAN!"

He says **"take pity on us and help us!"**

STAYING IN THE GAME BRINGS US OUT OF BABY FAITH TO GROWN-UP FAITH!

THE MUSTARD SEED STARTS GROWING INTO A TREE SO LARGE THAT EVEN THE BIRDS OF THE AIR NEST IN IT!

WHY DID THIS MAN NEED TO STAY IN THE GAME?

STAYING IN THE GAME MEANS THAT WE FIND OUT THAT THERE IS NOTHING TOO HARD FOR GOD!

Verse 23

Jesus says, "IF you can?" - I can hear Him say this with a smile on His face..."If you can?" Jesus says **ALL THINGS** are possible to him who believes!!

Jesus said in **Luke 17** when the **disciples asked him to "increase their faith"**- **IF YOU HAVE FAITH THE SIZE OF A MUSTARD SEED**, you can say to the **MULBERRY** tree [**deep and extensive**

roots] may you **BE UPROOTED** and thrown into the sea and it would obey you!

Staying in the game means acknowledging the NEED to stay in the game!

Verse 24

Here, we **again make the distinction** between believing faith and working faith. **He BELIEVED IN JESUS, but He did not have faith that He could help Him!**

He's saying here, **"I'm STRUGGLING right now!"**

I've **tried everything!** I **brought him to your disciples** and they couldn't do anything with him, my son has been like this since childhood...**I BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE LORD BUT I AM STRUGGLING TO WRAP MY MIND AROUND THE FACT THAT YOU'RE LORD AND SAVIOR and THIS THING ISN'T FIXED!!**

I wish that I could preach you a feel good gospel, peaches and cream...I wish that I could tell you that life would not be fraught with challenges...but I have to speak the truth, even prophetically at times when the people need to hear from God.

FOLLOWING JESUS WILL NOT ALWAYS BE A PERFECT LIFE

Comparisons

He's **no different from John the Baptist** who languished in prison while the ministry of Jesus flourished!

He's **no different from the disciples** who had faith in Jesus as the Christ, even confessed Him as the Christ but they struggled mightily with their doubts!!

HE'S NO DIFFERENT FROM US!

I KNOW that you are my LORD but when I look at the evidence, I start to ask some questions! I'm struggling right now because **what I see and what I know are not adding up!**

How can the God of heaven and earth allow something like this to happen to ME or my CHILD?

We **have to understand** that **JESUS IS LORD OF ALL AND IN HIS OMNIPOTENCE AND OMNISCIENCE, HE KNEW WHAT WAS COMING TO US BEFORE WE WERE BORN!**

It is utterly **HUMAN TO HAVE DOUBTS** about what we cannot see and what we cannot control-

SO we need the gift of faith to cope with this life!

THE GOAL OF THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE TO GROW IN FAITH and to **GROW SPIRITUALLY** to the point where the doubts give way to working faith!!

Sometimes the only way for our faith to grow is through tribulation! **KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING** that is the only way we can have peace in this world!

Here this man's humility is admirable and Jesus honors it!

Verse 25

Do not enter Him again [house swept clean]

B. DISCIPLES also needed to stay in the game

Verse 28

The disciples had to stay in the game as well because they were still learning!

Jesus says **this kind only comes out by prayer**...did He pray while they were dealing with this? Possibly but **the pattern** [i.e. **Lazarus**- "Father I know you always hear me..."] **says that this wasn't the case here.**

This is more than a single prayer/type of prayer but what Jesus saying, according to Joel Williams, is that **this takes a discipline and a lifestyle of prayer.** We know that Jesus spent **intimate time in prayer with the Father.**

He's **teaching His disciples** that in order to get the wisdom necessary to drive out these unclean spirits, **you have to have the answers given to you from above!**

The disciples **had not learned everything they needed** to learn from Jesus [disciple means one who is learning].

His disciples **do not yet understand what Jeremiah was talking about** when he says **"Call to Me and I will answer you, and tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know."**

You want to know the answer to those **stubborn problems** that seem not to want to go away? **PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!**

We **MUST** spend intimate time with God and when we **NEED** answers, God will give them!

CLOSE:

Jesus teaches us here that in order to grow in the Christian life, we must follow His example and stay in the game! He is the author and the finisher of faith because He stayed in the game:

When they reviled Him, He did not doubt, He set His face towards Jerusalem!

When He **languished in Gethsemane**

JESUS SAID, **IF THIS CUP CAN BE PASSED FROM ME...**
NEVERTHELESS, NOT MY WILL BUT YOUR WILL BE DONE

I'LL STAY IN THE GAME!

When they **took Jesus from judgment hall to judgment hall**, He did not call 12 legions of angels to His rescue...he **stayed** in the game

When they **drove the nails into His hands and feet**, He did not seek to get down off the cross...he **stayed** in the game!

What **promise** did Jesus have to hold on to?

No **man takes my life**...I lay it down on my own authority, if I lay it down, I can pick it back up, **THIS COMMAND I RECEIVED FROM MY FATHER!!**

Staying in the game has rewards...on the 3^d day, Jesus got up with all power in His hand!!

This ought to encourage us to say in the game! If the Father did it for Jesus, and we are joint heirs, He will do it for us too!

I KNOW THAT ALL IS WELL...IF I STAY IN THE GAME, I WILL GET TO THE POINT WHERE **MY FAITH IS WORKING OVERTIME!**

I AM **NO LONGER SAYING "IF YOU CAN" BUT I AM SAYING "I KNOW YOU CAN!!"**

" I AM NO LONGER ASKING WHEN BUT SAYING "YOUR WILL BE DONE!"

WHEN DO WE GROW UP TO THE POINT WHERE WE ARE NO LONGER SAYING TO GOD...LORD, IF YOU CAN?!!

When we hear the phrase “turning point” it usually indicates a moment in time when everything shifts.

This was the first time that one of the disciples of Jesus identifies Him as the Christ...the Son of the Living God!

John’s gospel says that Philip went to his brother Nathaniel and said, we’ve found the one whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets wrote- Jesus of Nazareth but He did not call Him the Christ!

The name Christ has significance on multiple levels. It means the anointed one! It is translated literally to mean the Messiah. IN the OT there were two offices described by this name, the priest and the king- both of whom had authority conferred onto them by GOD!

But this ONE is THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST and THE KING OF KINGS! This is the ONE for whom the Jewish nation was waiting and HE WAS ALREADY HERE!

In the text, we see two things that might stand as **contradictions**.

1. When Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, He **warned Peter and the disciples not to say anything**. Was Jesus **afraid...no, but His mission was not military or political**.

2. His mission was different...there was a **salvific purpose behind what Jesus came to do!**

In HIM THE FULLNESS OF DEITY WAS PLEASED TO DWELL!

Jesus and His disciples are now discussing the MISSION and I thank God for the mission because now, Jesus has set his face toward Jerusalem.

He is on the downward descent to go upward, to Calvary. Here we see God's unstoppable grace in action!

Let us see how this thing unfolds:

1. THE MISSION IS REVEALED (VERSES 31,32A)

Jesus says here the Son of Man [a messianic title; derived from the book of Daniel] MUST

a. suffer many things [Is 53 tells us of the suffering servant who came up as a tender shoot, Zechariah tells us of the Shepherd who must be struck and the sheep who must be scattered]

b. be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes [we know that Jesus was not wanted in the Synagogues; we know that the Herodians and the Pharisees/Saducees were plotting to take Him out;

we know that Herod [Luke 13:31] wanted to kill Jesus but Jesus said in reply...GO TELL THAT FOX** that I am casting out demons**

and performing today and tomorrow and on the third day I reach My goal!”

c. be killed [here is the problem...if this is the Christ, if this is the Messiah, the anointed One...how it is that he has to be killed? To some, this would seem to be the nail in the coffin!

This would seem to cement His status as an imposter...but we KNOW that HIS DEATH HAD A PURPOSE...WE KNOW THAT HIS DEATH WAS JUST ANOTHER TURNING POINT! We know that HIS DEATH WAS ONCE FOR ALL!!

His Messianic mission was to give life to those who were once dead in trespasses! It was to do for us what we could not do for ourselves!! **Jesus came to DIE so that we might LIVE!**

d. ON THE THIRD DAY RISE AGAIN! Here is what separates Jesus from all others who the Jews saw as “masiahs” [Jesus would die at the hands of the religious leaders and those conspirators who sought His life...

But His death was ONLY TEMPORARY- it was to **swallow DEATH UP** so that DEATH AND THE GRAVE WOULD BE ROBBED OF THEIR POWER!

THE LAST ENEMY IS DEATH AND JESUS CHRIST CONQUERED THAT! Death no longer has mastery over Him.

Verse 32a...He was **speaking plainly!** Here, Jesus does not use a parable or a story but He simply prophesies what is about to happen! He does so with **boldness** because He understands the mission!

2. THE MISSION IS MISUNDERSTOOD VERSE 32B

Peter **rebuked** Jesus...the Greek word has many meanings but in this case it is indicative of **disapproval**. Peter does not agree with what Jesus is saying because he does not yet understand the mission.

Imagine Peter's **dismay!** **I just said that you were the Christ**, the anointed one of God and now you're saying that you have to die!? NO!

Jesus not going to the cross means that the **entire WORLD would still be in bondage to sin with NO WAY OUT!**

Romans 5:17 says "By the transgression of the one [Adam] death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One Jesus Christ!

3. JESUS, SEEING THIS MISUNDERSTANDING CLARIFIES THE MISSION VERSE 33

Jesus **sees His disciples**...He **does not want them to come to the same conclusion** so He **returns Peter's rebuke** with a rebuke of his own!

JESUS UNDERSTANDS WHERE THIS CONFUSION IS COMING FROM EVEN IF PETER DOES NOT!

Satan totally understood what Jesus Christ going to the cross meant! He understood that the cross was the place where His head would be bruised!

He understood that the cross would be the place where He would be made a spectacle!

He tried to keep Jesus OFF the cross so **Jesus rebuked him first** for implanting the thought into Peter's mind! Satan understood that Jesus was about to render him impotent...that his last weapon, death, was about to be abolished!

THIS IS GOD'S MISSION FOR ME, THIS IS GOD'S WILL FOR YOU ALL...I HAVE TO DO THIS!

Satan stirs up the emotions of Peter but **Jesus was mission minded!** This was **not about what Peter wanted but what God the Father had already purposed!**

THIS JESUS HAD TO BE ABOUT HIS FATHER'S BUSINESS!

Jesus says in John 12 that it was for this hour that He came!

4. THE MISSION IS EXTENDED VERSE 34-38

This is what I love about Jesus. **Jesus prophesied of HIMSELF FIRST**. He is always the **forerunner**. That is why the Hebrew writer refers to Jesus as the **AUTHOR and FINISHER** of faith-

He is the trailblazer of our faith...therefore, we **MUST FOLLOW HIM!**

Jesus does not call us to anything that He has not already accomplished!

What does picking up the cross mean?

a. It means that we identify with Jesus Christ and His sufferings [it does not mean that we walk around in gloom and depression...woe is me, I'm carrying my cross...]

b. It means that we **OPENLY CONFESS JESUS CHRIST AS OUR LORD AND SAVIOR REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES!**

c. It means that we endure the ridicule and the shame that may come as a result of being a Christian in an anti-Christian world!

PICKING UP THE CROSS MIGHT MEAN THAT SOME RELATIONSHIPS ARE NO LONGER POSSIBLE!

Jesus said I did not come to bring peace but a sword! Jesus said in Matthew 10:36 that a man's enemies would be in His household" Does this mean that there will be constant conflict?

No, what it means is that even those closest to you may not understand WHY YOU LOVE JESUS MORE THAN YOU LOVE THEM! WE CANNOT LIVE IN TWO CAMPS!

WHEN THEY SAY "YOU'VE CHANGED" REPLY WITH, YOU'RE RIGHT! A WONDERFUL CHANGE HAS COME OVER ME!!

d. It MIGHT MEAN THAT WE DIE DOING SO...[I go to prepare a place for you...;]

Sam Cooke and the Soul Stirrers had a song that said "MUST JESUS BEAR HIS CROSS ALONE AND ALL THE WORLD GO FREE? THERE IS A CROSS FOR EVERYONE, THERE IS EVEN A CROSS FOR ME!"

If we die WITH Him, we will LIVE with Him! If we suffer with Him, we will reign with him! If we are faithless, He remains faithful because He cannot deny Himself!

IT IS ALL ABOUT GOD'S GLORY!

The beginning of life

Serving Jesus, being sold out for Jesus is not the end of life but the beginning of life!

CLOSE:

****We have to go back to the cross because it is the cross that is central to Christianity. Jesus understood this, He was conscious of this and He HAD to do it!**

****We get so hung up on everything else...but we need to preach the cross of Jesus Christ so that we can preach the resurrection of Jesus Christ!**

****The turning point of the ministry of Jesus was in chronological time...but in eternity, the turning point was set already!**

****When the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost agreed that this was the only way to break the shackles that sin placed on mankind...the mission was set!**

****When the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost agreed that this was the ONLY way to reconcile men back to God...the mission was set!**

****We see the turning point but Jesus already knew that this was the only way!**

****Jesus already knew that He had to be handed over, delivered up and struck down!**

****This thing was set before the foundations of the world**

****That's why in Genesis, God says to the serpent, I am going to put enmity between your seed and the seed of the woman...he will bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel**

****Jesus took the bruises, for our sakes but anyone know that Satan is under the feet of Jesus!**

****Well, if we look in the book of Numbers, the bible says that when the bronze serpent was lifted up, all who looked to it lived...that was a foreshadowing of what was to come**

****Jesus said, IF I BE LIFTED UP, I WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO MYSELF!**

****Isaiah 53 says that it pleased the LORD to crush Him, to render Him as a guilt offering, He was our scapegoat, our ransom, our deliverer...**

****He was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him...yet He never said a mumbling word!**

****He went to Jerusalem, He was rejected by the chief priests and the scribes...and I MUST BE KILLED!**

****But Micah says something to us that we can hold on to...don't rejoice over me, o my enemy, though I fall, I will rise again, I sit in darkness, the Lord is a light for me!**

****The light came on the third day...**

****The light came when Jesus could say MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!!**

****THE LIGHT CAME WHEN JESUS GOT UP WITH ALL POWER IN HIS HAND!!**

“All Worked UP”

Mark 9:38-41

INTRODUCTION

Subsequent to this passage Jesus was discussing humility with His disciples. They were **having an argument** regarding who was the **greatest**. We will deal with this subject at a later time [connect with chapter 10]. Jesus reminded them that the one who desired to be first should be last of all and servant of all.

This **ties into other gospel accounts** where it was **James and John** who sought seats to the left and right of Jesus. **Ironically**, they had this discussion after Jesus, for the 3rd time, predicted His own crucifixion; **as if they would somehow inherit His kingdom!**

So **Jesus brings a child** in and says to them in **verse 37 READ**

The child is significant in that we must **put off all of our pretenses**

Christ's standards are different from ours. The other gospels make this passage more clear- **WE MUST BECOME LIKE CHILDREN** [in trust and faith]!

Jesus is saying that **IF one comes “like this child”** and he **comes IN MY NAME, AND you receive Him**, you have received me! **REMEMBER, JESUS SAID WHATEVER YOU HAVE DONE TO THE LEAST OF THESE, YOU HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME!**

IF THEY COME IN THE NAME OF JESUS, **LIKE A CHILD [IN HUMILITY AND MEEKNESS]**- **NOT LIKE A WOLF**- RECEIVE THEM, WELCOME THEM!!

If you **remember** what Jesus said in John's gospel..."**I HAVE OTHER SHEEP THAT ARE NOT OF THIS SHEEPFOLD**"; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become **one flock with one shepherd.**"

I MADE A MISTAKE

The **discussion continues** when **John**, because of the previous statement, **realizes that HE may have made a mistake.**

Verse 38 READ

John said **we saw a man casting out demons in your name...**

HELP: **IF the demons were coming out** then the man obviously knew CHRIST!

In Acts 19 a group of Jewish exorcists were **attempting to MIX Jesus with their incantations** [**attempting to name over** those who had evil spirits]- they went in and said to the demon "**I adjure you BY Jesus whom Paul preaches.**"

The Bible says that **these exorcists were overtaken** by the demon because "**He KNEW Jesus, He heard of Paul...but he did not know these men!**" They were subdued and fled naked and wounded.

They tried to use His name without His authority- HE GAVE THE APOSTLES THE AUTHORITY TO CAST OUT DEMONS TO AUTHENTICATE THEIR WITNESS- THE MIRACLES LET OTHERS KNOW THAT THEY WORKED FOR JESUS.

Connection

So we can make the **connection** that **IF THE DEMONS WERE OBEYING** this man's commands then **he obviously had authority over them!**

We can also **recall** **when the 70 returned** they told Jesus "Even the demons are subject to us **IN YOUR NAME**"

THERE IS POWER IN HIS NAME! THERE IS AUTHORITY IN HIS NAME! DEMONS MUST BOW IN HIS NAME! MOST OF ALL, THERE IS SALVATION IN HIS NAME!

GABRIEL TOLD MARY- YOU SHALL CALL HIM JESUS (YESHUA- IN YAWEH THERE IS SALVATION)! Everyone else got to name their own children but JESUS received the name at is above every name!

Three scenarios

1. IN MY NAME [operating under His authority/Lordship]

Jesus said **wherever 2 or 3** are gathered **IN MY NAME**, I will be in their midst

The **Helper is coming**, who the Father will send **IN MY NAME**

When you **pray, IF YOU ASK ANYTHING-** IN MY NAME, THE FATHER WILL GRANT IT

2. BECAUSE OF MY NAME [CHRISTIANS **BEAR THE NAME OF JESUS-** WE ARE CALLED CHRISTIANS BECAUSE WE ARE BELIEVERS IN THE CHRIST]

Matthew 10:22 They will **hate you BECAUSE OF MY NAME** but the one who endures to the end will be saved.

There is a **blessing attached here-** Matthew 5:11-12 **blessed are YOU when they insult** you and persecute you, and falsely accuse you and say all kinds of evil against you **BECAUSE OF ME.**

REJOICE AND BE GLAD FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN; FOR in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

3. FOR MY NAME'S SAKE

Jesus said in **John 15** that the **world will hate you, persecute you** and they will not receive you and they will do it all **“FOR MY NAME'S SAKE”** – SIMILAR TO “BECAUSE OF MY NAME”

HE said in Luke 21 that His **disciples will be brought to trial** before kings and governors for “HIS NAME'S SAKE”

There is a **blessing here too:** Jesus says to us, “Whoever has left everything for MY sake and for the gospel's sake will receive a

hundred times as much in the present age AND in the age to come!”

What we see is that there is **SOMETHING ABOUT THE NAME OF JESUS!**

SATAN HATES THE NAME BUT HE TOO MUST BOW!

DEMONS SHUDDER AT THE NAME!

BELIEVERS WORSHIP THE NAME BECAUSE IT IS THE NAME THAT IS ABOVE EVERY NAME!

HE WAS DIFFERENT FROM US

John says **we tried to STOP him** because he was not following us.

How many know that **IF** this man was able to cast out demons **IN THE NAME OF JESUS** and **IF** He was a believer **IN JESUS** that **JOHN should have welcomed Him** just like a little child!?

This is where we get hung up. Can I bring this **up to date.**

This is WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE ENCOUNTER **denominational** differences, **secondary** doctrinal differences, differences in the **way we conduct services**, differences in **the way we say certain** words...

WE FIGHT OVER PETTY ISSUES AND DIVIDE THE CHURCH **WHEN WE COULD DO SO MUCH MORE TOGETHER!!**

IF DOCTRINES ARE ERRANT [UNSCRIPTURAL] then we should certainly reject them!

BUT we split hairs over secondary issues! That is **why the church is so weak and powerless in the world!** Jesus said *they will KNOW that you are my disciples BY YOUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER!*

No one really understands how God works BUT **we should all understand that we cannot control who God uses for His glory.** He will always get the glory!

A.[**Numbers 11**] Moses **called 70 elders** and the bible says that the LORD told Moses the same Spirit who is upon you, I will put Him upon them...there were two, Eldad and Medad, who didn't go to the tent but who the Spirit STILL rested on!

A man came and told Moses that these two were prophesying in the camp...Joshua did not understand and told Moses to go stop them! **MOSES UNDERSTOOD AND SAID I WISH ALL THE LORD'S PEOPLE WERE PROPHETS!**

THE SPIRIT GIVES GIFTS AS HE SEES FIT! There are many gifts but the same Spirit

NO one understood how **God used Cyrus the Great** to set the Israelites free from the **Babylonians.**

Isaiah could not understand how **the Lord used the Assyrians** as a tool in his hand to punish the Israelites for their wickedness!

No one understood how God used a donkey to speak - the prophet Balaam.

No one understood how Jesus cast a legion of demons out of a man and then deputized him to evangelize the Decapolis [go and tell your family what great things the Lord has done for you!].

WHO ARE WE TO TELL GOD WHO TO USE?

What truly matters are the **ESSENTIALS** of Christianity!

Ask this question: **What are we saying about the essentials of the Christian Faith?** What is essential Christian Doctrine i.e. those things that have been passed down [**lined up with Scripture**] to us that we accept as **orthodox**?

1. What are we saying about **Jesus Christ**?

A. Are we saying that **He is the Son of the living God**?

B. Are we saying that **He is the only way to the Father**?

C. Are we saying that **there's no other way to be saved except through Jesus Christ** and **through faith in what he did at Calvary**?

D. Are we saying **that there is no other name under heaven by which men must be saved**?

E. Are we saying that **there is one God who exists in 3 persons** and not three modes or functions?

F. Are we saying **that sprinkling or immersion [baptism] is not what really saves you** but the blood of Jesus?

We get hung up on the secondary and forget about the primary!

THE **PRIMARY** IS THAT WE ARE ONLY SAVED BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST AND PUTTING OUR TRUST IN HIM!

What is the response of Jesus?

Verse 39-40

Do not hinder him. He's one of us!

Jesus says "if he is not against us, he is for us!"

If he was against us, you would know it because he would not be doing works "in my name" he would be scattering and not gathering!

Jesus understood that the **harvest is ripe but the workers are few** and if there are workers in the fields assisting our efforts, do not hinder them!

WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING [Jesus Himself said that many will come **in My Name**...and they will deceive many]

How do we know if they are with us?

1. **What are they saying about Jesus:** NO one can speak ill of Jesus after doing a work of power in His name!

NO one can truly operate in the name of Jesus [it is functional and it is descriptive] and not truly be IN CHRIST!

No one can say Jesus is LORD except by the Spirit of God and no one speaking by the Spirit can say Jesus is accursed. God has the parameters already set in place!

2. Look at their fruit- “you will know a tree by the fruit that it bears.”

1 John 3:7-8 “Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; *the one who practices sin is of the devil*; for the devil has sinned from the beginning.”

1 John 3:10 “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: ANYONE WHO DOES NOT **PRACTICE righteousness** is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.”

3. Time will tell

How will we know if they are truly with us? **We let God figure that out!** A day will come when **many will come to Jesus** and say “Lord, Lord...did we not cast out demons in your name, did we not prophesy in your name” and His reply will be, DEPART FROM ME YOU **WORKERS OF LAWLESSNESS...I NEVER KNEW YOU!**

The Final Analysis

Verse 41

There are rewards attached for those who support the cause of Christ!

Matthew 10:40-42

40 “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

41 “He who receives a prophet in *the* name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward.

42 “And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.”

I think of men like Nicodemus who spoke up for Jesus during His trial! He reminded the Pharisees that they cannot condemn a man without hearing him out!

Simon the Cyrene who was pressed into service and carried the cross of Jesus when He was too weak to carry it Himself

Men like Joseph of Arimathea who ensured that the Lord got proper burial

Outline

1. Drastic Measures have to be taken with how we treat others... (Verse 42)

Sin here is **not the typical word- harmatia** [missing the mark]; here is the word **skandalizo**- meaning to **stumble** or fall away!

OUR ACTIONS CAN HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON THE WALK OF OTHER BELIEVERS!

In **retrospect and in context**- Jesus is **still dealing with the man** who John and the disciples sought to prevent from casting out demons.

The man who was casting out demons should have been **welcomed** in and not rebuked.

Being **overly judgmental; hypocritical, unloving, hard hearted** **can and will** make the “little [humble, unimportant, underdeveloped faith] ones” stumble!

Imagine the **surprise** of this man as the disciples rebuked him for helping them! **IMAGINE IF HE RENOUNCED HIS FAITH BECAUSE OF THEIR ACTIONS!**

This is where Jesus' teaching picks up. What Jesus teaches us here is that we are to take drastic measures to **see to it that no one stumbles i.e. falls away on our account!**

We must **be considerate of other believers**; "little ones" refers to children of God; **BELIEVERS IN JESUS CHRIST!**

Consequence

Millstone tied ~ perfect tense~ better if not born [a real **punishment** during these times- *consequence*- **no proper burial** for a Jew this was serious].

How to avoid leading others to stumble [fall away]:

1. Temper our zeal with wisdom!

We get so caught up in **thinking that our way is the only way**; if our zeal causes someone else to turn away from Jesus;

If our **cliques** cause folks to feel **ostracized** and therefore cause them to leave their faith...it would be better for us if a great millstone was tied around our necks!

2. Don't compromise God's Word

If it is a black/white issue - Bible speaks clearly~ *FOLLOW THE BIBLE*~ not emotion or feelings!

When we **compromise** the Word of God **and PEOPLE WATCH US** they start to ask “WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL ABOUT JESUS??”

IF WE DO NOT HAVE INTEGRITY THEN HOW CAN WE EXPECT ANYONE TO FOLLOW JESUS?

IF WE ARE NOT DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD HOW CAN WE EXPECT ANYONE TO BUY WHAT WE ARE SELLING!?

OUR **HYPOCRISY** WILL RUN PEOPLE AWAY FROM JESUS BUT OUR LOVE WILL SHOW THEM THAT JESUS IS INDEED REAL!

3. Don't make things up in “Gray areas”~ no clear teaching or warning~ **use cautious liberty**; humility such that our brother/sister is not offended [**1 Cor 8:9-13**]

- 9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.
- 10 For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?
- 11 For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.
- 12 And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.
- 13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

The Bible may not give clear instruction; **you may not be at the point where you understand that this is not a “sin”** or there is no law against it...so to ensure that you don't stumble on my

account, I will not do this! **I will not exercise my liberty out of LOVE for my fellow Christian!**

2. When we are involved 42-47 [we should **hold ourselves to a higher standard** and not judge ourselves based on what others are doing!]

Here, Jesus is **reiterating the cost of discipleship**. Discipleship is **exacting** even though as disciples of Jesus, we are not perfect nor will we ever be perfect.

The **temptation to sin is real in the life of every Christian!** Sin, by its very nature, causes us to drift away from God because sin is rebellion against God!

WE MUST TAKE DRASTIC MEASURES IN OUR OWN LIVES.

These chilling words from Jesus let us know the **reality and the high price of sin!** The wages of sin is death...

There is no **sin** in temptation but **giving in to temptation** [that's why **Jesus taught His disciples to pray "DELIVER US FROM EVIL"**

Clarity

Temptation does not come from God [**James 1:14**] says that temptation comes when a person is carried away by their **OWN** desire! When that desire has conceived it gives birth to sin and sin, once full grown brings forth death!

Temptation never comes w/o a way of escape

1 Corinthians 10:13 says we are not tempted with anything greater than what all man is tempted with! **God, because of His faithfulness, does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear but will provide a way of escape.**

Note the order that Mark uses HAND, FEET, EYES

Hands **carry out** what the feet have **carried us to** and what the eyes have **meditated on!**

Shows **progressive nature of sin**

David said it best:

Psalm 1:1 “**How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!**

Jesus says IF [WHENEVER] your hands or feet cause you to stumble...**CUT THEM OFF!** IS JESUS BEING LITERAL HERE? NO, HE IS **USING IMAGERY TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF FLEEING IMMORALITY!** FLEEING ANYTHING THAT WILL SEPARATE US FROM GOD!

Cut off (ACTIVE MOOD, IMPERATIVE VOICE): This is **personal**; it is **based on MY desire to please GOD;** **IT CAN BE DONE IF WE SUBMIT TO THE SURGERY OF THE SPIRIT!**

How drastic is Jesus talking?

Hands: it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to **go into hell, into the unquenchable fire...**

Foot: it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be **cast into hell**

Eye: it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be **cast into hell, 48** where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED

HELL is not an imaginary place! Hell is real.

He says it is **better to enter into “life”** which he later clarifies as the kingdom of God [the future kingdom as opposed to the future destruction of hell] crippled, lame...or with one eye!

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY! Whatever I lose following Jesus; I gain in eternal life. If I had to cut off a hand then that hand will be restored!

You know that Jesus is **speaking figuratively here regarding the condition of our bodies** because we will receive glorified bodies!

However, He is speaking **LITERALLY** here about hell. He uses the word Gehenna (YEH-nah) which is a word that can be traced back to the Old Testament.

The valley of Hinnom [he-NOME]; a place south of Jerusalem where King Ahaz [Judah] worshipped the fire god Molech by burning his sons!

King Josiah who instituted reforms made this place a dump for garbage- the garbage was burned and the fire was consistently raging!

So Jesus here paints a vivid picture of hell as a place where the fire is not quenched, the worm of torment does not die and that is an actual place that people are cast into!

WHAT A HIGH PRICE TO PAY FOR THE TEMPORARY PLEASURES OF WHAT OUR HANDS, FEET AND EYES GET US INTO!

SALT and FINAL WARNINGS

Verses 49-50

Everyone will [future tense] be salted with fire:

Commentator:

1. Disciples salted with fire to discipline and thus preserve us [Ezekiel] sacrifices were salted- and we are living sacrifices, made holy and acceptable to God by the blood of Jesus.

2. Unbelievers salted with fire as eternal torment!

VERSE 50

If the salt loses its saltiness...**middle voice**, **conscious action**; how will **YOU** make [future, **active**] it salty again [cannot be replaced]?

Our salt now is so pure that it cannot become unsalty but the salt in these times was an **impure mixture** of [**gypsum** [CaSO₄ and NaCl] that was extracted from the Dead Sea;

If all of the NaCl **leached out of the mixture**, what is left would look like salt crystals but would have no flavor!

Jesus says here “**have [imperative]** salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another!”

We are the salt of the earth! SALT HAS SEASONING AND SAVING PROPERTIES!

We [Christians] ought to **set the atmosphere** wherever we go such that people understand that we serve Jesus!

We ought to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ such that the **saltiness of the message** can preserve all who accept it and keep them from decaying along with the world!

We ought to be at peace with one another: not bickering over positions or bickering over who is the greatest; but rather humbling ourselves and being servant of all!

SAVE US JESUS

****All sin is rebellion against God!**

****Sin is crouching at the door...ITS DESIRE IS FOR YOU BUT YOU MUST MASTER IT.**

****Sinful nature is always craving; always desiring;**

****A pinch of sin here and there [worldly perspective] = desensitization » it is a bad sign when sin doesn't bother you anymore...callous (Ephesians 4 - old man: you did not learn Christ Jesus in this way!)**

****BEAT MY BODY AND MAKE IT MY SLAVE 1 Corinthians 9**

****A different law at work in my members [Romans 7]**

****WHO WILL SAVE ME FROM THIS BODY OF DEATH? THANKS BE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.**

****Sin is like a virus; it needs a host; it gets into healthy cells and uses them to replicate itself;**

****JESUS IS THE VACCINE [CURE]!**

****Vaccines work** by introducing a **weakened form of the virus** into the body such that the body **develops immunity** against the disease **by developing antibodies** to defeat the virus!

****Jesus Christ put on flesh~ was impervious to sin regardless of its origin - world, flesh, devil~**

****Looked** like a sinner **EXCEPT** He was CARRYING THE CURE FOR SIN IN HIS VEINS!

****The antibodies were built from His immunity to sin** [Hebrews 4; Romans 8; Romans 6]

****His lifestyle** gives us the **example** to follow and **turn away from sin**- He is the author and finisher of faith; lay aside the sin that so easily entangles

****His Spirit gives us immunity to the power of sin** [those who died to sin no longer live in it]

****His blood gives us immunity to the penalty of sin** [whoever believes in me shall not perish but have everlasting life]

****His return will give us immunity against the presence of sin** [no more sorrow, pain, death]

In this text, which has several parallel texts (Matt 18:1-5; Matt 19:13,14, Lk 18:15-17) we see an interesting story being told.

If we consider this in light of Matthew 18, we realize that the disciples had just had an argument about who was the greatest in the kingdom. We see this same argument played out in Mark 9:33-37 [READ]

We MUST ask the question:

- 1. Why were the disciples worried about their status**
- 2. Why did Jesus use a child to make His point?**

It seems as if the disciples were more concerned about where they would sit in relation to Jesus than they were the mission that was set before them! They sought a certain exclusivity with Jesus! They were in the CLUB.

Jesus chose a child as an example of HUMILITY. IF YOU RECEIVE ONE LIKE THIS IN MY NAME, YOU RECEIVE ME!

He uses the same illustration later in chapter 9 when the disciples rebuked a man for casting out demons in the name of Jesus! Jesus said to them, DO NOT HINDER HIM! IF HE IS NOT AGAINST US, HE IS FOR US!

Then Jesus punctuates his statement by saying that if anyone causes one of these *little ones* to stumble, it would be better for them if they were never born!

What is Jesus saying to us through this? Jesus is clearly letting us know that NO ONE has a monopoly on Him and NO ONE can tell Jesus who to love!

We get so puffed up and arrogant thinking that we have the market cornered on Jesus...HE DOES NOT BELONG TO US...WE BELONG TO HIM!

The disciples had a habit of thinking this and the same attitude is prevalent in the church today!

Grace, we don't own Jesus, we don't own His church and WHOEVER Jesus invites to the table ought to be able to eat in peace with us!

We tend to treat the church as if it is a social club and worship as if it is a social hour...MY THIS, MY THAT, I THIS and I THAT...never once thinking about the fact that our attitudes are far out of line with what Christ expects!

This is God's church, this is the body of CHRIST and we ought to simply be thankful that we are ALLOWED to be INTO IT!

HOW DO WE AVOID THE MEMBERS ONLY ATTITUDE?

1. Jesus should be a place of safety for all [Verse 13-14]

The parents were bringing the babies/children to Jesus to let Him touch them. This culture believed that you could bestow blessings by touching.

In Genesis 48, when Joseph brought his sons to Jacob, Jacob laid his hands on them to bestow a blessing!

IF JESUS TOUCHES ANYTHING IT IS GOING TO BE BLESSED!

EVERY NOW AND THEN WE NEED HIM TO LAY HIS HANDS ON US!

TOUCHING OUR **HEARTS** SO THAT WE CAN LOVE EACH OTHER

TOUCHING OUR **BODIES** TO RESTORE HEALTH

TOUCHING OUR **MINDS** SO THAT THEY MAY BE RENEWED!

You would think that anyone seeking Jesus would be welcomed in but the disciples had a different idea!

Why were the disciples rebuking the children [and for that matter the parents]?

Perhaps the disciples saw Jesus as a great teacher who did not need to be “bothered” with the lowly children. [**same attitude** when the **Syrophenecian woman; woman at the well**...they saw this as a members only situation!!

Maybe they saw the children as **less important** than adults;

Maybe they **forgot the lesson** that Jesus taught earlier about receiving one of these “little ones” in My name;

Maybe it was because **mothers** were bringing the children;

OR Maybe they were totally missing the point that Jesus, unlike the other teachers of the times **ACTUALLY MADE HIMSELF accessible to EVERYONE!!**

When someone comes to Jesus, and they are looking for Jesus...WE OUGHT TO WELCOME THEM WITH OPEN ARMS!

2. We cannot tell Jesus WHO to love [Verse 14]

Jesus now rebukes the rebukers! When the disciples were driving away the children/parents- the bible says that Jesus became INDIGNANT!

Jesus was literally ANGRY! Do we expect Jesus to NOT be indignant when we forbid others to come to Him because of what we perceive as some undesirable characteristic?

I don't think Jesus will cut us any more slack than He cut the disciples!

Here is the thing, **there was a reason that they were coming!!**

First of all, women and children were **not valued** in society and **YET Jesus** allowing them is letting us know that **HE VALUES THE LEAST OF THESE.**

Jesus says, **PERMIT THEM TO COME TO ME!** DO NOT HINDER THEM! THEY WERE COMING HOPING JUST THAT JESUS MIGHT TOUCH THE CHILDREN!

Permit is in the **IMPERATIVE** MOOD! Jesus is saying- GET OUT OF THE WAY! If they came, it's because I drew them to ME!

What Jesus is saying to us is this: I LOVE THEM JUST AS MUCH AS I LOVE YOU!

Verse 14B

He says the KINGDOM of God **BELONGS** TO SUCH AS THESE...what does he mean? [the kingdom of God is made up of these types...those whom others have cast away!]

3. An attitude shift is necessary if we truly want to belong to the kingdom of God! [verse 15]

HIS KINGDOM, HIS RULES!

Jesus says WHOEVER does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child...

WHY does Jesus keep using children as imagery?

Jesus understands that **the heart MUST be changed** and all of the JUNK in the heart that puts these barriers up MUST be removed!

He is **not referring to the innocence** of children but rather their attitude/gratitude!

This is a conditional statement...we can say it this way...UNLESS (subjunctive) you receive and accept and welcome with gladness...and thankfulness...and without pretense...and without a members only attitude...

CHILD: This is not for us to act pouty when things don't go our way, or selfish when we desire something, or petty when something as small as the color of the curtains comes up!

Jesus is using this analogy strictly in the sense of having a trusting and thankful heart for what God is doing!

What is it about children?

- 1. Children have complete trust in the one who is in authority!** IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT TOMORROW LOOKS LIKE, WE KNOW THE ONE WHO HOLDS TOMORROW!
- 2. Little children don't need to see a whole lot to believe.** The bible says that we walk by faith and not by sight!
- 3. Little children appreciate when they receive a gift.** Anyone know that being ALLOWED into God's kingdom is a gift from Him?

Christians are referred to in several instances as "children"

We are called **children of God** in John's gospel and his epistles,

Romans 8 says that the Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are **children of God**;

the idea is **pervasive** in the Bible- **we are CHILDREN of God, dependent on GOD!**

I like the way that **Matthew** puts it in his gospel...**Matthew 18:3** says “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

UNLESS YOU ARE CONVERTED...

Two things that will help us this morning:

1. The word for converted, **strepho- means simply to turn...**and it is in the **passive** voice. What this means is that **WE CANNOT TURN OURSELVES BUT GOD MUST TURN US! SOME OF US ARE STILL BEING TURNED!**

2. Secondly, strepho comes from a word **trope-** which refers to the **turning of planets!**

What am I saying here? Think about how much energy is required to turn a planet!

It almost makes me ask, like the disciples asked later in the chapter, **“who then can be saved?”**

Jesus replied with man it is impossible but with God **ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE!**

IT IS NOT EASY BUT IF WE SUBMIT TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD, AND LET HIM TURN US WE SHALL BE TURNED AND WE SHALL BE CITIZENS IN HIS KINGDOM!

4. God is going to do WHATEVER HE PLEASES...WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT [VERSE 16]

Jesus took the children and **began hugging them.**

HOW BEAUTIFUL IS IT TO KNOW THAT THIS IS HOW JESUS DESIRES TO TREAT US!

He desires to **take us into His arms** and all He asks is that we come in with this same type of childlike desire and appreciation for what He has done!

This is what the kingdom of God looks like...we may be going through all manners of trials and issues but *at the end of the day, we can get a HUG from Jesus to make it all better!*

He hugged them despite the rebukes of the disciples! We can't tell Jesus who to love and we can't stop Jesus from loving EVERYONE!

Not only did Jesus hug them, the bible says that he began **blessing** them, laying His hands on them; [kat-YOO-lo-gayo]-**only one occurrence in the NT]**

This verb is an **intensified form of eulogeo**- can mean bless or speak well of- kata is a prefix which means "down from"- so Jesus began to **call down blessings from God on their behalf!**

He began to pray the favor of God over their lives!

What a wonderful benefit for being “one such as these”! What a friend we have in Jesus!

CLOSE

ALL I am saying today is that we cannot have a “members only” attitude **when it comes to Jesus**, He is going to **ble**ss whom He chooses, He is going to **bring to Him** whom He chooses, He’s **not going to turn ANYONE** away who is sincerely seeking Him...and there is absolutely nothing that we can do about it.

When **Grace** begins to take on newcomers, we **need to be mindful** of this and understand that this is **NOT A CLUB WHERE ONLY CERTAIN MEMBERS GET IN...this is a representation of the body of Christ!**

Every Christian is a member!

You were once NOT a member...I was once NOT a member, but JESUS laid His hands on us! He said to Satan, DON’T HINDER THEM...DON’T GET IN THEIR WAY...THEY COMING TO ME!

The woman caught in adultery was looked down upon BUT Jesus said, I CAN and WILL FORGIVE YOU!

Mary (lady of the night)- came to Jesus crying her eyes out, tears enough to wet His feet and JESUS SAID-YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN!

Jesus said WHOEVER COMES TO ME, I WILL IN NO WAY CAST OUT...

AS A MATTER OF FACT...COME TO ME...ALL...WHO LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST!

Jesus is not a social climber, He's not the leader of a social organization...He is the AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH!

JESUS SAID...IT'S NOT MEMBERS ONLY, I WILL TAKE YOU JUST AS YOU ARE, I WILL PICK YOU UP, I WILL TURN YOU AROUND...I WILL PLACE YOUR FEET ON SOLID GROUND!

Jesus DIED at Calvary for EVERYONE, not just those in a certain clique!

Jesus ROSE on the 3rd day for EVERYONE...not just those who consider themselves high and mighty...He even got up for those who everyone else looks down on!

That's why Jesus taught Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth

Blessed are the poor in Spirit for THEIRS is the KINGDOM OF GOD!

THERE IS NOT A FRIEND LIKE THE LOWLY JESUS...NO...NOT ONE!!

"I Pledge Allegiance to Jesus"
Mark 11:1-10

In America, **we are expected as citizens** to pledge allegiance to the flag. Allegiance means that we swear to defend and uphold the constitution; we defend the nation against foreign and domestic enemies; we are **expected to uphold the values** of the nation. Where our allegiance lies is where our loyalty lies.

In this text, there is **tension between two kingdoms**. Jesus is **leaving Jericho** headed to Jerusalem. Jericho was Herod's **oasis**. It had **palm trees**, a garden and pool that was 295 feet long.

Herod's kingdom was in opposition to the kingdom of God. Herod was an emissary of Rome. The **physical empire of Rome represented the invisible empire of Satan!**

There are **two kingdoms** that exist at the same time: the kingdom of **God** and the kingdom of the **prince of the air**.

One thing we must **understand** is **WE EITHER PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO ONE KINGDOM OR THE OTHER!**

In the text, Jesus is **headed for a showdown in Jerusalem**. One commentator indicates that this text is where Jesus **throws down the gauntlet**. In verse 1, they are at the **top of the Mount of Olives**.

They are getting ready to make their **descent into Jerusalem**. This is a **prophetic** moment in the ministry of Jesus; He had already indicated what must occur in Jerusalem.

Jesus **meant for this entrance to be a public display**. Large numbers of other pilgrims would have been making their way into the city. Jesus and His disciples **could have slipped in** but **Jesus made a conscious effort to make a scene**.

It is at this **moment**, which **could have devolved into a very dangerous situation**, where **THOSE WHO WERE WITH JESUS HAD TO PLEDGE THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO HIM OR CHOOSE TO STAY IN THE SHADOWS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE**.

At the top of the Mount of Olives, Jesus **sends two of His disciples** to a village opposite to them. We don't know if it was Bethphage, Bethany or another village but Jesus gave these two disciples a mission.

1. Pledging allegiance to Jesus means we go where He sends us (Verses 2-4):

Jesus speaks with great **specificity**. Go into the village, immediately as you enter it you will see a colt tied there. This is a **wonderful illustration of prophecy**; the **Word of the Lord was being made manifest**.

A. The **colt** is identified in the **OT prophecy** of **Zechariah 9:9** as the mount of the Messiah:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey”

B. The fact that the **colt was tied up waiting for them** lines up with **Genesis 49:11** which is a Messianic prophecy saying that the **scepter shall not depart from Judah** UNTIL SHILOH [the one it belongs to] comes- this is a Messianic prophecy of Christ, the coming King!

It also says the king **tethers** his foal to the vine and the colt to the choice vine.

C. **Commandeering** of a beast of burden was the **prerogative of a king** in ancient times, and this, too, suggests that Jesus is a KING.

D. An **unbroken beast of burden** was regarded as **sacred** which made it appropriate for a king because no one could ride a king's steed.

All of these event line up with God's prophecy and point to Jesus as the true Messiah!

Verse 3

The disciples went and **did as they were told because of their allegiance to the Master.** What Jesus asked them to do **could have proved dangerous** for them but they **went without hesitation!**

The **only credentials that they had were those words that Jesus gave them,** “the Lord has need of it.” There will be **times in our lives where all we have is a Word from the LORD** and we have to **trust** that He will handle the details!

There is much **debate** over this passage. Some say that this was a **password** that was **set up prior** to this encounter. Some say that Jesus had **contacts** in the **area.** **I believe that this was supernaturally orchestrated.**

We KNOW that the LORD will organize and orchestrate every situation to His glory!

It **DOES NOT MATTER** how it got done, all of the **dominoes** had to line up so that the prophecy could come to past.

2. Pledging allegiance to Jesus means we commit resources to His cause (Verse 4-6)

Jesus was known in this area. It is possible that He had friends here. **BUT** here in the text, after the disciples untied the colt,

some **bystanders** asked them what they were doing. The disciples simply **repeated what Jesus said** “**The Lord has need of it and immediately he will send it back here.**”

Notice, when the people heard this, the Bible says that they gave them **permission**. Here is where we can see the Lord working.

He needed the colt and the people in the town gave permission for him **with the understanding that it would be sent back.**

Sometimes, the LORD asks us to make **momentary sacrifices** for Him. Sometimes the LORD will **use our resources** to fulfill a need somewhere. ***I NEED TO LET YOU KNOW THAT THOSE MOMENTARY SACRIFICES THAT WE MAKE WILL BE REWARDED!***

Anyone know that ***whatever we do in the name of the Lord will be blessed!*** If we give **a cup of cold water** in His name, we will not lose our reward!

Our works in the name of the Lord will stand- Paul says that if we build with **wood, hay or straw** then on the day of the LORD we will be found out but if we build with **gold and precious stones**, **our work will remain** and we will receive a **REWARD!**

Many times the **resources that we commit** to the LORD for the furtherance of His kingdom are **used in ways** that we cannot even imagine!

Other times, **resources that WE need** come from places that we don't expect- because God has already lined it up!

What an **honor** it must have been for the owner of this colt to give it up in the service of the Lord.

3. Pledging allegiance to Jesus means that sometimes our most personal possessions are committed to the Lord (verse 7, 8):

The disciples who retrieved the colt **put their cloaks** on the colt's back as padding for Jesus to sit on. **Others in the crowd laid their coats out in the road** for the colt to walk on. **Others put branches in the street.** John tells us that these were **palm** branches.

What they were **saying** was this: **My allegiance is to the REAL king and not king Herod or Caesar.**

When we consider this in light of what we know about what many were unwilling to give up, **these people were giving up even the clothes on their backs.**

The people chose to line up with Jesus! What is our choice today? **We are faced with choices each and every day!**

We **must understand** that there are two kingdoms in simultaneous operation! **Sometimes we are called to give up**

things that seem personal and precious to us when we give allegiance to Jesus!

We **must live with the understanding** that the **closer I walk with Jesus, the less material items mean to me!** My focus is on **furthering the purposes** of Jesus in the earth!

4. Pledging allegiance to Jesus means that I give my praise to Jesus (Verse 9,10)

We must **keep two things in mind.**

At this point in the text, they are **still outside the gates of Jerusalem.** Jesus shows up and makes a grand **spectacle** with a crowd following Him.

A. This crowd that is shouting is not the same crowd that would shout **crucify**, these are the same people who were following Jesus from Jericho.

B. The **crowd at Jerusalem did not give their allegiance to Jesus.** It was the Jerusalem crowd that would shout “Crucify!” on Good Friday.

Two crowds, two kingdoms, two choices!

When the people were saying “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” they were **quoting the 118th Psalm.** This Psalm is a part of the great **Hallel (HA-LAWL),** Psalm 113-118

which is recited during the Passover, Festival of Pentecost, Booths and the Feast of Dedication!

These Psalms were **written to remind** the people of the **greatness of God** and of His **delivering power!**

Hallel simply means praise! It is where we derive our word Hallelujah from- PRAISE JAH or PRAISE YAWEH-

Jesus is worthy of our PRAISE! He is the great deliverer, the great healer, the great IAM!

Sometimes we get so hung up on church protocol that **WE FORGET THAT WE OUGHT TO PRAISE THE LORD!** Praise doesn't stop when the music stops, praise is always in order!

They were shouting "Hosanna" which means **"SAVE"**. **NONE COULD SAVE AS JESUS COULD!**

The Roman government was **oppressing** the people, the religious leaders were **oppressing** the people and they were **finally getting a chance to see their hopes become reality!** They were saying **SAVE US!**

When the people were saying, **in verse 10**, "Blessed is the coming Kingdom of our father David", it is **clear that they did not fully understand** that Jesus was a **DIFFERENT KIND OF KING!**

YES, Jesus was coming to claim a kingdom **BUT** he was **NOT** coming to **dethrone Caesar**.

YES, the Son of David was coming to the City of David but this was **not political**.

This is the **ONE** who could sit on the throne of David forever, but **not as flesh and blood**.

Jesus first had to go to Calvary, be crucified and then be resurrected! It would be the resurrected Christ who sat on the throne forever!

Close:

What we have to see today is this: Here were these people living in a kingdom belonging to the Roman Empire and yet they were throwing down their coats and laying palm branches in the road claiming that there was a different king! **This is what we must do as Christians**. We must pledge our allegiance to Jesus and not to this world!

We must **be willing to suffer** with Jesus so that we may also reign with Him.

The **Palm branches were symbolic of victory**- the battle was at Calvary and Jesus- would triumph over the powers and principalities at the cross.

He would shame them and conquer them at the cross!

He would render Satan powerless at the cross!

Do you know that those who give their allegiance to God here will praise Him forever in eternity!?

Do you know that when we give our allegiance to God in the face of persecution and at the risk of persecution, God will reward us?

Revelation 7:9-17

“ALL In”
Mark 10:28-31

What do we think of when we think about discipleship? Many times, and I am guilty of this, we think only of the things that we must **give up**.

One commentator says it this way: “But to conceive of discipleship **solely in terms of its costs and sacrifices** is to conceive of it **wrongly**—as though in **marrying a beautiful bride** a young man would think only of what he was giving up.¹”

Rather than focusing on the beauty of the bride, we focus on how many potential brides we lost.

When God **prunes away things** from our trees with the goal of producing more fruit in us, we sometimes **lament over** the **branches** that were cut away rather than glorifying Him for the fruit!

Here, this text is **connected** to the previous reading. Jesus made a request that the **rich man** sell his possessions, give to the poor and follow Him. The man owned a lot of property and **did not want to lose it for the sake of following Jesus**.

¹ Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (p. 316). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

This is why Jesus says, **whoever loves his life will lose it** but whoever “hates” his life for the sake of Jesus and the gospel, will save it to eternal life.”

WHEN JESUS CALLS US TO FOLLOW HIM, HE IS ASKING THAT WE GO ALL IN.

That we not look at what we are leaving behind but rather we **look forward to the promise of his protection, His provision and His presence.**

Peter opens this section by saying in **Verse 28**, “We have left everything to follow you.”

Two ways to interpret:

Some see this as Peter’s way of saying that

1. **we are qualified** because we did not do what the rich man did...we actually DID give up what we were doing to follow You Jesus.

2. **This is a plea** on Peter’s part- Lord, what benefits will we receive for following you?

Not every benefit will be tangible nor will there always be instant gratification following Jesus. Unfortunately, Jesus does not operate a **microwave** Kingdom but that is not to say that Jesus does not take care of His sheep!

Jesus, sensing Peter's anxiety, answers with a **promise**.

1. Whenever we go all in, we do so knowing that a promise from Jesus is a promise that we receive with gladness.

Verse 29

House, brother, sister, mother or father or children or farms...

This is a heavy statement. I asked myself, IS Jesus calling me to abandon my family? **Is He calling us to leave behind everything?**

In the case of the disciples here in the text, they indeed **left behind their families but they were not disconnected from them**. Jesus and His disciples **returned many times to Capernaum** where Peter's home was.

Jesus **called** these men as His disciples for a particular purpose and they answered. They went all in.

What is Jesus calling for us to leave behind? Maybe it's **baggage** from the time before Christ became our Savior! Maybe there are **habits** that must be renounced. It is possible that there are **people** who we must **dissociate** ourselves from.

Whatever Jesus is calling us away from, **are we willing** to be all in and say- I will follow you Jesus?

Jesus said it in **Luke 14:25-26** [note the **large crowd**- whenever there is a large crowd, there is potential for **halfway discipleship**-

those who follow **close enough to be blessed** but **far enough away to avoid persecution.**]

“If anyone comes to Me and **does not hate** his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”

Is Jesus asking us to hate when he told us to love? No, he is **speaking hyperbolically**- actually, He is saying **we are not to love anything/one more than we love Him.**

Jesus calls us to **radical obedience** and radical **allegiance** to Him above all else.

In light of all this, **THERE IS NOTHING THAT WE ARE ASKED TO LEAVE BEHIND THAT CAN COMPARE TO WHAT WE GAIN BY FOLLOWING CHRIST!**

2. Jesus promises that our obedience will be rewarded when we go all in! Verse 30

He will receive **100 TIMES AS MUCH** in the present age!

This **sounds like prosperity gospel**- if I give up much, I will gain much! Let us not look at this as give to get. Let us consider this as **Christ rewarding our obedience!**

100 times as much of what?

Wait, **I don't want 100 children**—I am **broke** with just three! I don't need a hundred mothers! Or 100 brothers...

NOTICE that there is **one word missing** from this list? **Fathers!**

What is Jesus saying? As His disciples, we will be a part of a **spiritual family of brothers, sisters, mothers with God as our Father.**

Think of what Jesus said in **Mark 3** when His **mother and brothers came to “rescue”** Him from a debate with the religious leaders. Jesus **looked around** and said “Behold my mother and my brothers...**whoever does the will of God**, those are my mother and sister and my brothers!

How many people have you met since you’ve followed Jesus that have been a blessing to you?

How many **meals** have you shared in the home of another disciple?

How many times have you been ill and someone from your extended Christian family visited or called before someone in your biological family?

THINK OF THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT ARE FORGED IN THE FURNACE OF DISCIPLESHIP! Think of those who **weep when you weep**, who **rejoice** when you rejoice! The bible says that a friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity.

Truth be told, ***there are people in our Christian networks who sometimes treat us better than our biological relatives!***

What about those **100 houses**? Jesus promised me this! **Don't think that Jesus can not bless us materially as well.** Delight yourselves in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart!

The Bible says in **Philippians 4:19** "And MY GOD shall supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus!"

Jesus said **if we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all other things will be added to us!**

We sometimes have a misconception that God somehow desires for us to be poor and that **poverty somehow equates to righteousness.**

Yes, there are times, **when we try to serve MONEY** that God will remove it. **If we love money** more than God, then surely He will remove it. **IF we DEPEND on riches** rather than trusting God, He will remove it.

We have to put this in perspective.

There are **times of financial blessing** in our lives such that we are able to be a blessing to others!

There are **other times when God allows us to enjoy things!** **1 Timothy 6:17** "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to **fix their hope** on the uncertainty of

riches, **BUT ON GOD**, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.”

WE SERVE A GOD WHO KNOWS WHAT WE NEED BEFORE WE EVEN ASK, who knows how to give good gifts and therefore He is **ABLE to do whatever He’s promised!**

Persecutions too?

Here is how we know that this is **not a prosperity message**...Mark writes also that the one who goes all in must also expect persecutions[**100 times as many- again figurative language!**]

Mark is **writing this gospel to a church in Rome who is under the persecution of Nero.**

Mark is writing this gospel to **remind the modern church**, to understand that we should not solely focus on the 100 fold but realize that **following Jesus brings with it suffering as well; sometimes, unjust suffering.**

1 Peter 4:14 says we are blessed if we are reviled for the name of Christ!

The word here is **diogmos**- it is a **systemic and organized program of harassment**. We know that **Nero tarred Christians and used them for candles!**

We know **EVEN NOW** that there is a **systemic persecution** that every disciple will undergo- 100 houses or not- because **the world is becoming progressively more Anti-Christian** and atheistic!

SO MUCH FOR THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL. Jesus is **not promising a utopia in the present age**, He is promising that He will take care of us as we seek to do the will of God!

3. There is treasure stored up in heaven for those who go all in verse 30 b

NOTE: **Different description for time here.** **Kairos** [season/ age] but here **AION** [a-Yone] [**future period of time without end**]

Kairos refers to an **earthly time period** but **AION** is referring to the period that Jesus Christ reigns in glory, forever and ever.

During this time, **we receive “Life Eternal”!** Life that never ends!

Eternal life can ONLY be granted by Jesus and was ONLY secured by His death, burial and resurrection!

He says in **John 11:25-26** “I am **the resurrection and the life!** Whoever believes in Me will live, even if he dies. And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die...”

John 17:2 “even as You gave Him [the Son] authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him [the Son], **He may give eternal life**”²

² New American Standard Bible: 1995 update. (1995). (Jn 17:2). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

John 10:27,28 “My sheep know my voice, and I know them and they follow Me, and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand³”

What are we saying here- in the age to come, we will live forever with King Jesus!

ALL WORTH IT

With all of the demands that discipleship places on our lives, Jesus reassures us yet again that those who are first now will be last later- and many who are last now will be first later!

We live, not with temporal sacrifices in mind but with a broader view of the kingdom!

We don't focus on what we have lost- for it we lost it for Christ, we did not need it anyway!

We have to look at life with an eternal perspective

What gain we have in Jesus!

That we might know Him and the power of His resurrection!

That we might also suffer with Him in order to reign with Him!

That we might forget those things that are behind and press toward the mark of the high and heavenly calling that is in Christ Jesus!

What gain for those who are all in!

³ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update.* (1995). (Jn 10:28). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

That we might live as sojourners here, living in tents and living, strangers in a foreign land

Looking for a city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God...The Almighty!

We know that the foundation- the only foundation on which anything can be build it Jesus Christ!

LOOKING FOR A BUILDING NOT MADE WITH HANDS-ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS!

THIS HOPE IS AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL!

JESUS WENT ALL IN FOR US- AT CALVARY!

**A Closed Mouth
(Mark 10:46-52)**

You have undoubtedly heard the expression: “a closed mouth will not be fed.”

I need to let someone in here know that when it comes to Jesus and when it comes to His **prayer answering power, we ought to be willing to open our mouths and petition Jesus with **assurance!****

Hebrews 4:16 lets us know that because Jesus is our great High Priest and because He fully understands the human condition, we can **approach the throne of grace with confidence**, so that we **may receive MERCY and find grace** to help us in our time of need.

Jesus is on the road again to and through **Jericho. NT Jericho (a **recently excavated site** where Herod the Great built a **palace** and ornamental **garden**); located about **one mile south** of OT Jericho¹**

Bar-tigh-MEE-us son of Timeaus, was a beggar on the side of the road. **Matthew says that there were **two** but doesn't name either. Nothing precludes two beggars from being here; it is **possible that Mark only focuses on this one.****

¹ Mare, W. H. (2004). *New Testament Background Commentary: A New Dictionary of Words, Phrases and Situations in Bible Order* (p. 72). Ross-shire, UK: Mentor.

One thing we see is that ***WHEN BARTIMAEUS REALIZED THAT JESUS WAS IN THIS CROWD, HE BEGAN TO CRY OUT FOR MERCY!!***

Isn't that **embarrassing?** Wouldn't that bring **shame** on him? My question is, **what did he have to lose?** Here was a blind beggar sitting on the roadside, I am sure that he did not care about being embarrassed!

His actions show more humility than **James and John** who were **lining up their box seats** or **the rich man** who was unwilling to part with his material items!

What does this mean for us? Bartimaeus shows us that **when our backs are against the wall, there is no such thing as etiquette.** If we have to **lie prostrate**, if we **have to shed tears**, if we have to **lift up holy hands...WE OUGHT TO BE WILLING TO CRY OUT TO GOD!**

Bartimaeus made his request known by calling at the top of his lungs! He OPENED HIS MOUTH!

1. Crying out means that we are humble enough to recognize God's POWER! V47

Bartimaeus calls Jesus **Son of David- Messianic title!** *He is the first person in this gospel to recognize Jesus as the Son of David [aside from Peter's confession].*

This time the **tables were turned...the Messianic secret is out**. He was **headed to Jerusalem to lay down His life** and His identity would no longer be a secret!

How is it that a blind man is able to know this but those who walked with Jesus did not? The Holy Spirit opened the eyes of the inner man such that the needs of the outer man could be met! He's our source and our supply!

Witherington says that "Son of David" is a *political/military term* but the Son of David that Bartimaeus cries out to is **one who comes with mercy, not wrath, and will enter Jerusalem on a donkey, not a war charger!**

2 Samuel 22:7 "In my distress I called upon the LORD, Yes, I cried to my God; And from His temple He heard my voice, And my cry for help came into His ears."

2. Crying out means that we are humble enough to recognize that we NEED Jesus!

Too many of us don't ask or petition God because we think that "since He knows everything, He ought to know this." BUT there is a sense of humility in asking because YES He knows but He is not obligated to do anything!

We must **acknowledge the fact** that everything that we have all comes from Him! I am sure that Jesus saw Bartimaeus sitting

there! But it was the faith of Bartimaeus that Jesus took notice of!

We need His mercy! We need to be asking for MERCY! It takes humility to ask for mercy! **When I ask for mercy, I realize that I am at the end of my rope and there is no recourse!** I can't handle this but I know someone who is able to keep me from falling!

Mercy means that I'll be grateful for whatever you give me Lord. If the Lord does not do anything else for us, anyone know that He's already done enough!?

WHEN THINGS GET TOO BIG [can't see around it, over it under it], *don't ever be too proud to ask for MERCY!* Sometimes that is all we're able to say!

In the **midnight hour** when we are **crying** our eyes out, it's alright to say *"Lord have mercy"*! When the **job situation** is not right, it's **OK** to say Lord have mercy!

When I'm sick and I need healing, it's alright to cry out and say "LORD, HAVE MERCY ON ME!"

3. Crying out means I disregard those naysayers who do not understand my problem v48-49

We need to see a couple of things here:

1. It was the **people and not Jesus** who tried to hush him up

Two types of people

A. Those **who encourage** us to get into the presence of God

B. Those **who try to keep you out** of the presence of God-
question your faith, silence your praise and even stifle your
confession! Ultimately, these are trying to block your blessing!

2. Bartimaeus was **persistent in his call**, he **cried out a second time** [cried out all the more!!] **despite** what those people were saying.

Had Bartimaeus kept his mouth closed, his eyes would have remained closed but because he opened his mouth, his need was met!

NOTE: Satan will **either try to stifle your petition or stifle the answer**; Daniel prayed and his answer was held up because the devil [**Prince of Persia**] held up Gabriel the angel who was coming with the answer!

**DON'T LET SATAN STOP YOU FROM PETITIONING GOD!
WE'RE ABLE BECAUSE JESUS JUSTIFIED US BY HIS BLOOD
AND **GOD WILL HEAR US!****

3. Jesus stopped: When Jesus stops, it is **His way of saying that He cares!** I don't want to get it into anyone's head that we can

manipulate God, *Jesus stops out of His OWN concern...FOR A BEGGAR ON THE STREET!* God blesses us for His OWN glory! God heals and takes care of us so that HE will be glorified!

When Jesus called Bartimaeus to Himself; that was His way of telling the crowd to be quiet! You've been following me but you have said a word- you're too busy worrying about what the person next to you is going to think! **We should all be like Bartimaeus, unafraid to petition God for what we need.**

Social context: the fact that there were social strata where certain people were denied certain rights. **We can't tell God whose street to stop on!** He's no respecter of person!

Jesus will get into the trenches, He is not too worried about STATUS OR PIETY- BUT **FAITH IS THE LANGUAGE THAT WE SPEAK TO JESUS!**

NOTE V49, NOW the crowd changes their tune...WOW.

Crying out means that I know in advance that Jesus is able to meet my needs (v 50-52)

Bartimaeus throws his cloak to the side and jumps up! This is a **proper response** to the grace of Jesus!

Rabboni (MY Master, My Teacher, MY Lord)! I want to "regain" my sight.

We don't know the duration of the blindness, but we know the ONE who can instantly give sight!

V 52,

YOU faith- i.e. knowing that I'm able before you even ask! Has made you well.

He asked "I want to regain my sight" in the present tense i.e. this is an immediate need and the bible says here that Immediately, he regained his sight and FOLLOWED JESUS!

NOTICE, Jesus said GO and YET Bartimaeus followed instead.

He realized that there was nowhere else for him to GO!

NONE OF US WHO HAVE TRULY ENCOUNTERED JESUS LEAVES! We understand that there is no alternative!

FOR US

Bartimaeus was blind but he was not deaf!

Spiritual blindness: hear the words, recognize the condition, recognize the power and do not allow the devil to discourage us [sit down, be quiet, quit praying...he's not listening to you...*the devil is a liar* and he is the father of lies, why would we ever listen to him?]

The Cross is the entry way to us being able to petition God, to offer up entreaties to God.

We could not pray to God without the cross!

Then cross opened the door and tore the veil in two!

Because of the cross, we too can cry out- Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me!

The cross was the Lord's way of stopping BY and having MERCY on ALL MANKIND!!

Paul says in Romans 8 that the earth is groaning, everything and everyone is groaning waiting to be redeemed! Racked with pain from the power of sin!

Sin has corrupted everything AND the LORD stopped and had mercy by coming down from glory, being wrapped in swaddling clothing, walking the streets of Galilee, walking the roads of Israel, going to the CROSS and DYING FOR OUR SINS!

The Cross was God's way of saying, "I saw your need before you were formed in your mother's womb and I am going to supply that need."

The first need we have to have supplied is our **salvation! *We need to have the blinders taken off our eyes* but in order to do that, we must CRY OUT TO GOD! We MUST CRY OUT FOR JESUS TO SAVE US!!**

We can't do anything else until we first meet Jesus at the Cross.

IF YOU NEED JESUS YOU OUGHT TO OPEN YOUR MOUTH AND SAY LORD JESUS HAVE MERCY ON ME! Opening my mouth is me saying publicly, I have needs!

In THIS CHURCH, when the Holy Spirit is ministering to your spirit, don't worry about what your neighbor is going to think, if you want to cry out to God, by all means, do it!

It might be THROUGH tears, it might be laying at the altar, it might be a shout but WHEN WE NEED THE LORD, WE CANNOT BE QUIET ABOUT IT! IT'S ALRIGHT TO CRY OUT TO GOD!!

We get so worried about what the devil says! The devil is going to try to silence you because he doesn't want you to have your needs met.

I HEARD A SONG THAT SAID THROUGH IT ALL, I'VE LEARNED TO TRUST IN JESUS, I'VE LEARNED TO TRUST IN GOD- I'VE LEARNED TO DEPEND UPON HIS WORD!

**“You Can’t Handle the Truth”
Mark 11:31-33**

Context:

Triumphal entry

Curse the fig tree- an indictment of the religious system

Tables **overturned** in the temple; No merchants permitted to carry anything through the temple

Teaching with authority and quoting prophecy: *MY house shall be a house of prayer for all the nations*

Fulfilling prophecy [**Zechariah 9**]

Jesus was laying it down; He was commissioned to lay it down but the religious leaders were not picking it up!

1. People who can’t handle the truth will surround themselves with others whose opinions are like theirs [Verse 27]

The saying that there is safety in a multitude of counselors is true in the positive and in the negative. But when the counsel is unwise, there will always be issues. People who band together in atheism do so because they don’t want to hear opinions contrary to atheism.

If you’re Christian, don’t ever be afraid to hear what someone is saying. If it is contrary to the Word of God, you will know it and be able to refute it.

2. People who cannot handle the truth seek to entrap rather than to understand [Verse 28]

“By what authority or who gave you this authority?”

The questions were not genuine question but rather attempts to entrap Jesus! Luke’s gospel says that the religious leaders were looking for a way to *destroy* Jesus.

Jesus was changing lives and the Bible says that people were “hanging” on to every word He said.

One occurrence in the New Testament of this word- it literally means to be totally captivated...why, because Jesus did not teach like the scribes...He taught with authority!

This is why Jesus says that man cannot live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God!

They wanted to know the SOURCE of His authority

Most of the times when people question the authority of Jesus they are looking for a reason NOT to believe!

If they were listening like the people were listening, they would know.

Jesus said **at least four times** that He was operating through the initiative of the Father:

John 5:30 *“I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”*

John 8:28 “So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and *I do nothing on My own initiative*, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.”

John 8:32 “Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for *I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.*”

John 14:10 “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? *The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative*, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.”

Jesus came with all authority because He was SENT by the Father!

★ **JESUS SENSES THEIR TRAP** [**Verses 29-30**]

-The question that Jesus returned with contained the answer- this debate is also recorded in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

What was the source of John’s baptism?

Why would Jesus ask THIS question? Warren Wiersbe has this to say, “God will not reveal new truth if we have rejected previously presented truth.”

John, **we know, was a prophet** but not just any prophet; John was the *last prophet to speak prior to Jesus beginning His ministry.*

[Isaiah 40:3] John is the **voice of one crying in the wilderness** saying “make ready the way of the LORD, Make His paths straight”

John was messenger spoken of by the Father to Jesus in [Malachi 3:1] as

“MY MESSENGER who will prepare the way for you.”

John was the **forerunner** of Jesus Christ and His **baptism was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins**

Mark 1:5 says that the *people were going to John and being baptized and confessing their sins.*

Luke’s gospel sheds even more light. In **Luke 7** when John’s disciples were inquiring about Jesus, whether or not He was the Christ, **Jesus sent John a message** [*the blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them...*”

John’s disciples left and **Jesus proceeds to exalt John’s ministry-** Jesus said that John was **not a reed shaken by the wind, he was not a man who sought pleasure and luxury-**

HE WAS A PROPHET AND THERE WAS NO ONE BORN OF WOMAN WHO WAS GREATER THAN JOHN!

3. People who cannot handle the truth would rather pretend not to know rather than acknowledging the truth **Verses 31-33**

They **deliberate** on the answer to the question:

A. If we say that John's baptism is from heaven, He will ask 'why didn't you believe him?'

John's baptism was indeed from heaven. He was **commissioned from before the time he was in the womb of his mother!**

HE RECOGNIZED JESUS BEFORE JESUS EVER APPEARED-
WHEN *Mary VISITED ELIZABETH AND ELIZABETH WAS 6 MONTHS PREGNANT,* THE BIBLE SAYS THAT JOHN LEPT IN THE WOMB OF HIS MOTHER WHEN Mary WALKED IN!

When John was baptizing and preaching, the bible says when the **people and the tax collectors** heard this, they **acknowledged God's justice...**

They understood that John's baptism and their repentance meant that they agreed with God's judgment against sin!

Psalm 51:4 "Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when you speak and blameless when You judge"

We HAVE to understand that this is the heart of the gospel, we are **sinners with a problem that we cannot fix** and until we recognize the problem, we will never ASK FOR HELP!

The **religious leaders** *when John was preaching*, as Luke says in Luke 7:30, **REJECTED GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THEMSELVES!**

What does this mean? They **did not consent with God's salvific plan because it did not look like what they were expecting!**

What a dangerous position to put yourself in!

★ **What is the PURPOSE of God?**

The word in Greek means a "well-thought out or deliberate plan"

We know that **God is eternal**, He **cannot learn because He knows everything**, He cannot be caught off guard because He is omniscient...therefore,

He does not plan on the fly but rather His plans are from all eternity!

His overarching plan is simple...God seeks to redeem of man back to Himself and close the chasm that sin created!

John was a part of a larger plan and even he knew that...he said, I baptize with water BUT ONE IS COMING AFTER ME WHO WILL BAPTIZE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WITH FIRE!

I'M NOT WORTHY TO UNTIE HIS SANDALS!

HE IS THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD!

★ **How was the plan accomplished?**

1st **sending the law**, then the **prophets** and then the **final prophet**, John the Baptist...to **precede God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ** coming to save us from our sins!

It was the **cross of Jesus Christ** and the blood of Jesus Christ that **reconciled** us!

Colossians 1:22 says that Jesus *reconciled us through His fleshly body through death* in order to present us blameless and beyond reproach!

Therefore, *rejection of John's baptism meant that they did not believe they needed forgiveness, they did not need to repent* and they by default rejected the One whom John preceded!

The **question that Jesus asks is as important** as the answer that they sought!

IF YOU ALREADY REJECTED THE TRUTH OF GOD, HOW CAN YOU HANDLE THE TRUTH OF GOD?

B. If we say that John's baptism is from men, the people will stone us because they believe that he is a "real" prophet

The people believed that John was sent from God as a prophet [*one who speaks directly from God*] and that He was a part of God's mission. **He did not equivocate** when he preached against sin; he did not mince God's words given to him and he **paid with his life because Herodias** wanted to continue to lay with her brother-in-law [she couldn't handle the truth either]!

They knew the answer. They knew John's work. Some of them may have even seen John baptize Jesus! If they did, they saw the sign of the Spirit resting on Jesus like a dove and they heard the voice from heaven saying "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Their Answer: We do not know...[verse 33]

This is a **copout**- a very prideful answer based on their actually knowing the truth but refusing to acknowledge the truth]

Jesus says that these people were **like little children** in the market place but they couldn't make their minds up! "We played the flute and you did not dance, we sang dirge and you did not weep" They referred to John as a demoniac [and he did not eat nor drink] and they referred to Jesus as a drunkard and a glutton [because he came eating and drinking]! WHICH ONE IS IT?

PEOPLE WILL NEVER BE SATISFIED WITH GOD UNTIL THEY REALIZE THAT GOD DOESN'T DANCE TO OUR MUSIC, WE DANCE TO HIS MUSIC!

The reply of Jesus

Well since you won't answer my question, I am not going to answer your question. How awesome is this reply?

You can't handle the truth: I don't dance to your music, you dance to my music.

What does this have to do with us?

How does this text speak to us today?

- 1. Legitimate questions are asked from a sincere heart.**
- 2. God's truth can be a hard pill to swallow- however, it is only hard to swallow when we try to judge His truth through our own worldview.**

GOD'S TRUTH IS LIBERATING, IT WILL SET US FREE!

3. Many make excuses about coming to Christ, excuses about who He is and what He did; Many refuse to acknowledge the sin in their lives; many question His authority and where it came from!

His authority stems from the fact that He is GOD!

The sin in our lives can only be dealt with by GOD!

Those who refuse God/Jesus are saying that they don't trust His plan for THEIR lives.

Those who refuse those who speak the message of God are saying, by default, we don't want to hear your message God.

[Aside: there are many who have tainted the message [Satan has aided in this!], shamed God, lied about the message and this makes it very difficult for those who actually DO work on God's behalf]

The Final Solution

Mark 12:10-11

The religious leaders' questions regarding the authority of Jesus led Him to speak to them in this parable. A **parable** is an **illustration** /analogy that uses plain language to communicate some profound truth.

Keep in mind that Jesus has **just reprimanded the leaders** regarding their understanding of His authority! **John and Jesus were on the same mission, preaching the same gospel** and SENT FROM THE SAME GOD!

Now, Jesus is using this parable to reinforce His point.

The **imagery** of the **vineyard** would strike a chord with the audience because they lived in an **agricultural society**.

God also *uses the vineyard to describe Israel* in **Isaiah 5:1-2** READ...this was the **clue** that Jesus used to get the *attention of the religious leaders*.

Questions from the parable that we must answer;

1. (12:1 READ) Who is the man who planted the vineyard?

Obviously, this is a **reference to God** (Father)

2. (12:2 READ) Who are the ones that he left in charge?

The ones in charge are the **religious leaders**; Pharisees, Saducees and Scribes.

These *shepherds were supposed to lead folks to God but instead, they were preying on the sheep.*

3. (12:3-5 READ) Who are the slaves that the master sent?

The **slaves were the prophets** that God sent to admonish the people, to rebuke corrupt leaders (kings, false prophets and priests)

Ezekiel writes (Chapter 34): **1**The word of the Lord came to me: **2**“Son of man, **prophesy AGAINST the shepherds of Israel**; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? **3**You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock.

Prophets like **Elijah** who warned the people to come back to God and stop limping between two opinions!

Prophets like **Isaiah and Jeremiah** who told the people and the leaders of the *impending judgment*; **also reminded** the people that IF they *turn back* to God, they would be blessed and forgiven!

Jeremiah says in 33rd chapter: **3** ‘Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you **great and mighty things**, which you do not know.’

John the Baptist was **murdered** because of his work as a prophet...

Note the treatment of the ones sent gets **progressively worse**.

The servants of the Master kept getting the short end of the stick

4. (Verses 6-8) Who is the son that the parable is referring to?

The parable then relates that **THERE WAS ONE OTHER OPTION**; the planter **sent his son**... they will respect Him.

The **other gospels** add “perhaps” or “surely” but we know that the outcome was already known!

NOTES:

The son is referred to as **beloved**...[very special, more special than the other servants who were sent]

The son is **sent last**...**Hebrews 1:2** says that **God spoke through the prophets in many portions and many ways BUT in these last days**, God has spoken to us **IN HIS SON** who is the heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Who is the planter's son? If the **planter is the Father** then His *Son, the BELOVED and only BEGOTTEN Son is Jesus!*

HE IS THE FINAL SOLUTION!

John says *Jesus came to His own but they knew Him not.*

(Verse 7) This is the heir: they knew that Jesus was the Messiah but they were more concerned with maintaining the status quo with Rome.

Jesus **predicts** His own death again...

They took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard [**Hebrews 13:12** says that Jesus *suffered outside the gate* that He might sanctify His people by His own blood;

John 19:17,18 They took Jesus, therefore, and **He went out, bearing His own cross**, to the place called the **Place of a Skull**, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. **18** There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between.

How many know that **this was not their doing** but it was, as Peter preached in Acts, by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God?

How many know that **the Son could have called 12 legions of angels** to His aid but he laid down His life on His own authority!?

5. The Final Judgment?

(Verse 9) What will *the owner of the vineyard* do?

Jesus NOW **casts judgment** on these leaders and EXALTS HIMSELF as the CHRIST!

Jesus referred them back to their OWN scriptures- he quotes **Psalm 118**

Verses 10-12 HAVEN'T YOU READ THIS SCRIPTURE:

READ

DIDN'T YOU KNOW...**YOU CAN KILL ME BUT YOU CAN'T KEEP ME DOWN!**

THE ONE YOU REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE!

Jesus lets them know that **HE is the cornerstone-** and the cornerstone is the **most precious stone in the foundation!**

A cornerstone is the **first stone laid in the foundation** of a building. Many times the corner stone is **laid in an elaborate ceremony**. Sometimes it is **inscribed with the date**. It is said to **add stability** to the foundation!

We know that the Cornerstone (Jesus Christ) was *laid before* the foundation of the world! **He's been the Cornerstone from all eternity!**

His inscription is a name on His thigh that no one knows except for Him!

He **stabilizes** the BODY by being the HEAD!

★ **The cornerstone can be peace or it can be judgment!**

PEACE: **Isaiah 28:16** “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, **A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed.** *He who believes in it [the Cornerstone] will not be disturbed (panicked).*

JUDGMENT: **Matthew 21:44** [quoting Isaiah 8] adds this- he who falls on the stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.

6. How does this apply to the current day?

A. Jesus is still being “killed” every day

Let's kill Him...is this not the same thing being said now?

According to the commentators, the **tenants could legally take over the land** if the **owner did not collect** something from them [hence no fruit];

Also, the **son showing up** meant that the father was probably dead so **if they KILLED the son** the property would become **ownerless** and could therefore be taken over by them...

GOD IS NOT DEAD AND THIS IS GOD'S VINEYARD!

★ **Atheists** say, **let's kill Jesus** because **He never existed** anyway. This is totally contrary to biblical evidence and historical evidence!

★ **Liberal theologians** say, let's kill Jesus. *His teachings are too strict, he doesn't understand modern society!*

How can He not understand when the Bible says in Hebrews 4 that *He put on flesh for the very reason of understanding!*

He is **our Great High Priest who sympathizes with us** in our weakness because **He was tempted in every way just as we are!**

He **understands** which is **WHY HE gives us access to the throne of grace** where we find mercy and grace in our time of need!

★ **EVEN the CHURCH IS SAYING, LET'S KILL JESUS...IF WE GET RID OF JESUS, WE CAN HAVE THIS THING TO OURSELVES!**

WE CAN **SET UP OUR OWN SYSTEMS**, WE CAN TEACH **OUR DOCTRINE AND OUR THEOLOGY!**

So **NOW** we see folks teaching and preaching everything EXCEPT JESUS!

Inclusion, affirmation, psychology, TRADITION, CUSTOMS...let's get rid of Jesus! He is cramping our style!

REALLY?

They want to kick Jesus out of His own vineyard!

Get rid of the chief cornerstone? If the Cornerstone is removed, the WHOLE BUILDING WILL CRUMBLE!

A church without Jesus has no inheritance!

B. What will the owner of the vineyard do? Kill and replace...

As Jesus warned the religious leaders of the sure destruction, **we can take that to heart as this message applies to God's church!**

When **Jesus asked this question**, *Matthew's gospel records that the leaders answered:*

“He will **bring those wretches to a wretched end** and rent out the vineyard to other vine growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.”

They knew the requirement and the deserved punishment!

Denying the truth will lead to certain destruction

Denying the truth means that **God can replace you** with someone who will not deny the truth!

NONE OF US ARE IRREPLACEABLE- EVEN IN THE CHURCH!

God can use whomever He pleases- we should never get so comfortable with our positions that we take God's grace for granted.

It is IN HIM that we live and move and have our being; He bought US with a price so WE NEED HIM, HE DOESN'T NEED US!

A church that rejects Jesus and denies the truth is in danger of having its lamp extinguished!

To the church at Ephesus [Revelation 2:4,5]

“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent.”

Through this parable, Jesus is telling the religious leaders then and the church today, this is not your vineyard, it's mine.

You CANNOT reject the final solution- the chief cornerstone and expect anything other than destruction!

Close

This is what I love about Jesus...HE is the chief cornerstone in the house that He built but His own blood...and JESUS INCLUDES THOSE WHO BELIEVE AS LIVING STONES IN HIS HOUSE!

1 Peter 2:4-10 READ

These encounters recorded in the 12th chapter of Mark are all connected to the parable of how the tenants treated the Son! They threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

1. Questions are specific to some personal issue with how God handles things.

We all have some question!

My question seems to center around the **wicked prospering** while the righteous seem to be suffering.

God's answer to me; sit down and be quiet, I got this.

Others have different questions. Why is there **evil**, why does anyone **suffer**...

Some **allow these types of questions to shipwreck their faith** or as cover for their **refusal to believe** due to some underlying circumstance.

So, **here, in the text**, we **have a group with a personal issue** with Jesus. **He's been teaching eternal life for those who believe.**

The **only way to live eternally** is to **put off the mortal** and put on the immortal **BUT** the **Sadducees** **did not believe** in the **resurrection!**

SO, because Jesus did not agree with their position, they wanted to **test** Him.

You ever notice how **folks get real defensive when Jesus disagrees with them?** Jesus disagrees with **ERROR and SIN** and if we are living in SIN or in ERROR, He will **correct** us!

The Sadducees come and **believe that they are going to stump Jesus on the question of eternity.** The Pharisees and Herodians tried to get Him on taxes but he left them in amazement.

The Sadducees they **did not believe in an afterlife.** They lived for this life only.

We know that we will live on past this existence!

Jesus Himself, when **speaking of hell** said that it was a place where the **fire was not quenched and the worm never dies!** He was speaking of the **eternality of hell.**

When Jesus prayed for His disciples, He asked that God would show them His glory that he had **BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN...**so there had to be a time **BEFORE time...**

★ **THIS CAN'T BE**

So the Sadducees come and they ask this question designed to show the **improbability and foolishness** of the resurrection by using an **Old Testament law about marriage (Verse 18 READ)**.

They go on and on- with the woman eventually accumulating seven husbands.

Here they are arguing about eternity using something temporal.

The **Law of Moses was temporary**- it was a **shadow** of the substance to come who was Christ! **He said He came to fulfill the Law!**

ETERNITY IS IN THE HANDS OF JESUS; He knows the end from the beginning so...

HOW CAN YOU ARGUE ABOUT ETERNITY WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS ALREADY BEEN THERE?

John 1:1 says **IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD AND THE WORD WAS GOD!**

IF CHRIST IS ETERNAL, DON'T YOU THINK HE WOULD KNOW WHAT HAPPENS IN ETERNITY?

He **said Himself**, **"BEFORE ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB, I AM!"**

Usually our questions **revolve** around **what we BELIEVE something should be** versus what the reality is!

★ **WHAT WAS JESUS' RESPONSE?**

2. First, Jesus addressed their perceived QUESTION (Verses 24,25)

The Sadducees **question began with a kernel of truth** but they tried to twist it for their own benefit! They wanted to *make God's word match their agenda.*

Carlton Pearson began **teaching universalism** because he did not want to believe that his **unsaved grandparents** would be cast into hell.

So **his personal beliefs trumped the truth**; and he **began preaching the heresy** that **everyone would be saved**, even if they do not accept Christ as their Savior!

Why should it matter who this woman's husband was SINCE they did not even believe in the resurrection?

Anyone know that **we cannot use the WORD** [in this case, the Law of Moses] **to indict God?**

If we encounter **what we believe to be a mistake**, we must first **check ourselves**. [Geisler] We are more likely mistaken than God is!

This question was *one reason why they rejected the resurrection!*
If this woman was resurrected she would have seven men who claimed her as a wife!

Verse 24

Jesus implies that *it's not the resurrection that they have a problem with!*

Jesus says that **you have been misled**. The Greek word gives the *sense of moving away from what is right*. It's in the **passive voice** so someone has **deceived** you- through their teachings! He says you're misled for **two reasons**.

A. You **don't understand** [perfect tense, **you've never understood!!**] the **scriptures** and WHAT they say about eternity!

This is why is it **so important to STUDY the Word and pray for discernment while studying it!**

This is **also why it is important to study without an agenda-** we cannot make the Word fit our beliefs, our beliefs need to align with the Word!

B. You don't understand the power of God! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD IS CAPABLE OF! To MAN this seems impossible but to GOD, all things are possible!

He says **I AM the ALMIGHTY!** He **asked Abraham**, is there anything too HARD for the LORD? This was just before he put life into Sarah's dead womb and set young Isaac as the conduit that Jesus would eventually descend through!

Verse 25 [READ]

Jesus says that they **neither marry nor are they given in marriage!** BUT they are LIKE angels in heaven! He did not say that they become angels but are like angels in heaven.

We know what angels do in heaven!

They **PRAISE GOD!** They are **around His throne** saying "Holy, holy, holy...the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY who was, who is and who is to come!"

"...The whole earth is full of His glory!"

MY answer to them would be: **In eternity, am I more concerned about my wife or about God?** Who should I love more? **GOD**, not who I was married to!

I know we desire to be reunited with our loved ones AND it **does not say that we won't recognize one another** [the rich man recognized Lazarus] **BUT our PRIORITIES WILL BE DIFFERENT.**

The song says when we ALL get to heaven...what a day of rejoicing that will be; when we ALL SEE JESUS...we'll sing and shout the victory!

I'M TRYING TO PRAISE THE LORD, I DON'T HAVE TIME TO BE WORRIED ABOUT taking the trash out or fixing the kitchen sink!

3. Second, Jesus addressed their perceived PROBLEM (Verses 26,27)

The **problem had NOTHING to do with marriage** but everything to do with them not believing in the resurrection!

Paul said **if we only live for this life we ought to be pitied** above all men!

If **all we have to look forward to** is this tent and not the building made without hands, we have no hope!

IF there is *no resurrection then there can be no judgment*. If no judgment, how can all of the things that are wrong be corrected?

The Bible says it is **appointed unto man once to die** and after that the judgment!

WE MUST FOLLOW THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD'S WORD!

Because they have never understood the scriptures, Jesus points them BACK to the OT! See, the WORD of God will speak for itself!

Did you MISS the part about **MOSES and the burning bush**? Did you miss **when God spoke** from the bush and said:

I AM (PRESENT TENSE, I EXIST CONTINUALLY)

The **GOD** of ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB [**present** tense]

Have you seen them lately? NO you haven't because they're all **physically departed** from this earth! **BUT** they **LIVE on** in eternity!

Do you recall the **transfiguration**? Moses and Elijah [law and prophets] were ALIVE on the mountain with Jesus **discussing**, according to Luke, His **departure**- BACK TO ETERNITY!

Elijah was taken into heaven- ALIVE!

JESUS SAYS, HE'S THE GOD OF THE LIVING, NOT THE DEAD-

DEAD THINGS CANNOT EXIST IN HIS PRESENCE BECAUSE HE IS THE **GIVER OF LIFE!**

IF HE IS THE GOD OF THE LIVING, WE MUST LIVE IN ORDER TO BE IN HIS PRESENCE- THEREFORE THERE MUST BE A RESURRECTION!

Jesus says, you are not just mistaken BUT *greatly* mistaken!

CLOSE

THIS IS BIGGER THAN HUSBAND AND WIVES!

THE **REAL MARRIAGE IS BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE CHURCH!**

HE **LAI D DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE CHURCH!**

WE'RE **MARRIED TO THE BRIDEGROOM!**

★ **REV 21:1,2:** 1Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

★ We know there is a resurrection because Jesus said:

John 14: 1“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God^a; believe also in me. 2My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will

come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. [4](#)You know the way to the place where I am going.”

★ Jesus said, the Son of Man must be handed over to the chief priest and the rulers, He must be scorned, He must be KILLED BUT ON THE THIRD DAY; HE MUST RISE AGAIN!

★ Jesus proved that there is a resurrection BY BEING resurrected!

APPEAL

He also taught that there was another side to resurrection...

John 5: [28](#)“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice [29](#)and come out—**those who have done what is good will rise to live**, and **those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned**.

He said those who do not believe stands condemned already...

Right Answers, Wrong Actions
Mark 12:2-35

Sometimes we **can have all the information in the world and not do anything with it**. We can have knowledge but not apply it. We can know all the right things to say but our actions may be contrary to what we say. This is something that the Lord has had to work with me on. Not just saying the right things but also **DOING** the right things.

“Actions speak louder than words” is the old euphemism. Actions with the RIGHT MOTIVES speak louder than words.

When God tells us something there is always **some action that must follow**. When Jesus preaches repentance, the act of repentance must follow. It is the same with love, when God commands us to love, we must love in word **AND** deed.

We cannot merely have an intellectual ascent to the truth, we must also put the truth into action.

Here Jesus has sufficiently answered the Sadducees questions regarding eternity and there was an **eavesdropper**. A scribe who was listening in on their conversation discussion.

This scribe recognized his answer as being correct.

This was the only incident of Jesus having a friendly encounter with a scribe.

According to **Edwards**, scribes were **experts in the Torah** who were capable of issuing binding decisions on its interpretation. *They were considered enlightened and hence more authoritative*¹

The **first seats** in the synagogues were **reserved** for scribes, and people rose to their feet when they entered a room²

Matthew paints a slightly different picture of this encounter but the essence of the story and what Jesus answers does not change.

So this scribe comes to Jesus and asks Him a question:

Verse 28

He is **not asking which is the most important** commandment [according to the scribes there were 613 precepts in the law], **but** rather *which commandment supersedes everything and is incumbent on all humanity*—including **Gentiles**³

Micah 6:8 [What does the Lord require of you that you would act justly and love mercy and walk humbly before your God.]

This scribe, who has the authority to pass down judgment comes to Jesus with this question and Jesus gives him a straight answer.

¹ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 54.

² James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 54.

³ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 370.

1. **The RIGHT answers are found in the Word of God!** (Verses 29-30)

Jesus quotes was known in Jewish culture as The **Shema (to Hear)**. Religious Jews **recite the Shema three times daily** as part of their devotional life; no Sabbath worship is conducted in the synagogue without its proclamation.

The scripture is **found in Deuteronomy 6**. These are the words spoken to the people after Moses gives them the Ten Commandments for the second time.

He begins by saying “**Hear o’ Israel**” Listen to these words.

The **Lord our God is ONE**. There is no coincidence that after giving the Ten Commandments and the first two being:

6 “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

7 “You shall have no other gods before^b me.

8 “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 9 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God...

Some contend that there are more gods and that they can worship whoever they want. Yes, this might be true **BUT there is ONLY ONE GOD who desires to be personal with us!**

He says the Lord OUR God-

What Moses is saying and what Jesus is reiterating is that **YAWEH is OUR ONLY GOD!** There **might be others** but we belong to YAWEH. We serve and worship YAWEH alone!

THIS IS A CALL TO A RELATIONSHIP WITH A PERSONAL GOD!

★ **WE MUST LOVE OUR GOD**

He says that YOU shall LOVE the Lord your God

Deuteronomy is the first book in the Torah to speak of loving God⁴ (JPS Torah Commentary).

Love of God in Deuteronomy is not only an emotional attachment to Him, but something that expresses itself in action.⁵

There is an urgency connected to the teaching: the word *sh'ma* **demands that the hearer respond with his total being** to the fact [the Lord is ONE] and demands [LOVE HIM] of this essential revelation!

This is why the next words are to LOVE God with ALL of our heart, soul, mind and strength!

This is a total surrender to God, our thoughts, our intentions and **do it exceedingly** [all of our strength]!

⁴ Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 77.

⁵ Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, The JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 77.

We love in action because God loved us in action! God **DEMONSTRATED** His love to us in that while we were YET sinners, Christ died for us! That was an action!

★ **WE MUST LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR**

How do we demonstrate that we love God?

If we love God, **we will love those who are created in His image!**

Jesus brings in this **second** command (**Verse 31**)

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF!

If God is love, and God loved us first, and God loves us without any pre-conditions and we are made in His image, **WE TOO MUST LOVE!**

John says it best: **How can you love God** whom you've never seen if you hate your brother who you see every day?

Jesus says there is **no other commandment greater than these**. He says in Matthew that the **whole law and the prophets** hangs on these commandments!

He gave the right answer! And He demonstrated it with the right actions!

2. The right answer requires a right response (Verses 32-34)

READ 32,33

The Scribe answers and says the right things.

The Lord is ONE

There is no one else besides him

We must LOVE Him

This is greater than all burnt offerings and sacrifices...

3. The right ANSWER is not enough (Verse 34)

Then in Verse 34 the tables are turned...

He answered “intelligently” or with understanding.

You have the answers.

Jesus says, “you are not far from the kingdom of God.”

Now, the Judge passes judgment on the scribe. He switches the entire conversation from the Torah to the kingdom of God.

The scribe was qualified to determine who followed the law and how to interpret it but only Jesus can grant access to the kingdom of God.

★ WHAT IS THE MORAL TO THE STORY?

Intellectual answers and fine sounding arguments are good but that is not what God is after. God is after the WHOLE person. Every part of us. He is after our heart, our soul, and our mind!

Here is the crux of Christianity. There is no entrance into the kingdom of God apart from Christ and to be not far is to be too far!

Jesus says you are close to the kingdom. You understand what God desires. **He was not angry at the scribe.** Jesus knew that the scribe needed to take one step further!

Nicodemus was close...but Jesus said you **MUST** be born again!

Joseph of Arimathea was close but He kept silent for fear of the Jews!

The question is, when we GET the right answers, will we give the right response. He should have been asking, “what else do I need to do?”

★ **WHY WE NEED JESUS**

*IF we had to live up to this commandment, **NO ONE WOULD BE IN!***

The Law shows us our ineptitude!

Walter Elwell says it succinctly. As Jeremiah said, **the heart of man is desperately wicked!** *How can I love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength when my heart is corrupted?*

What about when I mess up? What about when my heart is divided because of my flesh?

This is why Jesus could say you are not far. **IN OUR PRESENT STATE, WE ARE UNABLE TO ENTER BUT JESUS CAME AND FULFILLED THE WHOLE LAW! HE DID WHAT MAN WAS/IS UNABLE TO DO- **He satisfied the law's requirement of all-encompassing love on our behalf!****

This does not give us a pass or let us off the hook! We **STILL** have to love God but through His grace, He has made a provision for when we don't love Him like we should!

Every one of us in here **has struggled** at some point in our walk with our devotion to God!

BUT Jesus gave the right answers and the right actions!

Witnessing to a man once and **he knew the Bible, knew scripture after scripture** but He did not know Jesus. He came up in the church but he did not have a relationship with Jesus! He was close to the kingdom but he needed to take that extra step!

Witnessing to an atheist once and they could tell me everything about evolution, they could understand the universe and even conceded that there **COULD** be a God...but even with all of their intellectual ability, they were still unable to enter the kingdom of God.

Close does not count, we must love God by loving the one that He sent.

John 14:23 “**23**Jesus replied, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make Our home with him.”

Today someone is on the fence...you can discuss the Bible etc. but you have not taken the step to enter the Kingdom of God! The only way into the Kingdom is **through a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.**

Fully Committed
Mark 12:41-44

It's easy to do things that don't cost us anything. Someone needs a ride and you are going the same direction...that's easy. But if you are going in the opposite direction, there might be a problem. We start thinking about our schedules, our deadlines, going out of the way...

Serving God costs, a lot. I was speaking with an old friend about being saved and I told them how many things I gave up to follow Jesus. Some things had to get cut off. BUT I did that because we cannot serve two masters. It cost me something to follow Jesus. Jesus said if anyone would be my disciple let them DENY themselves, PICK up their crosses and follow me!

We cannot serve God in ways that only make us comfortable! This scripture is not so much about money as much as it is about commitment. This is not a stewardship scripture it is a relationship scripture!

May preachers use this message to drive home a give til' it hurts sermon! **Today we need to understand that a preacher that tells you to give til' it hurts will never hold themselves to the same standard. The bible says that we are to give as we have purposed in our hearts, to give cheerfully- not until it hurts.**

In the text Jesus is sitting near the treasury. The inner area of the Temple contained three courts. The easternmost court was the Court of the Women [women could not go past here], and it contained the Temple treasury where people donated their money.¹

There were 13 marked boxes, 11 of which were for marked for offerings, two of which were marked for taxes.

I was wondering why Jesus would be sitting here. The Bible says where our treasure is that's where our hearts will be.

We see right away that there is a contrast between rich and poor (Verse 41)

1. Being fully committed can be uncomfortable but it does not have to be (verse 42)

PREFACE- It is one thing to LOOK committed and to be committed. Jesus speaks of the scribes and says that they love honor, they love recognition and respect but they were to be watched carefully. They did things for appearances sake!

God sees our motivations. He knows what moves us. Some of us love to be the show whereas others are ok without so much as a pat on the back!

¹ http://www.bible-history.com/court-of-women/the_temple_treasury.html, accessed 6/26/16

This is why Jesus instructs us to **never let our left hand know** what our right hand is doing;

don't blow a trumpet when you give [some say that this was a play on words by Jesus because of the shape of the offering boxes-shaped like trumpets];

don't pray like the pagans babbling on and on...if it's the attention that motivates us then it's not God motivating us!

While they were looking the part, the scribes devoured the houses of widows...the same ones praying those long prayers. **One commentator** said it like this: it was **the scribes who put the widows in poverty in the first place!**

Now we **contrast these two images**. The scribes with their long robes and this woman with her two coins. **Imagine being down to your last two copper coins.**

Since **people get uncomfortable when we think about giving to the church** [**even though** without giving the church cannot keep the **lights** on. The **air conditioner** that keeps us cool when we come here may or may not be working without giving...]

Imagine being down to your last piece of bread and God instructing you to give it to someone else! **That's an uncomfortable position.**

Now imagine being down to your last piece of bread and **you give it away willingly**...without being instructed!

I believe that she did this WILLINGLY and she was comfortable with it! **As we mature in our faith** we **reach a level of trust** with God that **we KNOW that He's going to provide**, even when our situation is uncomfortable.

What this widow shows us is how to respond when faced with being in an uncomfortable position.

We respond with trust! I don't have MUCH LORD but what I do have, it's yours anyway.

IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE! IT IS ONLY UNCOMFORTABLE WHEN WE FIGHT IT!

DISCOMFORT GIVES WAY TO JOY WHEN WE ARE OBEDIENT TO GOD!

2. Being fully committed costs us something (Verse 43,44)

The widow did something that cost her something. The bible says that she **gave more than all** of the others who gave. **Not in quantity but in quality.**

Jesus says, she put in her WHOLE livelihood! She put her entire LIFE into the offering box. **Can we just digest that for a second? There are still pieces of me that I am having to surrender!**

Her little small gift meant more than all of the other gifts combined because she **gave OUT OF her poverty. NOT because of it!**

SHE WAS NOT TRYING TO HIT THE DIVINE LOTTO!

This is why so many are hoodwinked by jackleg televangelists. **They give BECAUSE of their poverty...thinking with a GIVE TO GET ATTITUDE.**

She simply gave to honor God- not looking for anything in return!

There is **peace when you serve God JUST because He's God and not because of what He can do!**

We know what He CAN do BUT we are *not making propositions* and deals...we just serve Him because we love Him.

We also understand that God is going to take care of us! There is peace in that too! When we are obedient, God takes care of us! There is no panic or stress, just obedience.

Paul said I've learned how to cope with having plenty and having nothing. **Philippians 4:11-13, I have learned the secret to contentment...I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME!**

The rich gave out of their surplus. It did not cost the rich anything. They were **on Christian auto-pilot**. **NO worries, no cares...**just coasting along. **BUT what happens when the coffers go empty?**

What this woman shows us is how to give our all when we are down to nothing.

Usually, it is the other way around. When we get down to those last few pennies, sometimes **we start bickering with God** about allowing us to get in this position!

BUT she served God in spite of her apparent lack! Her lack did not affect her relationship!!

Are we willing to **give it all to God**? Are we willing to take the plane off auto-pilot and trust God to fly it?

3. Being fully committed means that we focus on God and not people (Verse 42)

Here was a widow coming to the treasury to give what she had. She had **no husband and therefore no income**.

She **was not ashamed to give what she had**- even when others were giving much more than she did.

This is why Jesus used HER as the example to his disciples and not the rich. When we focus on God He focuses on us! Her giving

caught the attention of the LORD! *Not the amount but the intention!*

She did not regard her gift as any less important. **God honors everything we do, no matter how small it is!**

Her offering **equaled to one penny!** Some churches would balk at that **but IF THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE, THAT'S 100%** AND NOT 10%!

She did not care who saw how much she put in! Why? Because *this was between her and God!* The **crowd** had nothing to do with this!

She obviously **had a heart after God's heart** because **her treasure was obviously NOT stored up here on earth!**

This is **not about money but about commitment** to the Lord. Remember **back to the Shema- Love the LORD** your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. That concept is reinforced here.

Giving her last shows the type of relationship that she has with God! **She was totally dependent on Him.** I have **been here before** in these **"DOWN TO NOTHING"** situations and I did not handle it as well as she did!

What does this mean for us?

We need to be dependent on the LORD just like this woman. We need to take some risks for the LORD just like this woman. We need to understand that God is a sustainer!

Jireh = Provider!

There was another widow in the Old Testament who gave her all to God and He multiplied it!

There was a famine in the land and Elijah shows up at Zarephat and says to the widow ‘bring me some water’...and a make me a cake too.

She said to the prophet Elijah, all I have a handful of flour and some oil in a jar...I’m going to gather some sticks and prepare it and my son and I are going to eat it and die.

BUT Elijah prophesied and said the flour nor the oil would run out and this woman believed what God said [She took a risk and trusted God] ...and the LORD stretched the meal and the oil through the entire drought and they all ate they ate for many days!!

Why? Because she turned over what she had to the service of the LORD!

Does this mean give all of your money to the church? NO, it means we must give all of ourselves to God!

Why? BECAUSE JESUS GAVE ALL OF HIMSELF FOR US!

CLOSE:

The reason that this woman becomes the object of Christ's teaching is because **her attitude was like His attitude**. Jesus said that the woman gave more than all.

So did HE.

Jesus did something even more radical...**HE LEFT HIS SURPLUS, PLUNGED HIMSELF INTO POVERTY AND BECAUSE OF HIS GRACE, WE WHO WERE POOR BECAME RICH THROUGH HIS POVERTY!**

He became **poor** for our sakes.

- ★ Who for the **JOY set BEFORE Him** [HEAVEN], endured the cross, despising the shame...and afterwards HE SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER!
- ★ He gave out of his poverty...He had **nowhere to lay His head** **YET** he told John's disciples to follow Him.
- ★ He had **no drachmas** to pay taxes **but the LORD provided** coins in the mouth of a fish!

- ★ He **did not have enough money** to feed the 5,000 **BUT he gave THANKS** and they all ate and 12 baskets were picked up afterwards...
- ★ WE were **too poor to pay for our sins** SO JESUS **GAVE** HIS LIFE in exchange for our lives!!
- ★ He **could have given out of his abundance** and **SENT** a substitute **but NOTHING ELSE WAS SUITABLE** SO HE **BECAME** THE SUBSTITUTE!
- ★ **He gave** and **THEN HE WAS GIVEN LIFE** on the third day when He **GOT UP** with all power in His hand!
- ★ He gave His life and the Spirit **RAISED HIM UP!**
- ★ He gave and then he was **GIVEN** the name that is above every name!

We **need to be dependent on the LORD** just like Jesus was during his earthly life. We **need to take some risks for the LORD** just like Jesus did during His earthly life. We **need to understand that God is a sustainer JUST like Jesus did during His earthly life!**

In this text, Jesus is still interacting with religious leaders in the temple. He has dealt with the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Scribes. All three had different questions and now Jesus has a question for them.

Jesus is talking specifically to the scribes and in the temple where the scribes make their decisions and discuss the law.

He is asking something of a rhetorical question. He asks a question about the Christ being the “son of David”. How is this possible.

WHO/WHAT IS THE CHRIST?

The “Christ” is the **New Testament term** for the **Hebrew mashiyach (Ma-Shee-Ya)** which simply means the **anointed one**.

Initially it could mean anyone anointed with oil and set apart for a specific purpose.

It later came to be associated with every office that God ordained. King, Priest and Prophet!

Jesus is able and qualified to hold every office that God ever ordained.

He is the **prophet** who Moses told the people would come from among them. The one who Moses said they should listen to.

He is the **Great High Priest** that supersedes all other priests. He **did not come from the line of Aaron** but from the order of Melchizedek. He reigns as a priest forever.

He is also the **King of Kings**. There is no other KING like King Jesus. He is the One whom **Isaiah** referred to as the Wonderful Counselor, the Prince of Peace, the Mighty God and the Everlasting Father.

There is actually **debate** over whether this is a **Messianic** title or a **Christological** title. There is **debate over his divinity** as well.

IN other words, is the CHRIST who is known in the New Testament the Messiah prophesied in the OT?

The **thought shifted from human kings to a true Messiah** as Israel began to be ransacked by enemies, as the Davidic line of kings was decimated, as the kingdom was torn in two and as oppression increased.

There is **no direct reference to His DIVINITY in the OT** BUT there is plenty of evidence to conclude that he would have to be a divine being!

Stuart Sacks says that **the nature of messianic prophecy is progressive**; **each prophecy casts more light on the subject.**

This occurs, for example with concept of the “**seed**”:

(Gen 3:15) Messiah is to be **born of a woman** AND **bruised on the heel** by the head of the serpent [in other words, the **Messiah would be the substitute to atone for sin**, He would be **BRUISED** for our transgressions and **CRUSHED** for our iniquities],

★ Born through the line of Shem (Gen 9:26) and

★ Born specifically through Abraham (Gen 22:18)¹

As prophecy moves forward, prophets like **Micah 5:2** tells us that he would be born in Bethlehem.

Isaiah tells us that **a son would be given to us** and a child would be born to us!

Isaiah tells us that the **Spirit of the Lord would be upon Him** and the He would be **anointed to preach good news to the poor!**

Zechariah tells us that he would **ride into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt!**

¹ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1447.

The angel in Luke's gospel says to Mary, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and *the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David...*"

And we can even see here in Mark that there were those who KNEW who this Messiah was.

Blind Bartimaeus called Jesus by His messianic title, Jesus Son of David...have mercy on me!

When He rode into Jerusalem, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah, the people laid palm branches down and cried out,

"Hosanna, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David..."

So we can see that there is really no separation between who the Christ is and who the Messiah is. But is the Messiah the son of David?

How could this anointed one be a son of David? The Messiah that the scribes sought was a political figure who would conquer the oppressive government.

The Messiah that Jesus represented was not a political figure but rather God with us!

How could Jesus be both son of David and the Christ? With man this might seem impossible but with God, all things are POSSIBLE! For a question of this nature, we must conclude simply, God did it!

1. God did it according to the working of His own power (Verse 35)

What does the title “son of David” refer to? The son of David is related to the **lineage of the Christ**. How would the Christ get here? How would the Christ be descended of David?

When God makes a promise, God keeps His promise. **God promised David a descendant to sit on his throne forever.**

2 Samuel 7:13-16

- 13 He shall build a house for My name, and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.**
- 14 “I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men [**speaking of Solomon**],
- 15 but **My lovingkindness shall not depart from him**, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.
- 16 “**Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.**” ’ ”

Isaiah prophesied that **a shoot would come from the stem of Jesse**. Jeremiah called Him **a righteous branch!**

WE CALL HIM JESUS!

The **scribes actually believed that the Messiah** would be a son of David. They believed that He would come from the lineage of king David but **their thoughts were resigned to a HUMAN king.**

{Don't miss a blessing because it doesn't look like what you expect!}

IF DAVID'S KINGDOM WOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOREVER THEN SOMEONE FROM THAT LINE WOULD HAVE TO LIVE FOREVER!

David was **simply the conduit** through which the SEED from Genesis that blossomed in Bethlehem *would make his way to the earth*. Every genealogy of Jesus the Christ tells us that he is from the house of David.

2. God did it according to His Word (Verse 36)

Jesus **quotes a familiar passage of scripture** to the Scribes. The scripture comes **from Psalm 110:1**;

READ

We need to understand here that Jesus is testifying to the divine inspiration of scripture AND the supremacy of the Messiah! He says that David **did not simply say** this but that **He said it THROUGH the Holy Spirit**.

This is why in the **51st Psalm David** prayed to the Lord **not to take** His Holy Spirit away from him!

We NEED the SPIRIT OF God! He is the **author of all scripture!** All scripture is **God breathed!** Every word of scripture is inspired by God.

Psalm 89, **not penned** by David [but **definitely THROUGH the Holy Spirit**]...speaking in terms of David and the Messiah:

Verse 20 says “I have found **David** My servant and with oil I have **anointed** Him

Verse 24 says his **horn will be exalted**

Verse 27 says *I will make him my **firstborn***, the highest of all the kings of the earth...

So we see ample evidence of God working according to His word. His word cannot return to Him void. **We know that the Servant is Christ!**

3. God did it in His own time (Verse 37)

The scripture in Psalm 110 has **Messianic overtones**. AND it shows **David, the Father and the SON simultaneously and David being subservient to his Lord...**

David says the LORD said to my LORD...**How can the Christ be David's son and yet David is calling Him lord?**

LORD = **Yaweh** the proper name for the Supreme God of Israel...i.e. the Father God

said to my

LORD = **Adonai** (Lord God, master, sovereign; can be **human or divine...HERE it must be BOTH!**)

“Sit down at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet”

Jesus says “David calls Him (the Christ) Lord; so in what sense is He (the Christ) his son?

How in the world can this be?

He is his son because he came from his lineage.

He is his LORD because he is God.

HE is BOTH the son of David AND the son of GOD!

How can this be? **GOD DID IT!**

God **came DOWN in the person of Jesus Christ-** the God-Man; God in the flesh!

God **used David and the promise** that He made to David, God **set up all of the players** who would be in the **lineage** [**prostitutes, adulterers and murderers and even carpenters** to name a few- **WE CANNOT TELL GOD WHO TO USE!**]

He came **THROUGH the line of David-** BY USING MARY and JOSEPH (**adoption-** through **Joseph (cursed lineage)** and **Biological** through **Mary (Nathan’s descendant)**)

and God did **SOMETHING ELSE.**

See, they were **looking for the Davidic kingdom to be established on earth in their time** **BUT GOD WORKS IN HIS OWN TIME!**

Ezekiel 37:24 “**“My servant *David will be king over them*, and they will all have *bone shepherd*; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them.”**

Jeremiah 23:5,6; 17,18

5“Behold, **the days are coming** [God doing it in His OWN time],” declares the LORD, “**When I will RAISE UP for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king** and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. 6“**In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called ‘The LORD our righteousness.’**”

Jeremiah 33:17

17 “**For thus says the LORD, ‘David shall never lack a man** to sit on the throne of the house of Israel [This man cannot be a mere human but MUST be immortal]...

★ SO what is David talking about? How can he call Him Christ the LORD if the scribes refer to Him as his son?

The reason why David calls Him LORD is because He is EXALTED and **at the name of Jesus**, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is LORD!

WHEN David says my LORD, DAVID here is speaking of the RISEN and Exalted CHRIST!

Jesus is **pointing forward** to the time of His resurrection! We do not serve a dead God but a living God!

^a Jer 30:9; Ezek 34:24; 37:25; Hos 3:5

^b Ps 78:71; Is 40:11; Ezek 34:23

It is the RISEN and EXALTED Christ who is going to **execute justice and righteousness** on the earth!

It is the RISEN and EXALTED Christ who will **bring every prophecy** to a final fulfillment!

It is the **RISEN and EXALTED** Christ whose **enemies will be a footstool for His feet!** Hebrews says we do not yet see all things in subjection but Jesus was made a little lower than the angels...In another place it says that he is now SEATED at the right hand of God!

It is the RISEN and EXALTED Christ who said to the chief priest **when asked if He was the Christ**, “**I AM** and *you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power* coming with the clouds of heaven!

It is the **RISEN and EXALTED CHRIST** who Peter preached about at Pentecost when He said, This JESUS whom you crucified, God has raised Him UP and made Him BOTH LORD and Christ!

It I the **RISEN an EXALTED CHRIST** WHO SAYS IN Revelation that I am the **ROOT** [he came out of me] AND Offspring [I came through him as a human being] of David

Do not Cling to This...

Mark 13:1-8

Prophecy and eschatology (last things) are fascinating elements of the Bible. There is nothing more rousing or more taken out-of-context, in my opinion, than prophecy.

Seeing prophecy play out the way that God said it would is amazing. **It is God who speaks the end from the beginning!**

There was no greater prophetic fulfillment than when God **showed up in Bethlehem** in an infant's body! There was no greater prophetic fulfillment than when that **baby grew to be a man and healed the sick, opened blind eyes, made the lame walk and the mute talk...**just as the prophecies said He would.

There was **no greater prophetic fulfillment** that when that Man named Jesus **hung on a cross**, died for our sins and on the **third day rose again!**

God has given us His words through His prophets and here **Jesus, who is the preeminent prophet**, is **speaking of things to come**. They are leaving the temple and one of His disciples is marveling at the beauty of the temple.

Verse 1 READ

Wonderful stones, wonderful buildings...

Jesus gives His disciple a **lesson immediately**.

1. Do not cling to man's institutions (Verse 2)

The temple was simply a shadow of what was to come anyway! Jesus told the **woman whom He met at the well** that a time was coming when **they wouldn't worship** on the mountain nor would they worship in Jerusalem but that they would worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth!

The **temple had become**, as Jesus described in His own words, a **den of robbers!** It was no longer where man went to encounter God, it was a *place of showmanship, deception and wickedness!*

These words regarding the destruction of the temple were **used by the religious leaders to convict Him of blasphemy**. Although He was not referring to the physical temple when He said "**destroy this temple** and in three days I will raise it up", they used that as proof that he was against Israel.

Some of the last words spoken by Stephen were, "The Most High **does not live in houses made by human hands.**"

The people of the time were more concerned about their institutions than they were with a true relationship with God.

Jesus says **not one stone** that was there wouldn't be thrown down!

This **prophecy was fulfilled in 70AD** when **Rome ransacked Jerusalem** because of an insurrection that began in 66AD. **143 days** of terror were inflicted on Jerusalem, the temple was destroyed and **600K were killed!**

The prophecy was really a **judgment!**

The **destruction of the temple goes right back to the prophetic parable in chapter 12**. The **vinegrowers** were those tending God's vineyard. They **did not pay homage** to the **beloved Son** therefore the master of the vineyard would destroy those who are there!

The **judgment is made more clear in Luke 19:44**. Luke's gospel says that **BECAUSE they did not "recognize the time of their visitation"** that the temple would be destroyed; women and children would be dashed to the ground...

What does this mean? [i.e. **He came to His own and they knew Him not**; they **did not listen or take heed** to the fact that God was in their midst!]

Jesus **wept over Jerusalem!** "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. **How I have longed** to gather you to myself as a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings, **BUT YOU WOULD NOT HAVE IT!**

The point that Jesus is making to His disciple here is this: **don't cling to these institutions, they are mere buildings!**

The message is **still relevant today** as we continue to look forward to Christ's return!

There is **no saving power** in an institution **built for profit, marketed for mass consumption, man-centered** rather than Christ-centered, safe and non-threatening!

The **modern church is no different from Laodicea**, it is **LUKEWARM** and is **in danger of being spit out** of the mouth of the LORD!

Like Laodicea the church of today **gives the appearance of being rich** but in reality is **wretched, miserable, poor blind and naked!**

2. Do not cling to the words of men (Verses 3-5)

Verses 3-4 says that they *asked* Jesus privately...(Peter, James, John and Andrew)

The disciples did what we should all do. They asked Jesus! Here is where many go wrong. We ask everyone else. We don't consult the Word of God.

The **Word of God will never line up with culture!** It is counter-cultural.

Men will twist the Word of God to suit their own agendas. Now more than ever we **NEED TO KNOW THE WORD OF GOD FOR OURSELVES!**

WHAT SOMEONE SAYS CURRENTLY DOES NOT TRUMP WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY SAID.

Heaven and earth will pass away but the Word of the Lord endures forever!

Jesus is **no longer physically here** but **we have a record of His words and deeds** on just about every subject known to man! It's called the Bible.

Jesus' first answer is this: See to it that no **ONE** misleads you!

"See that" is in the **imperative** voice! Beware, watch out for...

NO ONE [no matter who it is]

Misleads you or causes you to wander off from what I have taught you!

Colossians 2:8 "See to it that **no one takes you captive** by **philosophy** and **empty deceit**, which are **based on human tradition and the spiritual forces of the world rather than on Christ.**"

Don't trust in the words of men, trust in MY words! Don't cling to what men are saying, cling to what I am telling you!

Verse 6

MANY will come “in my name” i.e. posing as my emissary or posing as someone who comes on divine authority!

MANY will even say I am he! [This was Christ's own words to the Pharisees in John 8- unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.]

After the death of Jesus, many did come pretending. Many imposters, magicians, political insurrectionists and even criminals popped up as leaders of the people. And they led many astray!

One person in particular, Theudas, claimed to be a prophet, claimed to be able to part the Jordan but before he could, Fadus the governor of Judea sent troops to his location, killed many of those who followed him and later had Theudas beheaded!

It is always dangerous to follow a phony!

We will discuss in a different message but touch it here: **JESUS IS NOT GOING TO SNEAK BACK!** HE IS COMING IN GLORY!
HE IS COMING IN THE CLOUDS!

How can anyone show up and say, I am He when HE is going to make a grand entrance when he returns!

Jesus is coming back with **power and might**, to slay the wicked and put His enemies under His feet!

Here is a timely word for us today. With the proliferation of churches, ministries, televangelists and others, *we must ensure that they are teaching the Bible with accuracy and fidelity*. We must know God's word and know what to listen for and what to look for!

3. Don't even cling to what your eyes see or what your ears hear (Verses 7-8)

Wait, what?! Look at what it says...

When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed.

Keep in mind that the **destruction of Jerusalem was imminent!** Rome was going to **lay siege** to the city and the temple. War was coming!

Luke 19:43 Jesus prophesies "The days will come upon you when your enemies will **build an embankment against you** and encircle you and hem you in on every side."

He says the wars that are coming **MUST** take place, **BUT the end is NOT YET!**

In other words, when you see these things coming to past that I am telling you, **don't panic, just remember that I told you this would happen.**

These signs “**characterize the ENTIRE inter-advent period**” [new American Commentary, Craig Blomberg] i.e. *the time until Christ's return will characterized by turmoil until He comes back to bring peace!*

Verse 8 READ

Everything that Jesus predicts here happened before the temple was even destroyed!

The **pretenders** came before 70AD

The **war** between Israel and Rome (66AD)

Famine in Judea (prophesied by Agabus in Acts 11)

Earthquakes were commonplace...

Are these words sound advice for us today? YES!

Wars are the norm. We have been desensitized to war because of the 24-hour news cycle and reporters imbedded within combat units. We have been at war for the last 13 years against various enemies.

We see these same signs and they have been repeated over and over again throughout history.

What this tells us **two things**:

1. **SINCE** all of these things have been fulfilled, Christ could come back at any moment!
2. **We don't know** when that moment will be!

No one can predict his return but **we should all expect** His return!

Jesus says these things are just the **BEGINNING** of the birth pangs! Birth pangs were in fact a common Jewish metaphor to refer to an *indeterminate* period of distress leading up to the end of this age¹

How many **books and movies** have been made about this? Let us continue to wait anxiously for the Lord but not in fear!

CLOSE

This reminds me of a scripture in Romans 8

22For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. **23And not only this, but also we ourselves**, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we

¹ Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 354.

ourselves **groan within ourselves**, waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. **24**For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees? **25****But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.**

The birth pains are a sign of something new about to be born!

The **new heaven and the new earth** must be born!

The birth pains are **a sign that a new King is about to reign** on His throne!

Those who suffered WITH Him will also Reign WITH Him!

Those who died WITH Him will also live WITH Him!

Those who deny Him, He will deny them!

While we wait for Jesus, we don't cling to anything except for Jesus!

Recall last week we were **discussing the message of Jesus to his disciples**. He was telling them not to marvel at the things of this world. He was also **prophesying** things that were to come and that actually occurred during their lifetimes.

I mentioned last week that the fact that these things happened **in their lifetime** meant that the stage was already set for Christ's return.

Jesus is **still prophesying** here in the text and telling his disciples things to come. **It does not look good!**

For anyone who sees Christianity as some sort of **fairy tale, ice cream and cake** religion, think again!

Jesus is **not telling** His disciples that life is going to be **easy!** He's not telling His disciples that **everyone is going to love you!** He's not telling His disciples that you are going to be **superstars!**

Jesus is telling them something **radical: You're going to lose your life because of Me!**

This is how we can **be sure** of the **veracity** of the gospel! **NO ONE WILL DIE FOR A LIE!** The disciples **did not run away** from Jesus, they stayed with Him!

In the follow-up to **last week's** message, we said through the Spirit:

1. Don't cling to man's institutions [temple torn down]
2. Don't cling to man's words [I am He...]
3. Don't cling to what you see and hear [wars/rumors of wars..BEGINNING of birth pangs]

Jesus **continues in the same vein** here in this passage of scripture. He is **STILL saying**, "Do not cling to this" What is Jesus telling them not to cling to?

1. Don't cling to your safety (Verses 9,10)

Jesus instructs the disciples to be on their guard- **watch**- because **THEY WILL DELIVER YOU TO THE COURTS...**

WILL is future tense- the **WILL** turn you over to the authorities!

You **WILL** be flogged IN the synagogues!

You **WILL** stand before governors and kings

BUT IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU!

When we make the gospel about us, it takes the power away from Jesus!

He says, you will stand before these authorities **FOR MY SAKE (BECAUSE OF ME) as a testimony!**

How do we know that this prophecy came true?

Peter and John stood before the **Sanhedrin** in Acts 4; **Peter** was **thrown in jail** and had to be bailed out by an **angel**;

EVERY DISCIPLE EXCEPT FOR JOHN WAS MARTYRED!

So much for the prosperity gospel! The gospel of Jesus Christ is **more about suffering for His name** **than** it is about living the “**high life**”.

The beauty of this is that Jesus is not hiding anything!

With **man**, **sometimes we only show the best parts**. We **don't show parts of us that may be unappealing!**

JESUS HERE IS LETTING IT BE KNOWN THAT THERE WILL BE SOME HARD DAYS AHEAD!

He says you will **stand because of Me** **AND** it **will be as a testimony** to them [It is **possible** that the phrase **εις μαρτυριον αυτοις** means “**for evidence against them**”¹ **Witherington**]!

The Greek word for testimony is where we get our word **MARTYR** from!

This is the testimony (despite the hardship, we WIN):

¹ Ben **Witherington** III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 344.

Revelation 12:10,11 “...the accuser [**the devil**] of our brethren has been **thrown down**, and they **OVERCAME HIM BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB AND THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY!!**

How do we overcome (despite the hardship, we **WIN**)? **1 John 5:4**
“...everyone **born of God OVERCOMES** the world! And **THIS is the victory** that has overcome the world: **OUR FAITH!**

Then He says the gospel **MUST FIRST BE PREACHED** to all the nations. Many agree that **this is not a pre-requisite** for the return of Christ; **Doesn't mean** that the whole world will accept Him.

BUT we are still to publicly share the good news of Jesus Christ!

kerusso (key-reeso)- means to **publically proclaim** the gospel!
EVEN UNDER HOSTILE CONDITIONS!

How does this relate to us? We **can't simply have a proclamation without presence**; that's hollow. We **must be a presence in the community to proclaim the gospel to the community!**

We see this **repeated** in Christ's **Great Commission** to the church: **GO therefore** make disciples of all men, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the HS; **teaching them to observe ALL** that I have commanded you; and **LO I am with you even to the end of the age!**

2. Don't cling to your OWN understanding (Verse 11)

This is how we know God is in control- when we are in a jam and we **react the way Jesus commands and not the way our flesh desires!**

- ★ The **flesh** will be **cowardly** when **Christ commands courage!**
- ★ The **flesh** will be **weak** when **Christ commands strength!**
- ★ The **flesh** will be **quiet** when **Christ commands proclamation!**

Jesus will not give a command without giving the strength to carry it out!

- ★ **Here is where the power of the Holy Spirit is so important!**

He says here **WHEN** they arrest you [not if]

Maybe this is why the disciples stayed locked in their house after the crucifixion...because **they recalled this conversation** and were **fearful** of these consequences!

This is WHY he **COMMANDED** them to stay in Jerusalem **until** they were "**clothed with power from on high!**"

He says **DON'T WORRY** about what you are to say! Your **testimony will not be your own**, it will be from Me and about Me!

Don't try to defend yourself! **DON'T LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING!** **It won't be enough!** We **don't have enough**

courage of our own to withstand these persecutions **BUT thank God for the Holy Spirit!**

He says to **say WHATEVER is given you** in that hour [at that moment]

Reminds me of the LORD's command to Jeremiah! In **Jeremiah 26** the Lord says **speak ALL of the Words** that I have commanded you, **DO NOT OMIT A WORD!**

The Holy Spirit will **teach us what to say!**

He will **give us the strength to say it!**

He will **give us the peace to endure the consequences!**

In **ACTS 4** *Peter and John* gave their defense when they were **arrested and jailed** for proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ [Jesus prophesied this, here]; the Bible says that they were **"FILLED with the Holy Spirit"**;

THE LEADERS RECOGNIZED THEM AS HAVING BEEN WITH JESUS!; Peter and John said **whether you believe it's right to obey man or God**, that's up to you; **FOR WE CANNOT STOP SPEAKING ABOUT WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD!**

The Holy Spirit will **bring the room to a standstill** while He proclaims God's message through the messenger! He **will prepare**

divine appointments and even open deaf ears to the gospel message!

King Agrippa told Paul, if you keep preaching I may be persuaded to become a Christian!

Even now, we **cannot lean to our own understanding!** We **must be filled with the Spirit of God**, yield control of the situation to Him because the JOB of the Spirit defies our understanding!

He **teaches** us all things!

He **will ONLY say** what Jesus already said!

John 16:13 “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

3. Don't cling to your closest relationships (Verse 12,13)

This is probably the **most disturbing** for the disciples! Now **THEY** have a face. When Jesus says “**they**” will deliver you over...who is He talking about?

This gospel has a **POLARIZING EFFECT** that will be **even more evident when persecution comes!**

As disciples **we know that the days are coming** when hearts are going to **wax cold**; **sound teaching** will not be tolerated; **blood will be shed** for the sake of the gospel!

Keep in mind that **Jesus is prophesying this as what is looming on the horizon for the disciples.**

However, don't think that it ends with them!

When **religious persecution** comes, it **will drive a wedge** between some of our **most trusted relationships!**

Jesus said Himself in **Matthew 10:35-39**

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35“For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; 36and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.37“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39“He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

The **sword of the gospel** will **cut off those who are enemies** of the cross! **If they have not received the message**, then shake the dust off and keep moving!

Who can I trust? TRUST IN THE LORD!

MAN will fail us but the LORD never fails!

VERSE 13

A servant is not greater than his master; **MANY will hate you BECAUSE OF MY NAME!** I would much rather be opposed by man than by God!

I would rather be an outcast HERE than CAST OUT there!

ALL IS NOT LOST

Jesus says finally, **the one WHO endures to the end** (whether it is the end of their life or the end of time), **HE WILL BE SAVED [rescued, delivered]!**

- ★ The one who **does not fold** in the face of opposition!
- ★ The one who **is not clinging to this world** and the things in it!
- ★ The one who **holds out** [Lord help me to hold out, until my change comes!]
- ★ The who **crosses the finish line** receives the crown of life!
- ★ The one who **does not deny me before men** to save his own hide
- ★ The **one who overcomes** will receive a **white robe**, a **new name**, a **seat with Jesus**, a **right to the tree of life**, a **reprieve from the**

second death, hidden manna and an invitation to God's party, authority over the nations, our names permanently written in the book of life!

Trouble Is Coming: But SO is Jesus

Mark 13:14-23

Reading this text, we need to understand that **for the readers and through the writer** prophecy fulfilled in three ways:

1. **Past**: some foreshadowing event
2. **Near** Future: an event looming for those who heard the message firsthand
3. **Distant** Future: an even looming for those who read the words well after they were penned.

Jesus here is giving His disciples more signs and warnings to look for that will signal the destruction of Jerusalem. However, we cannot simply believe that he is talking to them only. He is also giving us wisdom to know what to look for!

1. God will warn us of trouble and tell us what to look for [verse 14]

When **false prophets** pop-up, God says test them and if what they are saying doesn't come true, don't listen to them or fear them!

When **diviners** work magic, God works miracles!

He **sent true prophets** to warn us when His wrath is imminent!

Even the **body**, designed by GOD, sends **signals** through pain-
nothing catches us off guard, we sometimes ignore it!

God will not allow us to be caught unawares!

Here, Jesus is giving a warning of what to look for **prior to the destruction of Jerusalem**

Verse 14 [WHEN YOU SEE THIS...]

Flee to the hills → **Cannot** be solely referring to his second coming.
(**near future fulfillment**)

Jesus here is telling his disciples that they are to flee from their enemies! He is **not telling them to stay and die**- IF they **were** apprehended, then they were not to seek their own defense- but Jesus says **RUN!**

★ How does this apply to us?

Distant future: Those who flee to the mountains **will be begging the mountains to fall on them!**

NO one can hide from Christ's appearing- every knee will bow and every tongue will confess—every eye will see Him! Who is the abomination of desolation?

This is another **past, near future and distant future** prophecy!

It is better translated “the abomination who causes desolation”

It is **not Obama, Trump or Hillary** [it cannot be a woman. In the Greek text, the word “**standing**” is a masculine verb and therefore it must be referring to a man.

Daniel prophesied this and it came to past when **Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple by sacrificing a pig to Zeus** on the altar in the Jewish temple. His soldiers also desecrated the temple by making sacrifices.

Daniel 11:31 says “Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

Jesus here is prophesying that in the **near future**, the disciples will see a **similar event**.

Titus, a Roman general and his soldiers would carry out a similar acts in 70 AD during the destruction of the temple!

WHEN THE DISCIPLES SEE THIS, THEY KNOW IT IS TIME TO FLEE JERUSALEM!

2. When trouble comes, God will give us a way of escape (Verses 15-17):

If you're on the **housetop**, you cannot go down to retrieve anything. Go down and be on your way.

Those who are **pregnant** and nursing babies will have it especially hard!

Note the **mercy** of Jesus here:

Verse 18

Jesus **instructs his disciples to PRAY** that it would not happen in winter.

Multiple **commentators agree** that Jesus says this because the **wadis and streams in the area swelled** in the winter making them **harder to cross**.

He says *pray that it happens in a time when people will have a chance to escape!*

3. Trouble is certain (Verses 19-20)

Jesus says point blank that **unprecedented trouble is coming**. He says that nothing like it has **ever been seen since the beginning** of creation nor will be seen again.

★ How can Jesus say this?

Because Jesus is talking to His **DISCIPLES** about a **NEAR FUTURE** event and He is **WARNING US** of a **DISTANT FUTURE** event.

Daniel 12:1-4 “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. *There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations* until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered...But you, Daniel, *roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end.*

The abomination of desolation is a *reference* to the **modern day anti-Christ.**

Paul even discusses this in **same figure in 2 Thessalonians 1** as “the man of lawlessness” who again, will stand in the temple and cause desolation.

Paul says that the **END CANNOT COME UNTIL** this man of lawlessness, the antichrist comes and when he comes, **God will slay Him with the breath of His mouth!**

In other words, God is going to **put him DOWN** by **SENDING JESUS BACK DOWN!**

YES, TROUBLE IS COMING BUT SO IS JESUS!

This is why Paul says **don't be shaken** about the end. Don't let **anyone fool you** about the end and **know what to look for** as a signal of the end!

4. In tribulation God always shows mercy (Verse 20)

Look at what Jesus says!

If the LORD had not shortened the days, no one would have survived.

Near Future: He is talking to his closes disciples and they are going to face tribulation!

The **days were cut short BECAUSE** of the **elect** i.e. those who are IN Christ. We are elect in the Son, not because of anything we've done to merit election. God is no respecter of person.

There will always be a remnant!

This is why Jesus told His disciples to flee the coming persecution!
The **gospel would be spread** through their scattering.

God will never let His name die out at the hands of the enemy!

This gave me a **new perspective** on the tribulation.

Some believe that there will be a **rapture BEFORE** the tribulation.
Some believe that we will be IN the tribulation.

This **text is clear that the disciples of Christ will face tribulation!**
They faced it in **their day** and we will face it in **ours**.

THE STAGE IS SET, SATAN IS RUNNING LOOSE AND HUMANITY IS CHOOSING SIDES!

In **Revelation 6**, when the **fifth seal** was broken and the souls of the martyrs under the altar **asked God HOW LONG** it would be before they were avenged—how long would it be before they got justice?

Revelation 6:11 “And there was given to each of them a **white robe**; and they were *told that they should rest for a little while longer*, **UNTIL** *the number of their fellow servants* and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, **would be completed also**”

Revelation 7: The **great multitude** that no one could count were described as “the ones **who came out of the great tribulation** and who washed their robes and made the WHITE with the BLOOD of the Lamb

I find it **very difficult that these would be NEW believers** who **signed up to be persecuted!** It is possible that these are SEASONED believers who are here when the end comes!

5. When trouble comes, foolishness cannot be tolerated (Verse 21-23)

Jesus is **not** merely **rehashing** what he said earlier.

He **says “and then”** i.e. **during that time**/ during those days/ when you are running for your lives...

Ignore the foolishness

Do not be sucked in by the charlatans

Don't be fooled by the impostors!

WHEN YOU ARE RUNNING, KEEP RUNNING! DO NOT LET SOME PHONY FOOL YOU INTO BELIEVING THAT THEY CAN PROVIDE SHELTER FOR YOU...

Their **signs and wonders are not of God.** They are **wolves** in sheep's clothing!

[the **difference in false signs and wonders** and real ones: **false signs and wonders** are going to **promote the** practitioner; will not be done to glorify God!

A false prophet will **blaspheme God** and will not glorify Jesus Christ!]

We know the end of the false prophets and the impostors, we also know where their power comes from.

The Bible says in **Revelation 13** that the **great dragon** gives the **beast his power**.

Revelation 16 says that **the dragon, the beast and the false prophet are UNCLEAN spirits...**

We do **not have time** for the foolishness!

★ **Trouble is coming, but thank God that SO IS JESUS!**

**I'M SO GLAD THAT JESUS IS STILL SITTING ON HIS THRONE!
I AM GLAD THAT HE KNOWS EVERYTHING AND THAT HE IS
GOING TO THROW THE DRAGON, THE BEAST AND THE FALSE
PROPHET INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE FOREVER!**

Jesus **says to His disciples and to us:** Be on your guard, **I've told you everything in ADVANCE!**

Don't leave here today saying that you haven't heard from the Lord! He told us everything in advance!

Judgment:

Here, what **Jesus is prophesying is the coming judgment** of God in the near future against Jerusalem!

We know that Jesus is also **pointing to HIS FINAL JUDGMENT!**

This text is **heavily connected to the Prophet Daniel's** prophecies.

Daniel prayed in **Daniel 9** and what Daniel's prayer **reveals is that God's judgment is certain.**

Every time Israel was destroyed by an enemy or calamity came upon them, it was because of the **judgment** of God!

There are **striking parallels** between **Israel and the United States** as far as how Israel was **reprimanded time after time** and how outside enemies were used by God as the belt to chastise them!

HOPE:

Sin has consequences. Calamities, tribulation and grief!

Good news is this: so does repentance!

Daniel says in **Daniel 9:13**, **IF WE WOULD SEEK THE FAVOR OF THE LORD BY TURNING FROM OUR INIQUITIES AND GIVING ATTENTION TO GOD'S TRUTH!**

i.e. IF we repent, God will relent!

★ **INDIVIDUALLY, WE MUST REPENT BECAUSE THE FINAL JUDGMENT IS COMING!**

★ **CORPORATELY WE MUST REPENT BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT OBEYED THE WORD OF THE LORD- WE HAVE ALLOWED THE**

POOR TO BE OPPRESSED, WE HAVE ALLOWED THE WICKED TO PROSPER AND WE HAVE NOT REACHED OUT TO THOSE WHO CANNOT DO FOR THEMSELVES!

★ AS A **CHURCH WE MUST REPENT** BECAUSE WE'VE ALLOWED **WOLVES INTO THE HOUSE OF GOD** TO PILLAGE IT AND TURN MEN AWAY FROM GOD!

★ AS A **NATION** WE MUST REPENT **BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN DUPLICITIOUS IN OUR DEALINGS** WITH OUR CITIZENS AND HAVE NOT TREATED EVERYONE AS IF WE ARE ALL CREATED EQUAL!

★ THE **WHOLE WORLD** MUST REPENT BECAUSE THEY HAVE **REJECTED THE ONLY SON, JESUS CHRIST!!**

QUESTION:

CAN YOU STAND BEFORE JESUS IN YOUR PRESENT STATE?

TROUBLE IS COMING, JESUS IS COMING TOO...WE WILL HAVE TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT...AND WITHOUT HIS SHED BLOOD COVERING OUR SINS, WE ARE STUCK WITH THE BILL!

Listen to Jesus

Mark 13:24-36

What does Jesus tell us about His **second** coming? **PLENTY!** As we scramble for answers, analyze the newspapers, CNN, Fox News, Fake-book and every other source, we need to be listening to Jesus!

We need to hear from the LORD and His word. Everything we need to know, **Jesus has already taught us!**

The question is, will we chase wild fantasies or will we let the Spirit of God teach us?

What does Jesus tell us about His return? There are **8-things** here in Mark 13 that we can **trust** about His second coming. We already know that when someone shows up and says that they are the Christ, not to believe them!

What does He say:

1. It will occur at a specific moment in time (verse 24)

Jesus says **He will return AFTER the tribulation.** I know that there are different schools of thought here and that is fine. It does not affect orthodoxy.

It is a **secondary issue** but we see here Jesus gives the season- we see previously that he says if the days were not cut short; no one would survive! **What better time for Jesus to return than after a time of**

great distress?

2. It will be spectacular (verse 25-26)

The sun will be darkened; the moon won't be able to reflect the light of the sun; **stars will be falling from heaven!!**

2 Peter 3:10 gives us reason to interpret this literally

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.”

ASIDE: If a **star falls from heaven**, that means it has been **falling for a long time**, stars are **light years away** from earth. The mercy of God is on display here!

Not wishing that anyone should perish, but that all would come to repentance, God has prolonged this time of Christ's coming- BUT ***the end began the moment Jesus was born into a human body!***

The powers of heaven will be shaken!

Interpreted two ways:

1. the stars, galaxies, heavenly bodies]
2. But also... rulers and principalities

This is **good news**: the **second coming will bring the justice of God!**

The rulers and principalities in heaven will be distressed because their doom is near!!

3. It will be obvious (verse 26)

This is why no impostor can come and hoodwink us! **The return of Christ will be a sight to behold!** This is the vision that Daniel had of a Son of Man coming on the clouds!

He says it will be with **GREAT power and glory!!** The Lamb will return as a roaring LION! The carpenter will return as the GREAT KING!

4. It has a purpose (Verse 27)

When Jesus says the ONE WHO ENDURES TO THE END WILL BE SAVED...this is what he means. He is **coming back for His children** (Jews and Gentiles)- to once and for all save us from the very presence of sin and death!

He is FAITHFUL and He will bring it to pass!

This gathering was **prophesied** by Daniel, Ezekiel, Joel, Moses and Jeremiah!

It has a **more ominous purpose!** The gathering is connected to the final battle, **Armageddon!**

Zechariah 14 speaks of the Lord **standing on the Mount of Olives** [same mountain that Jesus is teaching in the text], the mountain **splitting in half** and the valley that was created being a way of escape

for those who were gathered!

It says that **the Lord will fight the battle!**

The Lord and His army, the army spoken of in **Revelation 19!** Jesus, with a **robe dipped in blood**, a name that no one knows but Himself, the **king of kings and LORD of LORDS written on his thigh**, with a multitude of soldiers behind Him and the victory already won!

This will **usher in the 1000-year reign of Christ** and *those of us who have suffered with Him, we are going to reign with Him!!*

Zechariah 14:9 “And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.

Purpose: Gather all of the children of God under one head; crush the enemies of God and His children under His feet; Establish HIS NAME as the ONLY NAME!!

5. It requires us to be attentive (Verses 28,29)

Jesus says that we are **to be attentive** to the signs!

However, we **cannot be so fixated** on the signs that we stop working for the LORD!

You have seen people quitting jobs, running up credit cards, sitting looking up at the sky when there is work to be done!

What would the disciples have to look forward to? Verse 30:

Why would Jesus say verse 30 knowing that He would not return during their lifetime?

What does he mean by a generation?

Witherington: From a biblical point of view, a **generation was about forty years**, and not **coincidentally** it was that **length of time between Jesus' death and the destruction** of the temple.¹

Grassmick: The word “generation” is *capable of both a narrow and a broad sense*, in this context we understand it as a **double reference incorporating both senses**. Thus “this generation” means: **(a)** the Jews living at Jesus' time who later saw the destruction of Jerusalem, and **(b)** the Jews who will be living at the time of the Great Tribulation who will see the end-time events.²

6. It is certain (verse 31)

The **Word of GOD is MORE enduring than even the Universe**. It UPHOLDS the UNIVERSE!

7. It will be sudden, cannot be predicted but the time is APPOINTED (Verse 32, 33)

1 Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 349.

2 John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 172.

Anyone who tries to predict this will **fail miserably!** If the Son did not know the day nor the hour, how will a mere man?

Listen to Jesus in **Acts 1:7** “It is not for you to know the times or the epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority!

We don't need to know the time; we just need to know that He is coming back! ***If we knew the time, we'd wait until the last minute!***

We need to **live** like He's coming back and **LOVE** like he's coming back!

We need to be Christians who love everyone, who abstain from foolish arguments, who disdain lies and who champion the truth!

Don't get caught up: ***God is not going to show anyone else what He is doing!!*** Visions and dreams that leave people puffed up in their own grandiosity...this is God's prerogative!!

8. We MUST be about our Father's business (Verses 34-37)

We **each have work to do** as we await the coming of the LORD! (**v 34**)

We must **continue** to **exercise** our gifts, continue to **win** souls, continue to **preach** the gospel, continue to **minister** to the community, **continue to be a city on a hill...NOT BE SO HEAVENLY MINDED THAT WE'RE NO EARTHLY GOOD!!**

Jesus has left us here, He has given us His spirit and we **cannot squander the time that we have!**

We must stay dressed, stay ready and live in a constant state of expectation!

Jesus closes with the exact same warning, Be on alert!

CLOSE:

Well, He's **taking too long...**

We **MUST** live as the old saints who were looking for something greater!

We have to walk by faith, knowing that the one who promised is faithful

We need to know that the one who sits high is looking low...

BY FAITH...we know that there is more than this!

We *need to have the faith of Noah* who, being warned by God about things **NOT YET SEEN**, did what God commanded to Him, built the ark and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith!

Hebrews 11:13-16

“All these died in faith, ^bwithout receiving the promises, but ^chaving seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and ^dhaving confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.

And indeed *if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out*, they would have had opportunity to return. *But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.* Therefore, **GOD IS NOT ASHAMED** to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

★ *SOME OF THE DISCIPLES DID NOT LIVE TO SEE JESUS COMING BACK, SOME OF US MAY NOT LIVE TO SEE HIM COME BACK...*

BUT on the great day of the LORD, we shall ALL be caught up with Him in the air

For the **Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout**, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

THEN **WE WHO ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN** WILL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always

^b Heb 11:39

^c John 8:56; Heb 11:27

^d Gen 23:4; 47:9; 1 Chr 29:15; Ps 39:12; Eph 2:19; 1 Pet 1:1; 2:11

be with the Lord.

18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.³

³ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), 1 Th 4:16–18.

The Benefits of Discipleship?
Mark 14:1-8

Jesus has completed his discourse about the end times and **now it is getting close to the time of the end of his life**. He has taught us much about his return and now, Jesus will teach us more. He will teach us that there are three types of folks as it relates to Him.

There are those who **hate** Jesus. Either Jesus poses some **threat** to their **way of life, ego; status or position**.

There are those who are **sold out** for Jesus and will **do ANYTHING** that He asks!

There are those who **look the part** but are only with Jesus for personal gain.

The question today is, **which category do we fit into?**

It is my prayer that we are those who are sold out for Him!

There are some benefits to being a sellout! **Usually** that is a **negative** term because it means that we've accepted some **payoff**.

But I'm talking about being a **sellout for Jesus!** We've **ACCEPTED HIS OFFER TO PAY OFF OUR SIN DEBTS!**

This chapter begins with by giving us a **timeline** to consider as we see the **last days of the life of Jesus** unfold. He's getting ready to be glorified. Mark makes sure for us to **understand** that this is

close to the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were near.

Remember the **Exodus from Egypt**? When they **had to leave in such haste** that they did not have time to put any yeast in the bread?

Remember when the **death angel passed over Egypt** and the **blood of a lamb** without spot of blemish was applied to the doorpost? Remember that **wherever the blood was applied**, the angel “**passed over**” the house and the inhabitants were spared? This is the celebration that was coming up.

There is great **symbolism** here! The Exodus was the fleeing of Egypt by the Israelites. **Jesus is getting ready to make His exodus from this earth!** This is what Moses and Elijah were discussing with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. Before He made his exodus, Jesus had to secure the lives of those who would apply the blood to their doorposts!

Jesus was making a way for death to pass over those who name His name, who accept His sacrifice and who have repented of their sins! His blood applied to our doorposts is a reminder that we have passed from death into life! That the sentence of death imposed by SIN has been commuted by the grace of God!

We've been declared NOT GUILTY because of the blood of Jesus! Thank God He passed over us and delivered us from the wages of sin, death, and gave us His free gift!

So Mark leads us in with symbolism and he paints us a picture, like a movie. I can imagine the camera panning up over a hill and zooming in on this group of religious men who are plotting against Jesus.

1. This is our first group, those who hate Jesus! (verses 1,2)

They are trying to kidnap Him and kill Him BUT they were afraid of the people. The religious leaders hated Jesus. They wanted Him dead for several reasons: political [He would upset the delegated power that Rome gave to them]; social [He called the on the carpet for their lack of leadership and their hypocrisy- and he did so in the presence of the people]; religious [He was making Himself equal to God]

Jesus was the antithesis of the religious leaders. They were ivory tower theologians and Jesus was a blue collar worker. They were arrogant and pretentious, Jesus was humble and lowly. They looked down on the people to berate them; Jesus looked down on the people while reaching His hand down to pick them up!

There are even modern day religious leaders who are still trying to kill Jesus. Some on the far left are trying to remove Him from the New Testament by saying that He was not a historical figure. Some are trying to say that His words are not authentic; some are saying that He never even existed!

There are other social groups trying to kill Jesus! The atheists want to eradicate Jesus in order to prop up their ideal that logic is

the answer to everything. We know that God confounds the wise and brings them to shame! We know that the wisdom of man is foolishness unto God! The other social groups want to make Jesus into something of their own creation!

2. Then there are those who are sold out for Jesus (Verses 3-9)

There were those who willingly allowed Jesus into their homes! Here is a picture of the grace of God! The leper's home was once off limits to even the leper himself! He could not be in the home because of His disease but JESUS is now sitting with Him in his home!

Jesus cannot be made unclean so the notion that there are some that Jesus does not love is ridiculous! He said, behold I stand and the door and knock and whoever hears my voice and lets me in I will come in and eat with them, and they will eat with me!

This leper was one who was sold out for Jesus! He opened His home to Jesus!

Part of the problem with the church is that we are open to Jesus on Sunday but the rest of the week we don't know where He is! We don't open our whole home to Him, just certain parts!

(Verse 3) This woman is a second example of one who is sold out!

What does it mean to be sold out; what does real devotion look like?

1. You do not consider anything too valuable for Jesus!

She brought an alabaster jar of expensive perfume to anoint Jesus!

Alabaster was a costly material and she broke the jar to release the gift that was in the jar. This is rich in symbolism! We are the alabaster jars for Jesus and in order for Jesus to get out of us what is inside of us, we too must be BROKEN! The gift inside of us can be used for service of the LORD!

The perfume, pure nard, was an intense fragrance. Symbolic of the love of a bride for her mate in the Old Testament. Here, it has a revelatory quality...There is more to this than simply putting perfume on Jesus!

So in actuality, this woman breaks her alabaster flask and empties the contents- both very costly- without a second thought!

Here is where we should be praying to God to take us. Take us to a place where NOTHING matters to us except for LOVING HIM WITH OUT WHOLE HEART! This is my prayer that the only thing that matters in my life is whether or not I am pleasing to the LORD!!

2. You know that true devotion will always be resisted by the enemy (verses 4,5)

Some of the disciples were “indignant” or upset!! They were remarking that the perfume could have been sold for three hundred denarii- that is almost one year’s salary!

There will always be opposition to our devotion! Satan will use anyone to sow doubt! Here he creeps in to a gathering where JESUS IS SITTING!! You know his boldness does not have a limit!

They were talking to each other and can I tell you that many are going to say things about you simply because of your devotion to God!

Do you know how many times I have had to tell the devil “THE LORD REBUKE YOU!”? Why are you going down there to that church? Why are you wasting your time studying? Why are you praying for folks that may not even like you?

There will be resistance to your faithfulness! Someone in your own home may be the source of the resistance! Someone who is close to you!

They were worried about how much the perfume costs but do not let anyone put a limit on what you contribute to God! It meant something to them BUT it did not mean anything to the woman because she understood that WHATEVER I GIVE TO GOD, I AM ONL GIVING BACK WHAT HE GAVE TO ME!

If it was not for God, I would not even have the means to purchase the perfume!

IF GOD PUTS IT INTO YOUR HEART TO SELL OUT, SELL OUT AND LEAVE THE REST TO HIM. The same ones talking will be the same ones wanting to share the blessing!

3. Devotion leads Jesus to speak up on our behalf (Verses 6-8)

Look at what Jesus did, Jesus defends this woman's actions! Leave her alone, do not bother her...she has done a good deed to Me!

The Bible says that we ought not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not! The Hebrew writer says that God will not forget our faithfulness!

Can you imagine the opposition in the spiritual realm? Don't you know that when we sell out to God we have a bullseye on our backs! Satan is demanding permission to sift us as wheat BUT JESUS SAYS I HAVE PRAYED FOR YOU!

He's a defender of the weak, a father to the fatherless, the God of the oppressed, the rock in a weary land, a shield on our right hand...He will stand up for us when the opposition rise up against us! WE are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus who loves us! Trouble cannot separate us from His love; NOT persecution; nakedness; famine; the sword...NOTHING!!

Jesus says, predicting His exodus, you will always have the poor with you. BUT you do not always have ME. I'm going away soon...

4. Our devotion has a purpose (verse 8)

She was anointing Jesus for His burial...this was symbolic; she was helping Jesus to prepare for His exodus! What purpose does your devotion serve? Are you a light to someone walking in darkness? Are you the only Jesus that someone might see? Are you an answer to someone's prayer? Be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the works of the LORD and your work will not be in vain!

5. Our devotion will be rewarded (Verse 9)

Our devotion to Jesus leaves a legacy for others to remember! This woman's selflessness earned her a place in history! Her deeds meant that when the gospel was discussed and the life of Jesus was discussed, she would be mentioned.

What legacy are we leaving behind? When they speak "as a friend" or "as a neighbor" at our homegoing, what will they say about how you loved and served the LORD?

Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the works of the LORD knowing that your labor is not in vain!

Finally, there are those who are simply along for the ride (Verse 10)

Judas left to betray Jesus! One of the 12, the one who loved money! He used to help himself to the money box. He grumbled about the perfume because it meant that those denarii would not go into the treasury. He was following Jesus for His own personal gain! Don't let this be us!

Prophecy is an integral part of the Bible. Prophecy comes in two forms, **foretelling** (future events) and **forth telling** (directly speaking a word from God at an opportune moment).

Whatever the format, **all prophecy comes from God and is inspired by the Holy Spirit.**

Peter writes in **1 Peter 1:21** that no prophecy **ever originated** with man but men, moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

When we talk about prophecy, we must understand that **Jesus is known as “the prophet”**. **Moses prophesied in Deuteronomy 18** that a prophet would arise from among the people who should be listened to! He was talking about Jesus.

We see here in this **text** that **Jesus not only speaks prophetically, He is also the subject of prophecy.**

HIS LIFE WAS A PROGRESSIVELY UNFOLDING PROPHECY!

His **birth**, His **death** and His **resurrection** were ALL prophesied.

There is **MUCH prophecy being fulfilled** as the days of Jesus come to a close!

There are **two instances** of prophecy illustrated here in this **text**. Both involve Jesus, one involves **Him prophesying** and the other involves Him being a part of the **fulfillment of a prophecy!**

Let's wrestle with these for a moment. A prophecy has to be **precise, accurate and truthful** in order for it to pass muster...

1. Jesus Prophecies (Mark 14:12-16)

In these verses, we see that Jesus is **well aware that His time is at hand**. He is aware that this is His last Passover.

The disciples ask about eating the **Passover** [the **festival** where a lam was slain to commemorate the exodus from Egypt and the death angel passing over the Jews who had blood on their doorposts].

When they ask this, Jesus speaks prophetically (Verse 13-15)

He is foretelling what WILL be! **He does not have to begin the prophecy with "thus says the Lord"** because **He IS the LORD!**

He is able to speak those things that are not as though they are!

"This is why prophecy can be hard to deal with because when we don't see the results, we get frustrated!"

Many **wrestle** with this!

Some say that Jesus had a **previous relationship** with the man in the city.

Matthew 26:18 upon a cursory reading gives this impression:

“And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is near; I am to keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'”

Jesus indicating to a stranger that His time was near seems unusual. It would seem as if Jesus was **reminding** the man of something that He told Him earlier.

BUT even this is prophetic. He says “**I am to keep the Passover at your house**”.

THAT IS NOT A REMINDER, THAT IS A COMMAND.

This certain man is **identified** by Mark as “**a man carrying a pitcher of water**”.

This certain man was a **part of the prophetic plan** that God was enacting as Jesus was on His way to Calvary.

What does this have to do with anything?

- A. **Men do not carry water pitchers (Precision)**- only women carried water pitchers so this ***PARTICULAR INSTANCE IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW THE LORD'S WORD CANNOT COME***

BACK VOID! He speaks and no one can reverse it! [was he a widower, did his wife fall ill...we do not know.

But we know that it would be an *unmistakable sign* because he'd be the only MAN carrying water.]

Think back to the **woman at the well...**

B. (Verse 16- **Accuracy/Truth**) Even if Jesus did previously know this man, there was **no way, to coordinate** the **exact** time of day, **where** the man would be, who he was, what his **name** was...etc.

Only God can coordinate down to the most minute detail!

This prophetic moment was **one string in the fabric of time that Jesus walked this earth.**

This was a way of Jesus **confirming the prophetic office** that He occupied.

The Bible says that ***you can tell a prophet by whether or not what He says comes to pass.*** The **disciples could not mistake** that these events converged due to supernatural intervention.

2. Jesus also fulfills prophecy (Verses 17-21)

The death of Jesus was prophesied *hundreds of years before He was ever born*. The **entire 53rd chapter of Isaiah** is devoted to detailing the death of Jesus.

BUT before Jesus could go to the cross, be numbered among the transgressors, be pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquity...**he had to be “handed over”!**

He could not be seized because **He had committed no crime**. He was an **innocent** man; he was **getting ready** to shed His **innocent blood for the whole of guilty humanity!**

He says in **Mark 10:33,34** “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be **“delivered”** [**not deliver Himself...BE delivered at the hands of someone else**] to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and hand Him over to the Gentiles...

Jesus’ **delivery** would happen **at the hands of one of His very own disciples!**

This is very **troubling** because you would think that *someone who spent every day of three years with Jesus would show some signs of being transformed!*

(Verse 17, 18)

This in itself is a **prophecy being fulfilled!** Jesus prophesied that He must be handed over but even before this, **historically, David prophesied it!**

Herbert Lockyer states that David spoke of the cross almost 1,000 years prior to the event; **Jesus even uttered the 22nd Psalm** as he hung from the Cross “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me...”

THIS IS HOW WE KNOW WE CAN TRUST THE WORD OF GOD!

Who else can speak of an event 1,000 years prior to it occurring, speak in detail and see those details unfold in time as He envisioned them in eternity!

Fulfilled prophecy proves the divine inspiration of Scripture!

The “**handing over**” or betrayal of Jesus **HAD** to happen. David prophesies it in **Psalm 41:9** (repeated in **John 13:8**) “...My own **familiar friend**, who I trusted, who are my bread, has **lifted up his heel against me...**”

He speaks of this again in the **55th Psalm**: “***It was not my enemy who reproached me; then I could have born it...it was not one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; then I could hide myself from him; but it is you...an acquaintance; my companion and familiar friend***’ we **who had sweet fellowship together**; walked in the throng together to the house of God...”

We know from verse 10 that **it was Judas** who Jesus was speaking of! **I wrestled with Judas** because this passage of scripture has some **hard truths in it!**

Verse 19:

- A. ***When Jesus makes His pronouncement, all of the disciples began to think it was them!***

This says something about how Judas comported himself among the disciples!

They DID NOT KNOW IT WAS HIM! **Charles Simeon** writes that but of them the Apostles neither knew, nor suspected anything¹ **That is a dangerous position to be in!** TO be that close to Jesus and not be changed!

The Bible says in the **Luke and John** that **Judas was satanically influenced.**

Both gospels indicated that Satan either “**entered**” Him **or** “**put the betrayal into His heart**”! What this says is that **Judas NEVER REALLY loved Jesus!**

How could this be? Jesus prophesied it!

¹ Charles Simeon, *Horae Homileticae: Luke XVII to John XII*, vol. 13 (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1833), 413.

Jesus says in **John 6:70** “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and *yet one of you is a devil.*

B. Here is another place that **I wrestled** with because it would **seem as if this was a case for predestination.** Look at what Jesus said: **Verse 21**

A case **further bolstered by John 17: 12** “While I was with them, I was keeping them in your name which You have given Me, that they may be one as We are; and I guarded them and *not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.*

Judas was referred to as the “son of perdition” of the son of “destruction” or **destined to destruction!**

This **baffled me** but as the prophecy played out, **I realized that Judas was one who was simply along for the ride!**

He was **destined to destruction, NOT BY GOD, but by his own refusal to love Jesus above all else!** He had every opportunity to repent but instead he became a tool for Satan.

I believe that **Judas’ constant rejection of Jesus** left Him open to this satanic attack!

What is it like to forsake Jesus? *It is better to not be born at all than to renounce Jesus!*

Close:

When we think of all of these things playing out, all of the nuances, the precision with which God operates...we know that God has an ultimate plan!

The fact that they were **celebrating the Passover is not a coincidence!** They were celebrating the **BLOOD on the doorpost.** And **here is Jesus** in his final moments of His life, getting ready to be our **Passover Lamb!**

He is **getting ready to shed His blood** so that **death** could **Pass-over** us!

I thank God for His LAMB and for HIS BLOOD and for Him **PASSING OVER** those who are covered in the Blood!

Revelation 5:1-10 (READ)

Why we NEED the Spirit
Mark 14:37-38

Every man has a spirit. The Greek concept of the spirit is **that part of the man which is immaterial**. It is **this spirit** that is **given to us by God**, which **animates** us, which serves as our **conscience**- that part of us that **resonates with God's voice!**

It is this immaterial part of us that God speaks to when He is **trying to get our attention**. It is this **immaterial part** of us that will go **back to God** when we die.

It is this **immaterial** part of us that the *Holy Spirit testifies with* (as Paul says in Romans) **that we are children of God**.

In the text, Jesus is in **Gethsemane** and He is praying fervently. He takes Peter, James and John with Him and **tells them to keep watch**.

VERSE 34

Jesus comes back from prayer and finds His three most trusted disciples **SLEEPING!**

Why He tells them to keep watch is a bit of a mystery because He **knew** that **Judas was coming**, He knew that the **cup couldn't pass** and He knew that in this moment, there was **no way that these three disciples could stop anything** from happening.

But, **I believe** that this is **a lesson for the disciples** to **help them to understand that apart from the vine, they can do nothing**. It was a lesson to **SHOW US** the **importance** of the Holy Spirit in our lives!

When Peter made **bold promises** to die with Jesus before denying Him, **Jesus reminded Peter** that he would **DENY** him three times before the rooster crowed.

HOW did Jesus know this? Because, **PETER'S SPIRIT WAS MAKING PROMISES THAT HIS FLESH WOULD NOT AGREE WITH!**

Galatians 5 gives us a great **glimpse** into this **WAR** that is going on **RIGHT under our noses**.

Verse 16 But I say, **walk by the Spirit** (UPPERCASE- HOLY SPIIT), and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

Here Paul instructs us to **WALK** (i.e. live, move, breathe under the control of the Holy Spirit) by the Spirit- when we do this, we will **not "bring to completion"** the **desire** of the flesh!

Verse 17 For the **flesh** sets its desire **against the Spirit**, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, ***so that you may not do the things that you please.***

SO- the **flesh** (sarx) **craves against the Spirit** and the Spirit craves against the flesh- these are in **OPPOSITION** TO ONE ANOTHER!

This sums up the statement of Jesus and gives us what we need to **take home with us today!**

1. We need the Spirit to OBEY Jesus (Verse 37)

Without the Spirit of God, we are unable to obey! If we were, we would not need Him! Jesus ***gave an imperative*** in **verse 34**, remain here and keep watch! He gave an order BUT ***Peter was unable to comply.***

He tells us, love our neighbor, do good to those who mistreat us, don't lie, don't defraud, don't murder...yet people disobey Jesus daily. We ***ought to be praying*** for the Spirit to fill us so that we are able to obey the LORD!

2. We need the Spirit because the flesh is weak (Verse 38)

When Jesus comes back and finds Peter, James and John asleep he says something that has been repeated for years...

Notice, He ***speaks DIRECTLY to Peter***- the one who made those bold proclamations earlier about NEVER denying Jesus.

Notice He says the spirit is ***indeed*** willing **BUT** the **flesh is weak**.

What Jesus is saying is this: **YES**, in your heart you don't want to deny me, you want to die for me, you want to be my disciple...**but your flesh is fighting against that!**

The **flesh is weak** (not from a standpoint of being depleted) but from the standpoint of **CAVING at the first sign of pressure!**

It is the **spirit BY THE SPIRIT** that **says- Your will be done** while the **flesh cries out, "take it away LORD!"**

Go on a **diet** and the moment you see cake, the flesh says, "what's **one slice** going to hurt?" Try to stop watching **pornography** and the flesh says, "**One peek** won't hurt." Try to get off **drugs** and the flesh says. "**One more hit** is not going to kill you."

When we TRY TO OPERATE IN OUR OWN WILLS, WE WILL ALWAYS GIVE IN TO THE FLESH!

THIS IS WHY WE NEED THE SPIRIT- BECAUSE IT IS THE SPIRIT THAT KEEPS US FROM CARRYING OUT THE DEEDS OF THE FLESH!

It is the **Holy Spirit that gives us the power to overcome the flesh!** We **cannot win by sheer willpower!** We **MUST have the Spirit** of God in our lives every day, every second, every millisecond to give us the strength to live like Christians, to say the name of Jesus and to not deny Him!

BUT the **Holy Spirit had not been given yet** and therefore, those **desires of the flesh**- the desire to **run**, the desire to **hide**, the desire to **deny** rather than confess...those desires *won out on this night!*

Notice, Jesus says something else very important.

3. We need the Spirit to help us endure trials (Verse 38)

According to Matthew and Mark's gospel, **three times Jesus went to pray** and **twice he came back concerned** for the disciples. He told them twice to pray that they did not enter into temptation.

★ **TEMPTATION OR TRIAL?**

It is important to understand that the word **temptation here is not "enticement to sin"**. God cannot and does not tempt us to sin.

The word here in the Greek is *py-ras-mas* which can mean **temptation or TEST** depending on the **context**.

Here, the **context** leads us to the conclusion that Jesus was telling them to **pray** (not for Him!! But for themselves!) **that they did not enter into trial!**

Why did he tell them to pray for this? Jesus told **Peter** that the **devil had asked permission** to sift him as wheat, so he is telling him to *anticipate trouble*.

The bible says that in **James 1:3** that we should **count it all JOY** when we face trials because the testing of our faith develops perseverance!

BUT the **Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:13** says to 'lead us not into "trial" but deliver us from the evil ONE'...so **is Jesus contradicting himself? Absolutely not!**

The disciples were already sorrowful! Jesus was concerned for their welfare- **HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY WERE NOT READY TO ENDURE A TRIAL. THEY WERE NOT EQUIPPED!**

Jesus even **asked for their release in John 18:8** so that his prophetic word that he did not lose a disciple was fulfilled.

They **did not have the Holy Ghost yet**, they **had not demonstrated that they were capable of enduring a trial** and **THEY EVEN DESERTED JESUS WHEN THE ROMAN SOLDIERS CAME TO ARREST HIM**. Mark's gospel speaks of a young man dressed in **linen** that **ran away naked!**

Here, Jesus was more concerned about his disciples than He was for Himself.

So **does this mean that a believer will never go through a trial?**
Is Jesus saying that here?

NO...BUT you will never go through a trial UNTIL YOU ARE READY!

How many know that JESUS KNOWS WHEN WE ARE READY!

Romans 5 (tribulation → perseverance; perseverance → PROVEN character; PROVEN character → hope which does not disappoint!)

We are **not disappointed** because the **Holy Ghost** (the **Paraclete**) **COMES ALONGSIDE** US AND continually LETS US KNOW THAT GOD LOVES US AND HOLDING US UP THROUGH THE TRIAL!

So YES we will go through trials, we will endure tribulation but NEVER alone!

★ ANOTHER NUGGET

Looking after the needs of others when you are in the midst of your own struggle shows humility!

Phil 2:4 says that we are to look out not just our own personal interests but interests of others as well! we ought to follow the example of Jesus!

4. We need the Spirit because the spirit is willing...

It is the **flesh** that is corrupted by sin. The flesh does not necessarily represent our physical bodies but **the part of us that is still sinful**. When we are born again, we are **given a new nature by the Spirit of God but our old nature still exists**.

It is that **old nature that we call the “flesh”**. It is the part of us that **desires to rebel against God**.

Saved folks still have this rebellious aspect to our character but **saved folks also have this renewed mind** that is telling us what is right!

IT IS THIS PART OF US THAT IS WILLING!

The *flesh will oppose this and so we need some backup!* We need the Spirit of God to come in and bolster us, to stand beside us, to **HELP us!**

Paul says in **Romans 7: 15**

For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

What does this mean? It means that his *flesh was still active although his spirit KNEW to do the opposite!*

What does this mean for us? **WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT!** WE NEED HIS POWER! WE NEED HIS STRENGTH because although the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak and the flesh will CAVE IN!

History tells us that Jesus was the victim of a **crooked justice system**. The religious leaders had an agenda. They wanted Jesus dead, by any means necessary. If that meant fixing his trial, they would do that. *The whole Sanhedrin was working together [odd]!*

One of their **main charges** against Jesus was the claim that He blasphemed God by claiming to be **equal** to Him.

The death of Jesus, from the perspective of the religious leaders, was **more political than it was religious**. They sought to kill Him for **political expediency and for continued favor from Rome**.

So after arresting Jesus, they **began his trial before the Annas**, the high priest at the time. They **needed two or three witnesses** AND the trial was supposed to be public.

How do we know that the court was crooked?

- 1. The Council was seeking witnesses rather than allowing witnesses to come forth and bring charges (Verse 55,56)**

They could not get their stories straight; their testimonies were not adding up!

2. False testimony was accepted as the truth (Verse 57-59)

They were twisting the words of Jesus who said “destroy THIS temple and in three days I will raise it up” referring to His own death, burial and resurrection.

Here, the **perversion of justice was on full display**. The religious leaders were willing to break their own rules to ensure that Jesus the rabble-rouser was eliminated.

It’s funny how **church people** figure out a way around the rules to get what they want!

It’s also funny to **hear the excuses** that people make to eliminate Jesus. Some say that He can’t be God; Some say that He is a fairy tale; Some say that His story is made up; all in an attempt to remove Him from public view!

Their conscience was getting to them because they KNEW these people were lying! **Since there was no progress being made, the high priest himself gets in on the action!**

He needed to get Jesus to blaspheme God out of His own mouth...

Verse 60 READ

What the high priest did not understand was that God's plan was in motion from Bethlehem and they were all simply pawns in the game!

We learn this NOW because of the benefit of history. THEY would learn later when Peter preached at Pentecost and reminded the religious leaders that their plot was ALLOWED by God because there was a bigger picture being painted:

“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— *23this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God*, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. **24“BUT GOD RAISED HIM UP** again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.”

Jesus **did not respond to their lies** because **IF He had**, then the eternal plan of salvation, which had to be culminated the cross, could not have been finalized.

IF Jesus had started calling people out, the lying witnesses would have been bowing before Him asking for forgiveness or running from Him in an effort to stay in their sins!

The Bible says in **Hebrews 4:13** “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

SO, Annas must now try to get Jesus to **incriminate** Himself
[Verse 61]

This is the **precise reason that Jesus kept His identity a secret** when doing miracles; **He did not want to hasten this day.** They **started plotting in Chapter 12...** sending in groups to see if they could **trap Him in His words.** They could NOT because everything had to happen in the fullness of time.

Was Jesus **blaspheming?** NO!

Was He **really able to say** “I and the Father are One?” Absolutely YES!

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was WITH God and the Word WAS God.”

Literally, AND GOD WAS THE WORD...OR WHAT GOD WAS, THE WORD WAS! [**emphasis**]

SO **When Annas asked directly, the answer HAD to be the truth;**

If you **ask Peter**, he **may have denied Jesus.** If you had asked the **ones who ran from Gethsemane**, they may have denied Jesus **BUT** **Jesus cannot lie nor can He deny Himself!**

The Bible says in **2 Tim 2:13** that if we are **faithless**, He remains **faithful** because he cannot deny Himself.

This is how we know that He was ONE with the Father...AND that He was the One who was SENT by the Father to save us:

Verse 62

Jesus used Messianic language when talking to the high priest about Himself. **Annas would understand** this language and would know exactly what Jesus was saying!

1. **I AM (Ego Eimi)**- is an **emphatic statement** which is **brought out in the original text**- the pronoun I is placed before I am.

Verbrugge says this **construction is used to add force** to the statement. As if Jesus was pointing to Himself saying, "I AM"

The **I AM statements made in John are all constructed the same way!**

THEY ARE EMPHATIC STATEMENTS OF THE DEITY OF JESUS!

You know this language from the OT. The **burning bush**, where Moses met the LORD, was the first place that this name was used.

The LORD said to **MOSES when he asked** “who should I say sent me?” God said, tell him I AM sent you.

This **name carries weight**. I AM speaks to the **eternality** of God as well as His **ever abiding presence!** **I AM the ONE WHO IS!**

What Jesus is saying by answering I AM is that I AM! Before Abraham was, I AM!

By saying this, He is by default **saying that I AM GOD and I am one with the Father.**

2. **Son of Man**

Jesus calls Himself the **Son of Man** which is another **Messianic** title. It calls Daniel’s prophecy to mind.

Daniel 7:13,14

13“**I kept looking in the night visions,**
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One **like a Son of Man was coming,**
And He **came up to the Ancient of Days**
And was presented before Him.

14“**And to Him was given dominion,**
Glory and a kingdom,

**That all the peoples, nations and men of every language
Might serve Him.**

**His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed.**

**The One “like” a son of man is no other than the one on trial
here in the text.**

He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

**He is the One in whom the fullness of God was pleased to
dwell!**

He is the JESUS, the Son of the Living God!

3. Seated at the right hand of the Power (Verse 60)

**To add to it, Jesus is asserting the completion of His ministry!
He says you will see me seated! Seated meaning “my enemies
have become a footstool under my feet!” Seated at His right
hand...the highest honor was to sit at the right hand of the king.**

**This caused the high priest to tear His clothes...YES He
admitted that He was the Son of the Blessed One, because He
WAS ONE WITH THE BLESSED ONE!**

THIS DEATH SENTENCE FROM THE COURT GAVE A LIFE SENTENCE TO BELIEVERS!

NO ONE ELSE COULD DO WHAT JESUS DID, NO ONE ELSE COULD BE THE SINLESS LAMB, NO ONE ELSE COULD LIVE A LIFE FREE FROM THE ENTRAPMENTS OF SINS...THANK YOU JESUS

FOR STAYING QUIET WHEN THEY LIED, AND FOR TELLING THE TRUTH WHEN THEY ASKED FOR IT!

Many times we plan and we plan believing in our planning that we are truly autonomous. In reality, our plans must fit within God's plans! James 4:14-15 says (paraphrasing) we plan for tomorrow not knowing what our life will be like tomorrow- that it is but a vapor! He says WE OUGHT to say, IF GOD WILLS, we will live and do so and so!

We must wrap our minds around the fact that it is God who controls all circumstances and it is God who will always have the **final say**.

There will **never** be a time when man will supersede God and somehow tell God what to do. There are times when man can pray and God **relents** but that has **more to do with God's mercy** and less to do with man being able to control God.

God told Hezekiah through the prophet Isaiah to get his house in order. Hezekiah wept and **God relented and added 15 years** to his life...**but he still had to die**.

The Bible says that the Word of the Lord will never return to Him void but will accomplish that which it set out to do.

I came to **encourage** you this morning through an **unlikely** story.

The story of Peter's denials is indeed a story of encouragement. It is a story of **mercy and of grace**. It's a story of a **second chance**. It is a story *less about Peter but more about the immutability of the Word of God!*

In this text, **Jesus spoke about future events**. We can say that Jesus **prophesied** future events.

Jesus could speak with confidence about the future because the future belonged to Him.

1. Jesus spoke the future from the past (Verse 27)

The prophet Zechariah was a contemporary of the prophet Haggai. He was a **post-exilic prophet** whose ministry began during the return from Babylon. His writings occurred **about 480 B.C.**, over 500 years before this very moment.

Prophecy can be "foretelling" i.e. telling the future

Example: **Micah 5:2-4** where the birthplace of Jesus and His ministry as the Good Shepherd is **foretold!**

Example: God foretelling that Israel would be healed by using a valley full of dry bones to make his point.

or "forthtelling" i.e. giving a message directly from God

Ex: Ezekiel's **rebuke** of the priesthood in Ezekiel 34!

Ex: Moses' giving of the **Law** (Thus says the LORD)

In the 13th chapter of his prophecy, Zechariah opens this section by saying that a fountain **will be opened** for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem...a fountain for sin and impurity..

Here Zechariah is foretelling HOW sin and impurity would be dealt with-

by *piercing* the Son (Zech 12:10)

*“I **WILL** pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they **WILL** mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they **WILL** weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.*

Then he says in **Chapter 13:7** that **a sword will be awakened** against MY Associate, My Shepherd...

IT IS THIS “SWORD” THAT WOULD OPEN THE FOUNTAIN FOR SIN AND IMPURITY!

God says **Strike the Shepherd** and the Sheep WILL BE scattered!

So the **future was spoken from the Past!**

Jesus is the WORD. All Scripture is INSPIRED by God. Zechariah prophesied what God told Him to say. **SO Here in Verse 27** He says you **WILL** ALL FALL AWAY because IT IS WRITTEN...

In verse 27, we understand that **it is God who awoke the sword**, it was **God's plan that the shepherd be struck** and it was **for OUR benefit that he was struck**

because **as Jesus recounts** this story he says "**I WILL** (FUTURE) strike the shepherd...(the Father) and **the sheep WILL** be (FUTURE) scattered (passive voice)

So the **striking had a purpose**, to open the fountain

There is an **old song** that says:

There is a fountain, filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins; and **sinner plunged beneath that flood** lose all their guilty stains!

The **scattering ALSO had a purpose**, to propagate the gospel to the ends of the earth!

27 Καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι Πάντες σκανδαλισθήσεσθε,

And He says to them because of Jesus all will fall away (future tense)

ὅτι γέγραπται,

because it is written (present tense)- referred to scripture in present tense

Πατάξω τὸν ποιμένα,

I will strike (God the Father) the shepherd

καὶ τὰ πρόβατα διασκορπισθήσονται.

And the sheep will be scattered (passive)- because of the striking??

2. Sometimes the future is spoken from the present (Verses 29-31)

We see a **great example of Jesus the prophet** here in this text. He prophesies the future (forthtelling) from the present. And this is not the distant future but the near future...

29 ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἔφη (**imperfect**) αὐτῷ, Εἰ καὶ πάντες σκανδαλισθήσονται,
But Peter said (**kept saying**) to Him, and if all will fall away (**stumble**)

ἐγὼ ἀλλ' οὐκ.

But not I

Jesus speaking the future from the present gives Peter a stark reminder of what it means to sell wolf tickets!

READ

30 καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἀμὴν λέγω σοι ὅτι σὺ σήμερον
And Jesus says to him, Truly I say to you that today

ταύτη τῇ νυκτὶ πρὶν ἢ δις ἀλέκτορα φωνῆσαι⁴ τρίς με ἀπαρνήσῃ.

This night **before the rooster crows, three times you WILL deny Me**

READ

WOLF TICKETS- an emphatic double negative

31 ὁ δὲ ἐκπερισσῶς ἐλάλει (imperfect), Ἐὰν δέη με συναποθανεῖν σοι,
But with great emphasis he kept on saying, If it is necessary for me to die with you

οὐ μὴ (**emphatic**) σε ἀπαρνήσομαι. ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ πάντες ἔλεγον.
not not you I will deny. And all were saying the same...

When they arrested Jesus in Gethsemane and led him away, Peter kept his **distance**.

One of the issues with the church today is that too many of us are following Jesus at a distance!

There is **power in proximity**. We **MUST stay close** to Jesus in order to experience His power in our lives!

Following at a **distance is dangerous** because that **roaring lion** is **looking for those who are trailing** behind the processional!

Fast forward to **Verse 66-67** [READ] and we see the prophecy of Jesus come to fruition...

This slave girl comes up to Peter

Slave girl says you **were with “always (continuous)” with the Jesus** the Nazarene...

Verse 68 [READ]- he tried to play dumb...and distance himself

Verse 69 [READ]- He denied it again...verb is **imperfect** i.e. he **KEPT** denying it!

Verses 70-71 [READ]- I guess Peter **had had enough** so he began **cursing**; not in our sense; he began **calling down curses on himself**- ex. If I am not telling the truth that I don't know this man, may such and such happen to me...

He singled Jesus out... I DO NOT KNOW **THIS** MAN!

VERSE 72 READ

He wept because of the WORDS of JESUS. The Word of Jesus convicted His heart!

But the story does not end here...

3. Thank God Jesus Holds the FUTURE (Verse 28)

This is the MOST important prophecy ever!

AFTER I HAVE BEEN RAISED [PASSIVE VOICE];

AFTER I HAVE PICKED THE LIFE UP THAT I LAID DOWN;

AFTER RESURRECTION POWER HAS SURGED THROUGH MY BROKEN BODY;

I WILL GO AHEAD OF YOU INTO GALILEE!

I know that you are going to scatter and I know that you are going to deny Me;

But I'll meet you in Galilee and your faith will be made whole!

I know that your hearts are heavy and that your spirit is willing; but your flesh is weak!

Don't be boastful about what you WILL do, just rest in what I have already DONE!

I WILL meet you in Galilee and bid you peace!

I WILL meet you in Galilee and break bread with you!

I WILL meet you in Galilee **and let you touch** my hands and my feet!

I WILL meet you in Galilee and **remind** you that I STILL love you!

Peter, I WILL **walk along the beach** with you and give you the command to tend my **sheep!**

I WILL **fill you with my Spirit** and give you thousands of souls to save at Pentecost!

I WILL **NOT deny myself**, I WILL forgive YOU, I WILL cause you to be born again,

I WILL because I CAN!

I **CAN** because the future is in my hands!

I **AM** because the future **has always been** in my hands!

You **ARE** because **I KNOW THE PLANS THAT I HAVE FOR YOU, PLANS TO PROSPER YOU AND NOT TO HARM YOU...PLANS TO GIVE YOU A FUTURE AND A HOPE!**

One of my favorite passages of scripture is found in **John 10:18**. Jesus, **expounding on his Good Shepherd discourse**, says that when the wolf comes, the Good shepherd **will not run away** but will lay down his life for the sheep.

Jesus says in this tenth chapter that the **Father loves him because** He lays down His life SO that he may take it again.

Verse 18 is powerful- he says no one takes my life FROM ME (**intensified in GK**) I LAY IT DOWN from myself (**intensified in GK**).

I have authority to lay it down, **I** have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from my Father.

Examples

+When Jesus was asked for a sign by the Jews, He said “Destroy this temple and in three days **“I”** will raise it up.”

+When Paul penned Philippians, He said that Jesus did not regard equality with God and thing to be held on to but **He emptied Himself**, **took** the form of a bondservant, **took** on the body of a man and **was OBEDIENT to the point of death**, even death on a cross.

This was a **mission that Jesus volunteered for**, knowing the outcome, **knowing that He would be killed**, predicting His own death on multiple occasions...yet, he pressed on to the last act at Calvary.

+Even when Peter preached at **Pentecost**, He reminded the Pharisees and the religious leaders that it was by the **predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God** that Jesus Christ was given over.

So here in the **text today**, we see the **grand finale** of Jesus' earthly ministry. He has been **betrayed** by Judas **into the hands** of the religious leaders who secured false testimony against Jesus and **at this point they have delivered Him to Pilate**.

***Jesus offered no resistance because He said in Gethsemane, not what "I" will but what "YOU" will.*

Pilate **knowing their motives, offers to release Jesus** as it was **customary** for him to release one prisoner. The rulers influenced the crowds to choose **Barabbas**.

They had accused Jesus of being a rabble-rouser but here they are asking for a real terrorist to be set free!

The crowd yelled CRUCIFY HIM!

NOTHING done to him from this point forward was going to kill Him...until He laid His own life down.

Each successive step to the cross, he was laying it down but there was **one final moment** when He GAVE His life.

1. The flogging did not kill Him (Verse 15)

So, Pilate HANDED over Jesus to the guards to be flogged. **Flogging** was done after a death sentence had been pronounced. Some say it was to **hasten death** on the cross.

Jesus did not say a word because He knew that this moment was a part of a larger plan.

Historians say that Jesus was whipped with a **three-pronged scourge** with **bone and metal** embedded within the thongs. This was an instrument designed to inflict **maximum suffering**.

I am certain that Jesus was in **excruciating pain** **BUT** **this did not kill Him**. It was one step further to the cross.

*****Jesus did not resist because in Gethsemane, He said not what I will but what YOU will.***

2. The beating did not kill Him (Verses 16-20)

To add insult to injury, the Roman soldiers had their way with Jesus. They called together the **entire cohort**. *Imagine the testosterone in that place!* Imagine the **unbridled aggression!** **IMAGINE THEIR JOY!**

A weakened subject with no one to protect Him...

They put a **purple robe** on Him. They **twisted up a crown of thorns** and **pressed it into his scalp**. They **took a reed** and they **KEPT (imperfect active verb)** hitting Him in the head.

When they finished, they took the purple robe off and **put his own clothes back on Him**. This was to **fulfill prophecy**- the soldiers at the cross would cast lots for his clothes according to **Psalm 22**. **[EVIDENCE FOR VERACITY OF SCRIPTURE- alignment!]**

They **LED Him out** to crucify Him and...

***He did not resist because in Gethsemane, He said not what I will but what YOU will.*

3. The CROSS itself did not kill Him (Verses 25; 37-38)

It was the **third hour (9am)** on **Friday** and they nailed Jesus to a **Roman torture instrument** known as a cross.

After hanging on that cross for **three hours**, **enduring** the **insults** of the **passersby**, enduring the insults of **criminals** next to Him, **the land was engulfed in darkness!**

I imagine that the darkness came because the light of the world had become dim!

I imagine the **darkness could have represented** the **forces** of spiritual wickedness and powers and principalities **gathering up to celebrate!**

I imagine darkness came because **the sins of humanity**, for all time, were **upon the shoulders of Jesus!**

The WORLD as we know it, without Jesus, WILL be a very dark place!

We NEED Jesus because the Bible says that He is the ONLY ONE whom the darkness is unable to overtake!

Verse 34 READ

Jesus here recites a prayer from Psalm 22; ***the Father turned His face away from the Son for this brief moment!*** **This is why** Jesus was **anxious** in Gethsemane! This is why His **soul was grieved** unto death! **JESUS KNEW THAT THIS MOMENT WAS COMING!**

The **one who knew no sin** became a sin offering on our behalf.

Can you **imagine what that looked like to the Father**- to see **ALL** of the **darkness and sinfulness of the entire human race upon the one who sat with Him in glory?**

Can you imagine what that **smelled like** to the Father? The stench was surely unbearable!

BUT it was not the cross that killed Jesus. JESUS GAVE HIS LIFE- THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST, THE RIGHTEOUS FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS!

Verse 37 READ

Some crosses **had little “seats” on them** so that the offender could **hold themselves up** and so that the **flesh would not rip** before they person died.

Crucifixion put great strain on the body, especially the respiratory system. ***Breathing was short, shallow and uncomfortable.***

The Bible says that **He let out a GREAT cry**- therefore, **He had to first push Himself up to fill His lungs with air!**

Matthew writes in his gospel that Jesus cried out, **“Into your hands I commit My spirit”**, speaking to the Father.

John writes in his gospel that Jesus cried out **“It is finished!”** This is a very **powerful statement**.

The verb finished is in the **perfect tense/ passive voice!** What this means is that the **action was COMPLETED in a past time** and the **results are felt in the present time**.

What Jesus is saying is this: **It was ALREADY FINISHED!** It was finished **in eternity!**

I am the one who was **foreknown from before** the foundation of the world! I am the **lamb that was slain from before** the foundation of the world! **My work was completed before I ever set foot on the earth!**

This cross is just for YOU TO BEHOLD IT!

These were **HIS last words** and the Bible says **HE BREATHED HIS LAST**.

He died when HE BREATHED HIS LAST. He **GAVE HIS LIFE- no one took His life!** **JESUS had the last word**, not Pilate, not Caiaphas nor the religious leaders.

They believed they TOOK His life but in reality, HE GAVE His life!

The life of JESUS **lasted UNTIL** HE BOWED HIS HEAD AND GAVE UP HIS SPIRIT! **He died on His terms, not on man's terms!**

He **gave His life** to **satisfy a Holy God's requirement** for death as a payment for sin!

He **gave His life** to **take the sting out of death!**

He gave His life to **take the victory from the grave!**

He gave His life to **open up a new and living way!**

****POWER EVEN IN HIS LAST BREATH!**

NOTE what happened to the temple (Verse 38)

James Freeman describes the veil as the curtain that hung between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. It was sixty feet in length, and reached from floor to ceiling.

Note that it **wasn't torn in two from bottom to top as human hands would do** it, but **God reached DOWN and tore it from top to bottom** as only could do it.

The Holy of Holies was NOW exposed through the death of Jesus!

High Priest Caiaphas prophesied that one man would die for the nation- but **when the veil was rent**, John the Baptist's words rang true:

“BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE **SINS OF THE WORLD!”**

NOTE THE REACTION OF THE SOLDIER:

This last breath must have been POWERFUL! The soldier took note of it and said **“TRULY this was the Son of God!” The veil was torn and the stony heart of this soldier was now burning for Jesus!**

Where Were You On Sunday Morning

Mark 1:12,13; Mark 16:1-6

❖ Introduction

In the first chapter of Mark and the fourth chapter of Luke, the **temptation** of Jesus is recorded. Jesus, the Son of the Living God is LED into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted by the devil.

Hebrews 4:15 says that He was **tempted in every way** and He fully experienced the human condition, but was WITHOUT SIN. How many know that **because of this temptation**, Jesus is able to **sympathize** with our weakness!

He **knows every device** the devil uses against us and therefore, we can APPROACH God's throne and find **GRACE and MERCY** when we need it!

In the text, **Jesus is face to face with our most powerful enemy**. When Satan was tempting Jesus in the wilderness, in Luke's gospel, he made **three statements** all including an "if" (v3, v7, v9).

IF is a conjunction, used to **suggest** that something is being called into **question**...

❖ Pause for Eden

“If” is Satan’s main weapon. He **CANNOT TELL THE TRUTH**, so he **tries to get us to doubt the truth**. He did the same thing in the Eden with Eve. “Did God really say that?”

SET IT UP: In the temptation of Christ, **Jesus is famished and exhausted**. He’s been in the desert with no food or water for 40 days straight [an *analogous situation to Israel’s wandering* for 40 years]!

These **harsh conditions AND the devil’s temptation** are a recipe for a **breakdown!**

Now, the devil’s *motive was the same here as it was in Eden*. He brought the Sonship and deity of Jesus into question...

“If you are the Son of God...” He was **challenging** the validity of Jesus’ testimony.

40 days earlier, Jesus had just been baptized and confirmed as God’s Son by the **Spirit resting on Him** like a dove but NOW He was in the fight of His **human** life.

NUGGET:

Jesus is 100% God and 100% human so we see the *nature of Satan as this: to STIR UP THE FLESH*. Satan says “if” to the flesh in order to **stir it up**, to **suppress the Spirit** and to make us act contrary to what God has already said.

Satan is a master at trying to **create conflict** between man and God. He wants to **raise doubts** and cause us to question the truth, power and faithfulness of God.

He did it in Genesis and as a **reminder**, a **flaming sword** turning in every direction east of the Garden of Eden is there to ensure that no one will ever enter there.

What we have to **understand** is this: Yes, the devil will try to raise doubts and questions BUT **God's word is truth** and **WE MUST STAND ON WHAT GOD SAID** OVER ANY DOUBTS THAT WE MIGHT HAVE IMPLANTED BY SATAN.

❖ **An opportune time:**

Luke 4:13 says that the devil departed from Jesus until an **"opportune" time**. Greek **kairos** [not chronos (hours/minutes)]- but the right **"moment" or "season"**.

Opportune times are **usually times of high emotion, stress or depression!** *That's why Paul tells us not to give the devil a foothold*, that's why he is **described as a roaring lion**, that's why we must stay sober minded- **he is looking for the right moment to attack!**

(Satan **KEPT showing up** throughout the ministry of Jesus...let's talk about it)

1. Working through the religious leaders

Opportune time: Jesus was **in His hometown** and **drove out a mute demon!**

Satan used the Pharisees to **accuse** Jesus of **working with Satan** to accomplish His miracles- **THEN-** he **tried to make the people think that Jesus was insane-**

It **got so bad** that his mother and brothers showed up! **In Mark 3:21**, they said **“he has lost His senses...”** He’s gone crazy!

Jesus said **I don’t work for the strong man; I came to bind him up and rob his house!**

Jesus said **I cast out demons by the finger of God!** **Acts 10:38** said that Jesus was anointed with power and the Holy Spirit to set free ALL who were oppressed by the devil!

The religious leaders couldn’t out teach or out reason Jesus!

Actually, SOME of the religious leaders were starting to believe! (**John 7**) the **temple police** who were sent to arrest Jesus said, **“no one has ever spoken like Him!”**

Nicodemus (well-known Pharisee) said, **“We should hear from Him before passing judgment...”**

2. (...he just kept showing up...) Through the disciples

HOW MANY KNOW THAT **WHEN SATAN CAN'T GET YOU**, HE TRIES TO GET CLOSE TO YOU? The devil couldn't trap Jesus using the religious leaders...**so, he tried to get to the disciples...**

Opportune time (Caesarea Philippi) - Peter's Confession: In **Mark 8:29**, **Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ** and then, **4 verses later**, after Jesus **prophesied** His death, the same Peter starts to **rebuke** Jesus saying "...This shall never happen to you".

Jesus turned to Peter and said...**GET BEHIND ME SATAN!** Satan knew that **IF he could keep Jesus off the cross**, he could keep God's kingdom from being established in the earth!

The death of Jesus on Calvary was God doing a NEW thing! It was God making a way out of NO WAY!

Opportune time: The disciples **argued over who would be the greatest in the kingdom**, **not understanding** that being the greatest in the kingdom meant being last, washing feet, loving the least of these, loving the poor and the broken hearted!

Opportune time: At the **dinner table:** A little later on, they were **reclining at the dinner table**. John's gospel records that Satan actually entered Judas! *Jesus simply turned to Judas and told him what you do, do it quickly.*

And for 30 pieces of silver Judas sold Jesus out!

3. (he just kept showing up...At the cross)

Opportune time: When the disciple angle didn't work, **Satan got bold, he even showed up at the cross!** At the cross, Satan was **STILL challenging** the Godhood of Jesus.

There were **people standing around the cross** saying "If you are the Son of God, **save yourself!**" The thief on the cross says this: Save yourself then save us - as if they deserved saving! Men walked by wagging their heads and deriding Jesus!

Satan used this same line of questioning in the wilderness...so the devil was again **trying to raise doubts.**

What He was saying is this, "**hey Jesus, do you really think that you are supposed to die for all these people that hate your guts?**"

Come on down from there and **save yourself.** Don't those **nails hurt?** You can **wear a real crown,** not a crown of thorns. You can come down and be a king right here on earth!"

He showed up to **try to undo what put in motion from before the foundation of the earth!** Jesus **didn't come to be an earthly king-** he said to Pilate (**John 18:36**)- "my kingdom is not of this world..."

HOW MANY KNOW that **Jesus came to establish the KINGDOM of Heaven on earth using earthly subjects!**

Jesus did not come to save Himself; He came to save those that would trust Him as their savior, through His death.

❖ The ground shook (don't hide now)

Something started to change on Friday evening...(Natural events-**sun went black, great earthquake, veil torn in two**) and WHEN Jesus gave up the ghost, **even the Roman soldier at the cross started praising God saying “surely, this man must be the Son of God!”** [Mark 15:39]- the **light bulb** came on for Him...

Our **light bulb** (SOMEONE HERE IS STRUGGLING TO BELIEVE...STRUGGLING WITH BELIEVING THAT JESUS IS REAL):

When we begin to understand that God is real, cannot lie, cannot make a mistake, that Jesus is real and that He really came – and hold on to the truth...**WE CANNOT BE EASILY SHAKEN!**

When ***you've held on to Jesus for a while***, you have evidence that Jesus will do everything that He said! (WITNESS)

Yes we still make mistakes **BUT WE SERVE A GOD THAT HONORS OUR FAITH!** GOD IS REAL, and if we confess our sins

God is faithful and just to forgive us! He's full of lovingkindness, slow to anger and He rewards those that diligently seek Him.

4. Where were you on Sunday Morning (Mark 16:1-6)?

The bible says that it was early in the morning when Mary came to the tomb; and the stone was rolled away BUT THERE WAS NO ONE INSIDE!

A Young man in white asked, "why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here but He is risen." Remember, he told you this...that he had to be crucified and then raised on the third day?

Here is the **million dollar question...**"SATAN, WHERE WERE YOU ON SUNDAY MORNING?"

(Yes you were- repeat): in the **wilderness**, in the **synagogue** with the Pharisees, among the religious leaders, inside of **Judas**, you were even at the **foot of the cross...****BUT where were you on Sunday Morning?**

Where were you when Jesus, after the humiliation of the cross, got up in glory? When the stone was rolled away? When the Living God got up with ALL POWER?

The empty tomb was one place that the truth could not be denied!

This is the **CORE of ALL Christianity**. **God had to protect it!**

On Sunday morning, ***the same way that God has Eden guarded, He guarded the tomb of Jesus*** (with angels)

THIS IS THE ONE PLACE THAT HE COULD NOT BE! HE COULD NOT RAISE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION!

When the witnesses showed up, God did not give Him a chance to say, “IF”; “Maybe”; “listen to this”.

Where were you?

I will tell you...He was DEFEATED! Hebrews 2:14 “**Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,**”

Sunday morning meant that the only weapon that Satan had, death, was taken away from him!

SUNDAY MORNING MEANT THAT ALL POWER, EVEN THE POWER OVER DEATH BELONGED TO JESUS!

Thank God for Sunday Morning!