
a ***Grace Notes*** publication

The Gospel of Mark

an expositional Bible study by
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Foreword

These studies in the Gospel of Mark have been compiled and written by Rev. Daniel Hill, PhD, pastor of Southwood Bible Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has graciously provided his notes so that they can be made available by E-mail and on the World Wide Web.

After graduating from high school in Scottsdale, Arizona, Dan Hill served in the United States Navy. Upon receiving his honorable discharge in 1965 he attended Arizona State University where he received a degree in Speech and History. Dan and his wife Patricia were married in 1970. Pat is also a graduate of Arizona State University and is the Executive Administrator for Village Missions International, which has its headquarters in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

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Introduction

The four Gospels paint for us a portrait of our Savior. To Matthew our Lord was the King of the line of David, the Son of David. To Luke He was the Perfect man, the Son of Man. To John He was the Divine Son of God and the Mark the Lord Jesus Christ was the obedient servant.

The Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels and deals mostly with the ministry of Christ.

Matthew spent considerable time relating the Savior to Israel and John's emphasis was to show the Church at the end of the First century a portrait of Christ. Dr. Luke, the beloved physician, spent much of His Gospel writing about the unique virgin birth of our Savior and the miracles of healing accomplished by our Savior.

Mark portrays Christ as a servant who came to minister and save mankind.

MAJOR THEME: The Ruler who came to Serve . . .
The Servant who will come to Rule.

OUTLINE

The Sixteen Chapters of Mark fall into in Four Divisions:

The Servant's Coming: (Mark 1:1-13)

The Servant's Work: (Mark 1:14 through 13:37)

The Servant's Death: (Mark 14:1 through 15:47)

The Servant's Resurrection: - (Mark 16:1-20)

MARK, THE HUMAN WRITER

Mark is referred to in the Bible as Mark, John Mark, Marcus

He was raised in Jerusalem in a wealthy and formal Jewish setting. His mother was one of the Marys referred to in the Bible.

He went first with Paul and Barnabas on Paul's first missionary journey. But in Perga he became afraid of the robber barons and deserted them going back home.

Many Christians come under chastisement and testing and do not have the personal faith in Christ that helps them cope with this. Mark eventually ended up traveling with Peter and became to Peter what Luke was to Paul, an aide-de-camp, or right-hand man, executive officer.

Hence, much of what we read in Mark is a compilation of Peter's sermons.

Mark was eventually sent to Alexandria North Africa by Peter and there is given the highest honor. He was martyred for his faith . . . drawn and quartered by the army and he was not afraid.

We can find a great principle in the life of Mark. He was rejected by Paul because he had failed in faith, but he did not hold a grudge although Paul, for a while, did!

Acts 15:36-40 is the scene of the great disagreement and Paul's unforgiving attitude.

He took the rebuke and accepted Paul's attitude towards him although Paul was wrong. He didn't whine or pout, he moved on to maturity in doctrine.

Eventually Paul even reconsidered his attitude towards Mark and in Colossians 4:10 and in 2 Tim 4:11 compliments him and commends him to the Church.

THE SETTING AND DESTINATION:

Mark is writing from Rome and writing to Gentile Believers, mostly Romans. An interesting paradox is that in writing to Romans who valued strength so highly, he portrays Christ as a servant.

But here is Jesus Christ, God himself who possesses all authority, sovereignty, and strength - who is strong enough to become a servant. The ruler who serves -

ILLUSTRATION:

It is said that Henry IV, king of France, was visiting a certain village one day with some members of his court when they approached a very poor man who bowed himself completely to the ground. The monarch responded by doing the same thing. Those with him were astonished. When one of them asked why he condescended to return the salutation in the same manner, Henry IV quickly replied, Would your king be excelled in politeness by one of the most lowly of his subjects?

Chapter 1

Mark 1:1

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

This is like the title to the entire Gospel:

Most manuscripts do not include the title Son of God, not because it would be incorrect but because Mark will reserve the privilege of this title to be bestowed by God the Father in Mark 1:11

“Gospel” in the Greek [EUANGELLOS] is the word that becomes EVANGELISM in English. It means a good message or good news. It was used in secular Greek for the royal dispatches of the king.

This GOOD NEWS belongs to Jesus Christ, He is the one who secured the Gospel for mankind.

JESUS CHRIST

This is both a name and a title, a fulfillment of prophecies and promises, and a look to future prophecies.

JESUS is the Greek transliteration of Hebrew name JOSHUA which means: Jehovah is Salvation.

It is the Savior’s personal name and was given by prophecy from God to Joseph in Matthew 1:21.

It was a common name given to an uncommon person. While others had and even today in Spanish speaking countries have this personal name, there is only one who is truly Jehovah the Savior.

“Christ” is the Greek CHRISTOS ” and is translated from the Hebrew word Messiah or anointed one. The Messiah or Christ is the one who would deliver Israel from her enemies.

This title presents the Savior as:

1. True Humanity: He has a human name, Joshua/Jesus
2. Deity: He is the promised Messiah, the Christ
3. Uniqueness: He is humanity and deity in one person
4. And He is the possessor of Good News

Here is something else interesting, almost paradoxical in Mark. Remember that Mark presents Christ as a Servant. Thus, there is no

genealogy as we find in Matthew and in Luke. A servant doesn’t need a genealogy. But here the Servant has something that is normally only associated with royalty - a herald to announce his coming.

Two Reasons for this:

1. Mark is going to tell us what happens to John the Baptizer in this Gospel so he introduces him at this point
2. Mark knows the end of the story and that by the last chapters Jesus Christ the Servant will be called the “King of Israel” on five occasions.

So he is setting the stage for the Ruler who Serves

Mark 1:2

**As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:
Behold, I send my messenger ahead of
you, who will prepare your way;**

The prophecy concerns the ministry of John the Baptizer:

Mark refers to Isaiah, the major writing prophet of the Old Testament, and quotes both Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1

**Isaiah 40:3, The voice of him that crieth
in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of
the LORD, make straight in the desert a
highway for our God.**

**Malachi 3:1, Behold, I will send my
messenger, and he shall prepare the way
before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek,
shall suddenly come to his temple, even
the messenger of the covenant, whom ye
delight in: behold, he shall come, saith
the LORD of hosts.**

Mark combines these two prophecies into the statement in this verse.

This verse tells us about John the man, his method, his message:

1. The man John was an appointed messenger, a herald of Jesus Christ. He announced Jesus Christ as a herald would announce a king.
2. His method was to go to the desert and cry out. A public ministry in which the public came to him.
3. His message: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.

In Galatians 4:4 we find that the coming of Christ, heralded by John the Baptist, occurred at the

perfect time, at the fullness of time. There has never been nor will be a more perfect time for Messiah to come - politically, economically, linguistically, socially, in every way.

Spiritually, however, things then were not unlike the situation today. Israel had fallen into a tradition of dead orthodoxy with no life to their religion. Legalism and ritual prevailed.

The Gentiles had fallen into a cynicism and viewed spiritual values as folly, old tales and myths - which they were for Greece and Rome.

Israel needed to be shocked out of their dead tradition and the Gentiles needed the truth for a change. Both would get what they needed for revival from Jesus Christ.

Today, our society needs the same thing. Rightfully many people are cynical regarding the Church and its dead legalism and ritual - it need the same thing Jesus brought to earth - the TRUTH.

Mark 1:3

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the lord, make his paths straight

Tells us of the three point method and message of John.

A voice crying in the desert

Present tense - "kept on crying out with a loud shout."

The word "crying" is used to express strong emotions and strong feelings. John inhabited the desert and cried out with great emotion regarding the Messiah who was coming.

The fact that John is referred to as a VOICE indicates that the real issue is not the man, but the message.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord:

An ancient custom is referred to in this statement. It was the custom for a road crew to precede the travels of a king. They would prepare the road, so that the King would have a smooth surface on which to travel.

"The Way" refers to a well traveled path or road:

The path that Christ would travel was well traveled by the prophets, judges, priests, and kings

of the Old Testament. who foresaw his coming and Cross.

Make straight His paths

This idiom means to shorten the distance and level the way.

This looks at arriving at the objective, the goal in the most expeditious manner.

Jesus Christ had a priority. and nothing, not even the constant harassing of the opposition, would distract him from the path he would travel.

Having presented the messenger, his method, and his message, Mark now gives us information about the ministry and the man, John the Baptizer.

Mark, who at one time had been rejected by Paul, writes about another who was rejected, John the herald of Jesus Christ.

John was out at the Jordan River preaching and baptizing. The closest point of the Jordan River to Jerusalem is about twenty miles - yet the people came because that is where the Word was being taught.

A Few Observations Regarding John's Ministry:

Four things John's ministry was not:

1. It was not a ministry of self but pointed to another. Any ministry we have must point to Jesus Christ. Whether it is a ministry of the Word, or Prayer, or Helps, or Comfort, the objective, the focal point must not be ourselves but Christ.

John was a herald, one who announced the Savior. The apostle Paul would later tell the Corinthian church regarding his ministry that

2 Corinthians 4:5 - we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

Even God the Holy Spirit, the third member of the trinity, does not speak of himself:

John 16:13 Howbeit when the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

2. John's ministry did not conform. This was a time when institutional religion was at its zenith in Judea. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and Rabbis were highly organized and had been functioning according to a human standard for nearly 300 years.

But their standard, their system, their method, their purpose was false.

John did not do what every other minister did. He did what God wanted him to do.

We are told that organized religion did not like this. John 1:24,25 tells us that the religious leaders traveled the twenty miles to see this preacher and then criticized him because he did not conform.

3. John's ministry was not a ministry of convenience: People had to travel more than 20 miles to get to the place where John was teaching and baptizing.

4. John's ministry was not one of pleasant platitudes but of power:

His message was of the coming Kingdom of God, a kingdom that would come with power. He told the people not what they wanted to hear but what God wanted them to hear.

When the religious crowd came around we are told:

Matthew 3:7 - he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

But what was John's ministry:

1. A ministry of prophecy (verses 2,3). John's ministry was spoken of by the prophets 700 years prior to Jesus' Day.

And he gave prophecy regarding the coming Savior (verses 7,8)

2. A ministry of Preaching (verses 4 and 7): He did not discuss, he did not philosophize, he communicated truth.

3. A ministry of Repentance (verse 4): He knew that his preaching must effect a change of mind.

4. A ministry of People (verse 5): His ministry was not to ritual or rules or conventions, but to the people who needed salvation.

5. A ministry of Proper Perspective (verse 7): He realized he was nothing and that Christ was everything. He was humble in his M.A.

6. A ministry of Power (verse 8): His ministry pointed the way to the omnipotent Son of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Your ministry, according to your spiritual gift and your geographical location is the same ministry.

Prophecy: The Bible addresses the act that every believer is equipped to ministry

Preaching: Your ministry communicates either by your lips or by your life. You communicate truth in how you live.

Repentance: When you meet an unbeliever you should have one thought in mind, bringing them to a saving knowledge of Christ, to encourage them to change their mind regarding Christ.

When you meet a believer who is not learning Doctrine on a consistent basis, you should also desire their repentance, their change of mind - to get with God's program.

People: No one is called to minister to the walls or the rocks. God is in the business of Saving people and we are to be about our Father's business.

Proper Perspective: We are nothing more than servants to the Ruler who serve, Jesus Christ

Power: Not our power, not our ability, only our availability and using the power that God has provided. That alone will cut it in life.

In order to fully appreciate the two baptisms mentioned in these opening verses of Mark, we need to quickly examine the Doctrine of Baptism. By Doctrine we mean the sum of the Scriptural teaching regarding a particular subject.

Topic: Baptism

By listing all the baptisms of the Bible we can now see that our passage refers to John's unique baptism for believing Israel and Jesus' unique baptism in obedience to His Father's plan.

But there is another aspect of John's baptism that bears mentioning. And that is what this baptism meant to the people of Judah with their long heritage of faith in God.

Mark 1:4

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Here is what he proclaimed or preached:

1. A baptism that belongs or goes along with or attends repentance.

Repentance is METANOEW, to change the mind.

This change of mind was demonstrated by those who had already repented (changed their minds) by baptism in the River Jordan by John

2. Second proclamation was looking at or with a view towards the forgiveness of sins.

Elementary to forgiveness of sins is to recognize that you are a sinner. For many of the religious arrogant types in Judea that would be difficult, they indeed thought that they were without sins.

Mark 1:5

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

The people came the 20+ miles to hear John and they did change their minds and they were forgiven of their sins, and they were baptized.

We are told here that they confessed their sins and that word is a little different than the word we have for confess in 1 John 1:9. There, the word means to agree in words with God regarding your sins.

Here the Greek word means to admit, face up to, recognize that you are a sinner in need of salvation.

This word and what these people were coming to grips with is something that we need to face up to today.

No amount of good deeds or works or religion can eliminate the fact that we are sinners.

But Israel's religious leaders had rationalized their sins, had minimized their culpability and rejected responsibility for their own actions - much like people today.

So what did God hit them with to shake them up, to get them to realize the depravity of their position of being lost? BAPTISM!

What we do not see in this passage is the tremendous affront John's baptism was to these people who came from Jerusalem to hear him.

BACKGROUND ON JOHN'S BAPTISM:

1. The idea of baptism was not completely new in Israel although the way John used it was new.

2. As early as Genesis 35:2 we see Jacob instructing his family to be cleansed before returning to Bethel.

3. Cleansing by way of immersion in water became one of the parts of the ritual for a proselyte in Israel.

When an unbelieving Gentile believed in Jehovah he would be ceremonially cleansed, similar to baptism.

4. That was for the Gentile but here we have John adding this cleansing, this baptism to his ministry.

He was approaching Israel as though they were Gentiles in need of conversion.

How that must have shaken the sensibilities of these Jews who traveled the miles to the Jordan to hear this new preacher, just to have him tell them they were no better than Gentile unbelievers.

BY WAY OF APPLICATION, what does God have to put in front of us to shake us out of the error of our thinking - a thinking that we are something special and that God should be impressed with us. What is it going to take?

Mark 1:6

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

John's unusual dress and manner of life are mentioned in this verse. In many ways the ministry of John was similar to the ministry of Elijah 800 years earlier. Both men of God preached against the false religions of their days and encouraged people to return to true faith in Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Basically, John looked like a mountain man and lived like a mountain man.

Mark 1:7,8

**And he was preaching, and saying,
""After me One is coming who is
mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop
down and untie the thong of His sandals.
I baptized you with water; but He will
baptize you with the Holy Spirit.**

The correct perspective and priority of his ministry:

There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop

down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

When in the King James Version you see the word GHOST it is the same as the word SPIRIT and the better translations have corrected this mistranslation.

Here John mentions that real Baptism of the Holy Spirit that occurs at the moment of salvation when the Holy Spirit identifies us with Jesus Christ and we are IN CHRIST.

John was ministering to people by pointing to another, to Jesus Christ - this is the correct perspective of any ministry.

Mark 1:9-11

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

Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; And a voice came out of the heavens: You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.

The Baptism of Jesus Christ: why was Jesus Baptized?

1. The baptism of Jesus Christ had nothing to do with sins because the innocent Son of God had no sins.

2. The baptism of Jesus Christ identified the Son of God with the plan of the heavenly Father.

A public attestation at the beginning of His public ministry that he was about His Father's business.

3. This baptism also allowed the herald, John, to announce the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. It showed the people that this is the one John had been preaching about.

4. In Jesus' three fold ministry of prophet, priest, and king, a priest and a king had to be anointed at the inception of their service.

As the only prophet of his day, John anointed the Son of God for service as priest and king in the waters of the Jordan.

MODE: Immersion: Going under the water Jesus said Yes I will die for the sins of the human race.

Coming up out of the water he said Yes, I will be raised from the dead to rule forever.

Therefore, the most important aspect of the Baptism of Jesus is that, he was, as he did often, identifying himself with the plan for our salvation.

The divine response is the most important response:

Three things occurred:

1. The heavens rolled back: Greek word is SCHIZO and the beginning and end of Christ's earthly ministry was marked by a SCHIZO.

Here the Heavens are torn apart and when Jesus died on the Cross the veil in the Temple was torn apart from top to bottom (Mark 15:38).

This demonstrates that Jesus Christ is in control of all thing, whether in heaven or on earth.

2. The Holy Spirit descended, like a dove.

The Holy Spirit was not a dove but descended as a dove. The Lord had from His physical birth been indwelled and dependant upon the Spirit but here the Spirit of God is seen by the assembled multitude coming upon Jesus Christ.

3. The Father spoke: You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Six times in the Scriptures we find that the heavenly Father spoke of his pleasure in the decisions of his Son. Each time in reference to his willingness to go to the Cross.

Baptism looks at identification. For John's baptism, identification with the coming kingdom and its king.

For Christ's baptism, identification with the will and plan of the Father.

We may have been baptized with the believers baptism, but do we continue in the reality of that ritual?

Every day we have the opportunity to identify ourselves with Jesus Christ, identify ourselves with the Father perfect plan for our lives - do we?

What we see in theses baptisms are people who were willing to stand up and be counted as true believers. In their stand they were rejecting the religiousness and legalism of their day - and they were advancing towards a personal relationship with the one who had done everything for them - Jesus Christ

This opening chapter of Mark's Gospel presents us with the account of the emergence of the Son of God onto the scene of history. The chapter serves as a division between his private life and his public ministry.

Three events usher Jesus from the privacy of preparation to the public ministry that will find its sum total at the Cross:

1. The ministry of John the Baptizer, the herald of Christ
2. The Baptism of Christ: We see Him agreeing to carry out the Salvation Plan and the pleasure this gave the heavenly Father.
3. The Temptation of Christ: The testing of both the humanity and deity of Christ as he sets forth on his journey to the Cross.

We have already discussed the uniqueness of John's ministry. He was, to say the least, unusual.

The final prophecy of the Old Testament, 400 years before the time of Mark, Chapter One, spoke of the prophet Elijah returning to warn the people prior to the judgment of God and the kingdom of God.

John was not Elijah, but his ministry was similar. It was a ministry of warning, warning the people prior to the coming not of the kingdom, but of the king.

That final prophecy in Malachi 4 ends with the curse that was perpetuated from the fall of man.

It is to people under the curse of sin that John came and is with people under the curse that Jesus would begin his public ministry.

The banks of the Jordan were not a place for the rich to flaunt their wealth or the wise to display their knowledge or the poor to be brushed aside. This was a place of common ground and the only common denominator was that these people knew they were sinners in need of a Savior.

Back in Jerusalem, the religious institutions were at their highest. The Temple activity was in full swing . . . yet it was not there that Jesus went to begin his public ministry.

Principle: Jesus chose to be with the positive receptive believers. He was even baptized in the same waters of the Jordan as they and with them witnessed the approving signs from His Father in Heaven.

QUESTION-Application: Where would Jesus be today if he were to come from heaven to earth. Would he be in a church? Which one? He would be with those who are serious regarding life and to be serious regarding life you first have to be serious about your faith.

The Church today must be a place of common ground and the only issue is: What think ye of Christ?

At His baptism Jesus shared the approval of His Father with those who would be His followers:

The final and most spectacular event was the voice of God, booming from heaven saying:

This is my beloved son in Whom I am well pleased.

God the Father was pleased in heaven by that which was done on earth. Although omniscience and having knowledge of this event from eternity past, that pre-knowledge did not diminish in any way the historical event.

As Jesus entered the waters of the Jordan he was adding his volition, his free-will, to the plan of God. He was saying yes I will die for man, yes I will be raised from the dead for the church.

Jesus volition was in view and it was his volitional decision that pleased the Father.

The Volition of the Humanity of Christ

While the volition of Jesus Christ was, from his birth to his physical death at all times set towards the will of God the Father there are certain instances revealed in the Gospels in which volition is in view.

Five times we see Jesus making a decision to set His will to completing the plan of the Father:

1. At His birth: Hebrews 10:5-10

Christ is unique and we do not often consider that he volitionally decided to be born. As ever existing God he chose to humble himself, really humiliate himself, and become man. The creator became the creation. The divine person took on human form.

2. Luke 2:41-49 Jesus at the Temple with the Rabbis:

At the age of twelve we see an incident that shows us that Jesus chose to grow in doctrine.

He stayed at the Temple and notice that even the learned men of Israel were astonished at his understanding and his answers.

These two responses included the application of wisdom and the academic facts of the Scriptures.

We see that Jesus adds: Do you not know that I must be about my Father's business, or affairs.

Here at the age of twelve we see that his volition had been set on learning the Word and would be set upon the business of His Father.

3. At His Baptism: As we studied last week, the baptism of Christ by John at the Jordan demonstrated Jesus' volitional decision to fulfill the will of God.

He set his focus upon the Cross and the Kingdom and publicly displayed his willingness to minister the will of His father.

In this the response of the Father: This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

4. The final portrayal of the consistent positive volition of Christ was on the eve of His crucifixion, in the garden of Gethsemane.

At that time of great trial, as he faced the total unknown of sin and judgment for sin and separation from His Father he set his will, even then, about His Father's business.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record this greatest prayer of human volition:

Luke 22:42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

When Jesus raised his head from prayer he looked at the Cross upon which his death would come, but he also looked beyond that hill of Calvary to the Kingdom and the subjects of that kingdom and you and me - and there was no question that his will would be about his Father's business.

In these events we see the consistent volitional decisions that Christ made as he carried out the will of God.

His earthly ministry is a pattern, an example, a prototype for us.

John 13:15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.

Let me give you two points of comparison regarding the volitional decisions of Christ and our volitional decisions:

1. Every day, every moment of every day, Jesus' will was set towards accomplishing the plan of God.

In the same manner, our volitional decisions come into play every day.

One of the great failings of the church is to seek a one shot decision on the part of believers.

While salvation, entrance into the Christian Life is a decision that is made once and for all, the Christian way of life. is lived daily by the believer.

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

2. While we must make correct decisions every day, there are also some very important decisions every believer must make in his life. These vital, essential, important decisions are parallel to the times we examined when Jesus' volition was tested and presented in the Scriptures.

As there were four times in the life of Christ that he made correct essential decisions, there are also four times in our lives when we make decisions that are critical to our life now and life in eternity:

Our essential volitional decisions:

1. As the eternal Son of God decided to be born into the human family, we must all make a decision to be born-again into the Royal Family of God.

This is a decision every member of the human race must face. Are you going to be saved by the work of Christ alone? There is no other way of salvation but by the Cross.

While this decision to be born humbled Christ, the decision to be born again exalts us, we are saved, secure the title of Christian, and are placed forever into union with Christ.

As this decision by Christ at his physical birth pleased the Father, the Father is pleased when men are born again by believing on his son.

2. When Jesus was twelve and tarried behind at the Temple he expressed two volitional decisions that he consistently made:

FIRST he demonstrated a separation from earthly relationships and set as a priority his spiritual relationships.

Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

In the same way we must come that point in our lives where we make a decision regarding who and what is really important. Family, parents, children can be a distraction to spiritual growth. Have a proper perspective and priority.

ALSO WHILE AT THE TEMPLE Jesus demonstrated what was truly important in life . . . the Word of God.

Luke 2:47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

His decision was to understand, learn, and apply the Word of God.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

IN THE SAME WAY WE MUST set the Word of God as the priority in our live, learn it, understand it, apply it.

Only then can we be about our Father's business.

3. At Jesus' Baptism, he make the decision to minister. That was the advent of his public ministry and he made the decision to apply doctrine not only to self but to others in ministry.

This pleased the Father, and it pleases the Father when we make that decision to minister to others. All believers have the ministry of witnessing, every one of you can extend yourself and the doctrine you have within you soul to others . . . in help in a time of need, in comfort and encouragement, in prayer.

These first three decisions could be summarized by three words:

SALVATION ---- GROWTH ---- MINISTRY

But there is one additional decision:

4. In the garden on the night before the Cross, Jesus prayed a pray that every believer should have as a goal.

To pray this prayer takes a volitional decision but it is preceded by much more than that: It requires the time it takes to mature in the Word of God.

Jesus prayed: Not my will but thine be done.

IN HIS HUMANITY he had come to the point of knowing that the greater reality of life was the will and the word of God.

His trust, His faith, His whole life was wrapped up in the Word.

CHRISTIAN: You need to set a goal and that goal must be to set your feet solidly upon the high plateau of maturity, Jesus reached that goal when on his knees in the garden.

We need to make proper decisions every day and there are times that we have critical decisions to make that will determine our:

SALVATION ---- GROWTH ---- MINISTRY

But all that works towards a goal of being mature in Christ:

And one decision you will make when you are mature will enable you to recognize maturity in Christ when it come. You will join ranks with Christ in the garden - not will but thy will be done.

Mark 1:12,13

Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness.

And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.

A more complete description of the temptation of Christ is given in Matthew 4, so refer to that chapter for the following discussion.

The account in Matthew begins with the word THEN, this is TOTE, which tells us to consider the context.

Prior to this we have the Baptism of Jesus where He, in his humanity agrees to do the will of the Father and the Father encourages him by saying This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.

This reception of great spiritual blessing is now followed by intense attack.

Application: We will find that Satan loves to attack on the heels of our spiritual victories.

He was led up by the Spirit to be tempted by the Devil.

Jesus, in His humanity, was led by the Spirit. He did not depend upon his own human ability nor upon His divine attributes but upon the power of the Spirit. The same power that is available to us.

Satan, who is called by more than 10 different names in the Bible, is very shrewd. He is going to tempt Jesus' humanity with the purpose of trying to get him to act independently of Divine will.

Christ depended upon the other two members of the Godhead and Satan wanted him to depend upon self or upon him.

If he could get Jesus to depend upon self or Satan he could call a win in the Angelic Conflict by eliminating the Savior who had been promised to take away all sin from the fall of man to the last sin of the Mill age.

Satan's strategy for attacking Christ is the same as his strategy for us. Satan wants us to be independent from God, rather than dependent on God, to follow Satan rather than to be led of the Spirit.

THE FIRST ATTACK: The first of the last three, there were many other temptations during the 40 days of fasting. If, and you are (since) the Son of God, say the word and these stones might become loaves of bread.

If you have been fasting for 40 days and nights you are hungry. The purpose of fasting is to set aside the normal activities of life in order to concentrate on the intake of the Word of God. Jesus had been taking in Doctrine for 40 days and nights.

He responded with the Word of God: Our primary weapon:

But he answering said: It is written (Deut. 8:3) Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Jesus was attacked, tempted, but used the weapon of the Word of God, a promise given to Moses 1500 years before.

ATTACK NUMBER TWO:

Since Jesus quoted Scripture, Satan decided to get into the act also.

He quotes an Old Testament prophetic promise given to the Messiah of Israel in Psalm 91:11,12

If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

NOTICE: This is Satan quoting Scripture but applying it incorrectly.

Principle: Quoting a verse can be done by Satan, an unbeliever, a reversionistic believer, an apostate, a heretic. The words are not magical.

What is Supernatural is the correct application of the promise, the principle, the precept.

Jesus answers the incorrect application with a correct application:

He quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, "Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God."

THE FINAL ATTACK: The Kingdom without the Cross:

Here is a very subtle attack. It was the deity of Christ who created the world. It will be Jesus Christ who will rule the world in the Millennium Age.

Satan makes a legitimate offer of the world, Satan is the prince, the ruler, the god of this world.

An offer that says take it now, the easy way, why go through the pain of sacrifice, of dying for the sins of man. Forget man, you can rule them right now.

But then Jesus commands Satan to GO!

And again uses the weapon of the Word of God:

Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20, "Thou shall worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve."

THE VICTORY:

Satan leaves and angels come to minister to the humanity of Christ. Beautiful in the Greek: "And behold, angels approached and ministered to him."

IN THE TEMPTATIONS WE SEE JESUS TEMPTED IN THREE AREAS and resisting temptation by three weapons available to every believer

a. Relationship with the Holy Spirit, Mt 4:1-4.

b. Relationship with the Word of God, Mt 4:5-7.

c. Relationship with the plan of God, Mt 4:8-10.

IN EACH TEMPTATION JESUS used a weapon of warfare that would be given to the Church:

He depended upon the power of the Holy Spirit to sustain him physically; we depend upon the Holy Spirit to sustain us in all things.

He trusted in the Word of God in His soul as we must know the Word, direct our faith to the Word, and trust in the Word.

He made a right decision regarding the plan of God. He chose the Cross and the Kingdom - just as in our decision making we must chose the Cross for salvation and then:

Matthew 6:33, " Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

As Mark writes of the Savior he is presenting stories about the earthly ministry of Christ. He is not complete nor comprehensive but selective as he paints a portrait of the Ruler who has come to Serve and the Servant who will Rule.

Between the times of verses 13 and 14 in the first chapter of Mark, we have a break of more than a year, about 15 months, during which time Jesus ministered in Judea and near Jerusalem.

Mark 1:14

Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,

Upon reading this you may think that Jesus was going off to a safer haven - but that is just the opposite of what he was doing.

John the Baptizer had been imprisoned and would later be beheaded by Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. And Herod Antipas was the Tetrarch of Galilee.

Therefore, Jesus did not go north to escape what had happened to John, but rather, went right to the place of the problem.

John had been ministering in Galilee while Jesus was in Judea and it was in Galilee that the Roman ruler of Galilee illegally arrested John.

The RESULT of John's ministry was that he was arrested. But someone else was to come to his street corner in Galilee.

Mark 1:15

And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.

This tells us what Jesus did when he went to Galilee: Jesus went to Galilee and continue to proclaim the same message that John had proclaimed - repent - and believe the Gospel.

Principle: John and Jesus functioned as a team. We see here a principle of teamwork under the direct guidance of God.

Now John and Jesus may have not even seen each other after the time at the Jordan, but God was leading and directing both and their ministries were actually one ministry of proclaiming the Gospel.

God allowed John to be imprisoned and then lead Jesus to pick up where John left off in Galilee.

Application: Christian service, ministry, the exercise of your spiritual gifts, all function in the framework of a team. Sometimes you may have contact with other team members, other times you will not..

At verse 15 we also have a summary of the MESSAGE:

We have in this proclamation two declarations and two commands:

FIRST DECLARATION: The time is fulfilled. The word for time here is significant in that it refers to an epoch of time rather than chronology.

This might be translated the time is right, rather than the time has come.

Conditions existing in the world at that time make it a perfect time for the Messiah to come.

Later on Paul is going to refer to this perfect time in Galatians 4:4 by saying:

... when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

Principle: Proper timing is as essential as proper procedure. Jesus' timing was perfect.

2. SECOND DECLARATION: The Kingdom of God is at hand. Jesus was the Messiah, the king of Israel, and the offer of the kingdom would be made to Israel - but they rejected the king and the kingdom.

John would say of this in John 1:11 That Jesus came unto his own, and his own received him not.

However, from that rejection, the Gospel went forth to the Gentiles and the Church Age began - and well, here we are.

Principle: The lack of expected results should never interfere with proper timing and proper doing.

We may have one result in mind, God may have another - and His plan is far better.

3. FIRST COMMAND: Repent. Prior to belief there must be a change of mind. This is not regret nor is it cleaning up your act. To repent means to have a change of mind.

The people of Galilee had to have a change of mind regarding the Gospel, the truth of God.

For 400 years the people of Judea and Galilee had been forming opinions about God and the Messiah. But now the Messiah was here among them, and many of their opinions were wrong - they need to change their minds.

Application: In like manner today we have a lot of opinion about God, who He is and what He is doing. We need people who are willing to repent, change their minds away from the opinion and to the fact. And that fact is given to us in the next command.

4. SECOND COMMAND: Believe the Gospel. In the Greek text, believing is the verb form of Faith. These concepts are transitive and demand an object.

Believe in something, have faith in something.

That something can be either right or wrong but here the object is given.

Believe in the GOSPEL: The Greek word from which we get Evangelism, EUANGELOS or "good message."

That good message is the same good message we share today, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved.

This was the message of Jesus and this had been the message of John. Now that John was off the field of ministry, Jesus took up where he left off. That is teamwork and that same teamwork exists today as Jesus is off the field of ministry, seated at the Father's right hand, and we take up He left off with the same message.

THAT IS ONE TYPE OF TEAMWORK but in the next five verse we see another type of teamwork. Jesus, in calling his disciples formed a ministry team that would spend the next two years with Him in service and ministry.

Mark 1:16-20

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

And Jesus said to them, Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."

Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

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

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

The calling of the disciples occasions some confusion in the biblical account because of the relating of the various and numerous calls of the disciples.

In John 1 the calling of the disciples was a call to believe in Christ unto salvation

A year later in our passage, we see a call to follow Christ and become his disciples, his students. Here the emphasis is on learning and growth.

In Mark 3 (also Matthew 10 and Luke 6) we have a final call of the Twelve disciples which was a call to ministry.

These three calls of the disciples parallel the three critical decisions that we studied previously, decisions we make for -

SALVATION - GROWTH - MINISTRY

So here in Mark 1 we are seeing a call to growth in Christ as his disciple, as a part of his team.

Here we have the call of Simon (Peter), Andrew his brother, James, and John (writer of Gospel of John and the youngest disciple).

We can observe seven principles in the calling of these disciples:

1. These four were all busy doing their jobs where they were. We are told they were fishermen by trade and they were busy at their trade.

Principle: You must first be busy where you are before you can expect to be busy where you wish to be. Too often we live only looking ahead, we need to be busy right now. Too many people wait on the Lord by doing nothing.

SECOND Principle: When God seeks someone to use for a special mission, he finds the person who is already busy where he is and with what has been entrusted to him.

2. Jesus, who they had already known and traveled with, gave them a short precise order:

Come after me - DEUTE OPIOW, Join with me, stay with me

Principle: Our orders in the Christian way of life are not complex but precise - stick with the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. With the orders Jesus gave them a promise.

I will make you to become fishers of men.

Jesus related a future promise to them in terms that they understood, fishing. The use of the two verbs indicates that this would be a process that would take time. But it will occur:

Principle: The promise was long range but these men saw its value and went with Jesus Christ. There is great promise in following the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

There was no discussion, no committee meeting, no inquiry as to contract or length of service, they knew Jesus Christ and that was all that mattered.

They left a very profitable business for a greater prophet, Jesus Christ.

Principle: They put the spiritual opportunity of being with Jesus Christ over and above everything else. They immediately grabbed the opportunity.

5. With James and John we see two fishermen by trade who are not fishing. They are mending nets.

Principle: James and John saw the value of proper preparation and of taking care of what they already had.

Spiritually, Jesus in calling them would make them menders of people.

That same word for mending nets is used for the ministry of the word in Ephesians 4:12

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

6. James and John left their father Zebedee to follow Jesus:

Principle: They put family and the profits of business all secondary to being with Jesus Christ.

They left family for a royal family. In Mark 3:32-35 the mother of Jesus along with his brothers and sisters sought him and he responded by saying -

Who is my mother, or my brethren? For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

7. The last principle looks at the ones left behind. James and John left the hired servants in the boat.

Principle: Being a follower of Christ is not a job you are hired to, no hired servants but willing followers, disciples of Jesus Christ.

The call of Peter and Andrew, James and John began the formation of a team that would eventually number twelve.

These were called and chose to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, but not everyone who was called chose to follow him.

Matthew 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

Just as there were three calls extended to the disciples Jesus Christ extends three calls to us:

A call to Salvation

A call to Growth

A call to Service.

Mark 1:21

They went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach.

In previous verses we saw that Jesus, more than a year into his public ministry, was beginning to put together a ministry team. He called Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

Between verse 20 and 21 we have a number of things that happened over a period of weeks that are recorded in other Gospels: e.g., the sermon on the mount, the call of some of the other disciples, and the reason Jesus and his ministry team moved

on to Capernaum, his rejection at his home town of Nazareth at which time he said a prophet is not without honor except in his own town and among his own people.

The loss to Nazareth would be a tremendous gain to Capernaum, a city where Jesus would spend more time than any other city, a place of more miracles, more parables, more teaching than anywhere else.

In ancient Israel, the people of God gathered for worship on the Sabbath, Saturday morning.

The Talmudic Rabbis had taught the people to hurry to the synagogue taking brisk steps and return home slowly, taking leisurely steps. The Rabbis had a lot to say about conduct during the Sabbath and the people's attendance at the Synagogue.

During the time that God was not sending Prophets to speak to his people, the whole concept of the Rabbis and the synagogue arose.

The initial idea was good: An established place where people could come and learn the Word of God from men who had dedicated their lives to teaching . . .

But as with many things, man's viewpoint soon entered in and the synagogue service became regulated, complex, and empty.

MEN LOVE TO CONTROL, TO INFLUENCE, to regulate. Even in Jesus' day men could not stand the simplicity of the synagogue. One way to control was to add superfluous activity and order to the service.

Soon formal prayers were introduced, prayers written by men Next, someone wrote a Jewish creed and that became mandatory. No less than six benedictions eventually became part of the service. And then the concluding eulogies spoken every week the same way

In addition to control through regulation and formality, there was also control through complexity. Make the service so complex that nothing was really accomplished and no real teaching ever went forth.

No less than seven men would be called upon to read portions of the Law and the Prophets. This was followed by a message but usually given by a scribe or a distinguished visitor. In both Matthew

and Mark we read about teaching that is described as the Scribes taught.

How did the Scribes teach, well, certainly not with authority. They would give the opinion of others regarding a certain passage. Often these opinions would number into the hundreds. This Rabbi says this - that Rabbi says that, and so on and so on.

After the message the congregation could ask questions, and we will see in Mark 1 what happens during this question and answer period.

Is there something similar today in which God's people are gathering together on a weekly basis to engage in some complex type of activity where formality and opinion dilute the truth that is found in Jesus Christ?

THE CHURCH, it has been said, has become many things today. It has become a place of meeting where friends gather to meet with friends. It has become a social club where people who reject the normal conventions of social activity find a refuge. A place for ball, bingo, and other games. The church has become a place to put young people when you do not want them on the streets. It has become an organization with all its attending power struggles, petty controls, and machinations. The church has become a news service an opinion market where views are assimilated and speculation is promoted. Indeed the church has become so many things it has lost what it was intended to be - the simple place where Christians gather to learn God's word and worship their heavenly father.

The synagogue of Israel had also lost its simplicity and now it was many things but no longer a place of true worship and learning.

Mark 1:22

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

It is into that situation that Jesus was to come one Sabbath day and as one who was already well known, he was invited to take the place normally held by the scribes and read and comment on the Scriptures.

We are not told what he taught, but we are told that he taught: The Greek word in our passage means an extended discourse, not merely a proclamation. The tense is imperfect so we see that

he taught for a period of time. While we are not told of the content we are told of the reaction:

We actually have two reactions: First, a reaction from the congregation of the synagogue which is found in verse 22 and again in verse 27. Secondly, we have the reaction of one man who is possessed by a demon, his story is found in verses 23 through 26.

When something, anything is perceived by the senses, you have one of two actions you can take. You can either react or you can respond.

Reaction means to act against, to engage in an opposing action. When a problem comes you can fight it, you can run away, you can go into panic. These actions of fight, flight, and fear are reactions.

With response we deal with the situation perceived. We don't run away, we don't panic, we don't fly off the handle and try to solve our problems with a fight.

When respond we use what is available in our souls to deal with the situation.

Now there are some things in life that demand a reaction. We are told to flee sin, that is a reaction. we are told to flee Satan and his systems of evil, we are told to run from anything that would take us away from our relationship with our Savior Christ Jesus.

But most things in life require a response, and that does not mean to go along with it but to deal with the problems and the tests of life (whether they might be people or situations or systems) and deal with them by thinking, by using the doctrine in our souls.

The word for **astonished** is a very strong word that means to be struck with amazement. To be shocked at what was heard.

The tremendous power and authority of the Lord and His word struck these people with amazement.

The impact was partly due to the fact that they had never heard anything like this before. They were accustomed to the droning of the scribes giving this opinion and that.

The one thing that they noticed above everything else was that he taught:

As one that had authority and not as the scribes.

The Authority With Which Christ taught came from two sources:

1. His authority was delegated to him by the Father in heaven who has sent His only begotten Son into the world
2. His authority was delegated to him by the Word of God which he taught.

We as Christians have the same authority delegated to us. We have the authority of the Father who has left us in the world as ambassadors of His Son. And whenever we use the Word of God, any promise, precept, principle, we can do so with authority.

The scribes never did this, they gave opinion or thoughts that were shared. Here was for the first time the very delegated authority of God in their midst.

Notice also what struck them with amazement: His Doctrine:

This is the noun form of "teaching" and means "a statement of belief consisting of formulated teaching."

In other words, Jesus did not just teach from the heart, he formulated his message through preparation.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

But to be amazed, to be astonished, to even be impressed with that which was different is not belief, or faith, or receiving the teaching into the soul.

You see we have this astonishment in an imperfect tense and that means that it was only for a time, but soon the time past, the astonishment faded . . . and it was back to old system.

Principle: Unless the Word that is taught, the message that is given effects you as much on Monday morning as it did on Sunday morning, you astonishment is a mere reaction, imperfect, and fades with time.

Consistency, persistence, endurance are all factors that accompany response rather than reaction

There was one man in the synagogue that had a more extreme reaction than the others.

Mark 1:23

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

Notice the possessive pronoun, their synagogue.

This indicates that this man was not a regular member of the Capernaum synagogue.

He is said to have an unclean spirit.

This man was inhabited by a demonic spirit, a demon.

The man was an unbelieving Jew who was possessed by a demon. Demons were at one time angelic beings who sided in a revolt against Satan and fell from the grace and protection of God.

In Jesus' day and now they are Satan's army and they can possess a person.

Movies such as The Exorcist and other creeper features give the idea that people who are demon possessed are always foul and unclean, their heads can turn around, are physically abnormal.

But this man was just sitting in the synagogue, no physical or emotional abnormalities until he heard Jesus teaching doctrine with authority.

Then the man, controlled by the demon, screamed out.

He could take the redundant rhetoric of the scribes giving the various opinions but he could not handle the teaching of doctrine with authority.

Principle: Some people have told me that doctrinal teaching makes them uncomfortable. Some people have walked out of a Bible class when the word is taught as with authority. They are numbering themselves with this demon possessed man.

Mark 1:24

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

The first intelligible thing out of the man's mouth is an insult.

Like asking What do we have in common. But then addressing him with a title of derision, Jesus of Nazareth.

Not Jesus of God, but Jesus of Nazareth.

Remember that shortly prior to this Jesus had been

rejected by the people of Nazareth. This looks at him as did the people in his home town, as the son of Mary, a carpenter.

In the KJV it appears that he asks a question but this is more of a statement in which he tells the facts, the reason Jesus has come to earth.

You are come to destroy us, I know who you are, you are the Holy One of God.

This demon was attempting to show superiority over Christ by way of knowledge.

Jesus time to destroy sin and Satan would be at the Cross as our Lord often said, His time had not yet come.

He was unfolding his purpose and his plan. This demon goes right to the heart of the purpose of Christ.

Mark 1:25

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be quiet, and come out of him!

There are two words for rebuke used in the New Testament. One means a rebuke that leads to a desired result, a change of mind. The other word, used here, refers to a rebuke that does not lead to a conviction of sin, a change of mind.

Satan and his fallen crew are incorrigible, they refuse to be convicted of their rebellion, there is no repentance or changing of mind.

Hold thy peace, translators see this as being very close to the idiom we have, shut your mouth.

The rebuke was strong and it was from one who had the very authority of God and the authority of the Word.

When our Lord command the demon to come out, the demon had to leave the man. This is commonly termed exorcism, the expunging of a daemon from possessing a human being.

DEMONS DO NOT LIKE THIS - not only do they lose control of another one of God's creatures but also they are from that moment on incarcerated in Tartarus.

Tartarus is referred to in 2 Peter 2:4 and is the temporary abode or hell for demons prior to their eternity in the Lake of Fire.

So this demon was on his way, very quickly, to hell.

Mark 1:26

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

There was a physical reaction. And he shouted with a loud voice. This is not the same as we had back in verse 23.

Here we have a screech, a death cry, that droned on and on.

This is a participle which means it went along with the exorcism and resulted from the demons knowledge of what was in store for him.

We have the misplaced idea that Satan and his demons reside in Hell or that they rule in Hell. A philosopher once said it was that it would be better to rule in hell than serve in heaven.

WRONG: Even Satan will not be ruling in hell. Hell is outer darkness, isolation, fire and pain, and it lasts for ever.

If the unbeliever knew, as did this demon, that eternity for them was hell, every unbeliever who died would do so with a loud scream that would go on and on until death came.

But a believer, can face death with a smile on his face and hope, assurance, in his soul. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

Mark 1:27,28

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

Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee.

What has just happened has given these people in Capernaum something else to deal with. Will they react or respond?

Again they reacted with amazement:

They questioned among themselves ...

In a synagogue service the speaker would take questions from the congregation. These people could have asked questions to the Lord himself, but instead they preferred to debate it among themselves.

This is total subjectivity, when the source of truth is standing right in front of you and you would rather get in a debate with others as ignorant as you . . . that goes beyond ignorance to stupidity.

Here were their topic for debate:

1. What new doctrine is this: I have never heard it before so it must not be true.
2. What is this man's authority: Where did he go to school, what degrees does he have, which Rabbis have approved of him?
3. He commands the demons and they obey HIM: HIM is a dative of advantage and in this question these men are making a subtle implication that he may be in charge of demons.

That is exactly what i mean by reacting rather than responding!

Subjectivity, reaction, arrogance even today refuse to come to the source of truth, the Word of God, for answers.

Life is going to full of things that you will not understand, that be confusing, that seem at odds with much of what you might have thought was true - are you going to react or respond.

Are you going to come to that source of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding that is the Bible, the Word of God, the mind of Christ?

In verses 29 through 39 of Mark's Gospel we have the writer presenting us with Christ's ministry in Galilee.

This section begins with the wide spread ministry of miracles that our Lord engaged in and - it ends with a very curious statement by our Lord regarding his true purpose.

Mark 1:29-31

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

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

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

And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

Now the custom of the day was for family and friends to gather after the morning spent at the Synagogue.

Here, Jesus and four of his disciples went to Peter's home. Peter's mother and law was the matriarch of the house.

An interesting note, Peter had a mother-in-law. Now the last time I checked, you had to have a wife in order to have a mother-in-law.

Peter, as well as some of the other disciples were married. We are told in Luke 8:1-3 that a number of women traveled in the company of Jesus and some of these would have been the wives of the disciples.

In I Corinthians 9:5 we read that Paul stated: *Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Peter?*

So Peter was married which is rather strange in that the Roman church ended up making him a celibate pope.

The meal that was to be eaten was not prepared on the Sabbath day but on Friday. It was the honor for the leading lady of the home who prepared the meal to serve the meal especially when guests were present.

However, in this case, Peter's wife's mother was ill, she is said to have a fever which would have made her very weak and unable to follow the protocol, the manners, the customs of the day.

Jesus took her by the hand, and lifted her up and immediately she was healed.

And then she served or ministered the meal to them.

Now there are three types of miracles of our Lord in the Bible:

1. Miracles in nature: These demonstrate that Jesus is all powerful even over creation.
2. Casting out of Demons: These miracles demonstrate that Jesus is sovereign over even the forces of Satanic evil
3. The Healing of Illness and Disease: 20 of the 35 recorded miracles of Christ were of this type.

In these miracles, even the simple one described here, we see a parallel. What the infirmed person was physically, we are spiritually.

We too lay sick, and weak with a fever of unbelief, lack of faith, lack of trust in the Savior who has done everything for us - we need the touch of the Master's hand.

Then we can do exactly what Peter's wife's mother did. We can be made well spiritually and then we can serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

NOW ON THIS FIRST SABBATH IN Capernaum Jesus has preformed two miracles, cast a demon out of a man in the synagogue and then healed a woman who was ill with a fever.

Mark 1:32-34

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

And the whole city had gathered at the door.

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

The News of Christ's Miracles was Spreading

We are given two time words here: When the evening had come, the sun had set -

Since it was the Sabbath, the people of Capernaum waited until sundown to come to Peter's home.

The Law forbade working on the Sabbath and the Rabbinical law forbade carry a burden on the Sabbath. So they waited until the Sabbath ended which was at sundown.

All the city was at the door of Peter's home. They had either seen Jesus in the synagogue that morning or they had heard the stories of the miracles this man from Nazareth could perform.

As he healed those who were sick he also cast out demons from those who had been possessed.

Mark is very careful, as are the other Gospel writers to make illness and demon possession two separate categories. Even then, as now, some were teaching that all illness and infirmity was due to demons.

As he expelled the demons we are told, He did not allow them to speak because they knew Him.

Reasons:

1. The attestation of Jesus as the Messiah, the holy one of God was not to come from the mouth of the enemy - it would be Peter who would first see that Jesus was the Messiah.

2. Jesus' plan and purpose was the Cross. He was revealing his purpose step by step to the positive believers. He did not need demonic interruption.

A number of times, especially in John's gospel we read about Jesus telling others that his time had not yet come. These demons could have encroached upon our Lord's proper timing for his ministry.

3. Also, the demons could have very easily lie about Christ and mislead the people. They could have given a slanderous sermon about Christ.

But Christ did not give them the chance. And this even further demonstrates his power and authority over all forces even forces of evil.

That Sabbath day in Capernaum ends with Jesus in the limelight of popularity. Many people were present, the city gathered around him, he was the center of attention.

Mark 1:35-39

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

Simon and his companions searched for Him;

they found Him, and said to Him, Everyone is looking for You.

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

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

He went away alone to pray.

The writer Mark presents us with Jesus at prayer three times in his Gospel. Here, towards the beginning of the account, once towards the middle (Mark 6:46) and then a third time towards the end of the Gospel (Mark 14:32-42).

The common thread of each time Mark talks about Jesus alone and at prayer is that every time our Lord was faced with a decision to make regarding the fulfilling of his mission.

Each time there was a choice as to which road to take, an path with less cost, easier, more attractive -or- a path less traveled.

Think in terms of the humanity of Christ:

He had been rejected in Nazareth, and yet here in Capernaum he was the man of the hour. He had been terribly abused in Judea, but here in Capernaum people flocked to his door.

It would have been very easy to stay in Capernaum but in these early morning hours of prayer he communed with his heavenly Father and the answer became very clear.

I am sure that Simon, who is Peter, could not understand why the Lord was out here in the wilderness when so many people in Capernaum were trying to find him.

The people of Capernaum were seeking Christ - he just had to go back to Capernaum.

But look at his response:

And he said unto them, let us go somewhere else, neighboring town -

Now that would have thrown them. But they did not know that in those early hours of prayer, Jesus had an answer to prayer. An answer that was right there all the time.

On thing about getting away and praying - You sometimes learn the things you knew all along. It just takes some time alone, in prayer, to get them up to memory center.

As Jesus was in Prayer he came to a decision.

Purpose is more important than popularity !!!!

The Lord Jesus Christ was almost distracted from his true purpose. The miracles of the prior day gave rise to Jesus' popularity in Capernaum. If he had gone back to the city at that time, the whole population would have greeted and welcomed him. He could have been the chief rabbi, the president of the synagogue, the man of the hour.

But what would have been the reason for this popularity and acceptance - his miracles of healing Remember, the people came to Jesus the evening of the Sabbath with their sick and their infirmed.

In his compassion he healed them, but that was not his purpose in coming to mankind -

His purpose is stated in verse 38:

That I may proclaim, preach, for it is for this [purpose] I came forth.

This verse tells us things about Christ:

He was not to be distracted by even those activities of ministry which to some all important. Healing the sick is a very wonderful thing to do, especially if you had the power our Lord had or the power that was given to the apostles prior to the completion of the Bible.

But healing the sick was not the purpose for which Christ came - he came to proclaim the truth.

While the people were impressed with the healing, that was not what they should have been impressed with. They got the method before the message. Two parts of the fatal flaw of arrogance were in view:

1. They put the man above the message. The whole city was seeking Christ but not for his teaching - for his miracles.
2. They put the method above the message. They focus in on the act of healing rather than what the act of healing demonstrated - that all are spiritually sick.

Parallel:

The people of Capernaum were much like people today. Today Christians make the mistake of putting the man or his method before the message.

I Corinthians 1:27-29 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Principle: Every time a man stands to proclaim the truth of God you are given a test - will it be the man, the method, or the message.

The people of Capernaum were subjective and shallow, they wanted their infirmities healed, their friends made physically whole and they could not

see below the surface to the spiritual truth that Jesus' presented.

So what did Jesus do - he left Capernaum

The second thing we see in Jesus' decision was that he was Mission Oriented. He did not allow the flattery of popularity to deter him from his purpose.

The people wanted him back, his disciples hunted him down and were telling if to take advantage of the opportunity, go back to Capernaum - all men are seeking you.

But Jesus Christ was oriented to his mission. He knew what his purpose was and he would see it through to the end.

During his earthly ministry, Jesus Christ was heavily criticized by some of the people and abundantly complimented by others.

The compliments fell into two categories, compliments of the man and the method, compliments on the message,

The same two categories are found today. Any compliment taken seriously regarding the man or the method is totally superfluous, dispensable, and non-essential.

In acting one of the greatest occupational hazards is to begin to believe your critics. In your ministry the same thing could be said, are you going to believe your critics, whether they are making you the hero - or the goat.

Pastors today must be Mission Oriented, but it doesn't just end with the Pastors. Every Christian must be Mission Oriented.

There is a reason you have been left upon this earth and that purpose is spiritual growth, then ministry. You are on a mission, but so many are not oriented to that mission.

Let's look at some lessons we can learn from this passage:

1. Proper decisions solve difficult problem. Jesus faced a very difficult choice, remain in Capernaum. Be the man of the hour, have many people coming to him - or leave.
2. Prayer must precede proper decision making. Prayer is not the solution, but prayer sets up the solution which is the decision you make.

Proper decision making is part of prayer pursuit and in the pursuit of your prayers God can give you the information upon which to make a decision.

3. You can only make a decision based upon the information at hand and God alone can supply accurate information.

When Jesus was alone praying he was asking the Father what he should do, remain in Capernaum, will the people there be turned from the miracles to the message.

But then Peter, Andrew, James, and John hunted him down and the first words out of their mouths because the additional accurate information he needed.

All men are seeking you. Not his message but they are seeking the man for his method of miracles.

In leaving Capernaum for other towns, he made the choice for the more difficult over the more easy.

It would have been easy, comfortable, convenient to stay in Capernaum - but it also would have been a distraction.

Lesson: Sometimes it is the road less traveled that is right. If we are oriented to our mission (purpose in life) the distractions of life, even those closely associated with our mission, we not deter us.

Lesson: The best defense against distraction is knowing where you are going. Jesus knew his purpose, he came to proclaim the truth. When he said this he had already made the decision not to go back to Capernaum at this time (although he will later go back). But he gives this not as a command to his disciples, but as a potential for them to go with Him.

LET US GO is a subjunctive mood verb. Jesus knew what he would do and he was going to do it but did not presume upon these others - they could have decided to stay in Capernaum.

Lesson: If you are right, even if you are only one, you are a majority. Jesus was right and whether or not his disciples went with him or not would not deter his decision.

Final lesson: When Jesus stated his purpose he said, "That I may proclaim ..."

Again we have a subjunctive mood of potential.

Jesus knew what awaited him in Capernaum, popularity, acclaim, people following him - but as he looked ahead to the ministry he would have in other towns, he look at only a possibility.

Remember, He had preached in Nazareth, and there his own people threw him out of town.

What was ahead for Christ - he did not know but he knew his purpose was right, he knew his decision was right, and he knew that whatever tomorrow held, his Father's plan was perfect.

Lesson: The potential of his purpose was not presumed even by Christ. But he put all the potential, all the possibilities, into the hands of God.

And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out demons.

The demons can never stand the preaching of the truth so that aspect of his ministry was to continue.

Mark 1:40

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

We have seen our Lord make the decision to leave Capernaum and go to neighboring towns to proclaim the message of truth.

This decision was made as a response to the people of Capernaum and their distraction by the miracles of healing Jesus preformed in their town.

One of the great problems of ministry and indeed one of the great problem of life is distraction. Distraction takes us away from that goal that we set out to accomplish. Distraction puts us into the arena of failure rather than success. Distraction is forces us to settle for second best when God's highest and best was just within reach.

Distractions come in every size and in every form. From those things that the Bible would consider sin to those things that are legitimate, those things in which we would see no harm.

The stories that appear to be the main emphasis of these beginning chapters of Mark are not really the critical portions of the passage. The events in the Capernaum synagogue, the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, the healing of the leper, which we

will examine next, are not as germane to the portrait that Mark is painting as are the events that occur in between.

The popularity of Jesus in Capernaum, the hoards of people that came to Jesus for healing, Jesus going off alone to pray, the purist of his disciples and His very important and almost contradictory decision to not go back to Capernaum but to go to other towns - for he came to proclaim.

This tells us something about life, it is often not the big events that shape our futures but the small sometimes insignificant decisions that we make.

F.W. Borman said: We make our decisions and then our decisions turn around and make us.

For the Lord Jesus Christ the decisions were always right even when we see them resulting in not so right situation. The decisions he made tell us how important decisions are. And the distractions to his ministry by the people that gathered around him tell us how easily it is for us to be distracted from the true importance of life and ministry.

Two of the recorded miracles of the Lord dealt with the cleaning of leprosy. However, a number of passages indicate that many more lepers were healed by the Lord of this dreaded disease.

Leprosy today is not the same disease we have described in the Bible. In 1873 a Norwegian physical named Hansen discover the bacillus that is common to what we call leprosy today, also now called Hansen's disease. It is not a contagious disease but the leprosy described in the Bible was a contagious disease and required isolation and separation.

NOW THE LORD had not been healing people but this man apparently had heard what the Lord had done in Capernaum and came to him.

Beseeching him and falling on his knees saying to him, if you are willing you have the power given to you to cleanse.

The mood of this moment is very dramatic:

Jesus was teaching, perhaps in the streets, not in a synagogue (the leper would never have gotten in), there are others around and through the crowd, perhaps wrapped in his robe with head covered comes this leper and addresses the Lord.

The fear of the contagious was so real that the Law of Moses given by God specified in Leviticus 13 that the person with leprosy would be expelled from the camp of Israel. They were not to come into contact with anyone. They lived out their lives in what has commonly been called a leper colony.

But here is an outcast, a leper in a city, in a crowd, and coming up to Jesus.

This was a very bold step.

He no doubt heard that Jesus was nearby, that he had healed others of physical maladies. Should he go to this man who speaks the very words of God, dare he live the outcast commune and go into a village risking life and limb if discovered?

Not only did he have the boldness to seek out the Lord he also had the confidence that Jesus had the power to cleanse him of the disease.

We have a series of present participles: He kept on beseeching him, kept on kneeling before the Lord, kept on saying to him -

Now the contents of his request is built around two verbs followed by an infinitive. I imagine he had thought very carefully about what he would say and what he says is very accurate:

If you are willing: Recognition of his dependence on Christ and Christ's will.

You have been given the power: He recognized that Christ's power was from God, given to Christ.

To cleanse: An infinitive of results, the man knew that if Christ willed to do so he had been given the power to cleanse him of this terrible disease.

The combination of this verb and this infinitive, you have been given the power to cleanse is only uttered by this man who was in the most desperate of situations.

What this phrase tells us is that somehow he had been listening to the message. He accuracy of request goes far beyond that which most of the people were getting:

REMEMBER IN CAPERNAUM: The people were seeking Jesus the one who could heal

BUT THIS MAN WAS seeking the power of God that was in Jesus.

He did not see Christ as a mere miracle worker, he saw Christ in whom was the power of God.

The people that were whole, healthy, wealthy and wise did not yet see what this man saw.

Mark 1:41

Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, I am willing; be cleansed.

The participle for being filled with compassion is from a noun that refers to love within a family, and that is how Jesus looked upon this poor man.

The compassion, the touch, the healing all were a response to what this man said when he so accurately told the Lord what the Lord had the power to do.

If you are willing, you have the power of God in you, to cleanse me.

Principle: Jesus will always respond to our pleas when we are accurate regarding His work and His person.

Mark 1:42

Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

Previously I told you that all the miracles of healing in the physical being were parallels of what we all are in the spiritual being?

Leprosy is what we all have apart from Christ Spiritually.

What was the former condition of this man:

1. The man was in bondage to the physical disease he had.
2. He was an outcast from society
3. In every area of life, physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, he suffered.
4. Under the total depravity of leprosy we can see ourselves under the total depravity of sins

But it was Jesus who decided that he could be clean, who had in him the very power of God to make him clean.

That word that Mark repeats in verses 40-41-42 is the same word that John later uses of us as believers in Christ:

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Principle:

1. As Jesus had the power in Him from God to cleanse this man from leprosy, He had the same power from God to cleanse the sinner from his sins.
2. This man came to the Savior dependant upon him, knowing with confidence that if the Lord was willing he had the power to cleanse.
3. We must also come to the Savior dependant upon Him, having the confidence in Him that he can cleanse us from our sins.
4. As this man did not focus on his disease but rather on the Savior, we must not focus on sin but rather the solution in the Savior.

Our study in Colossians 2:23 has shown us that attempting to deny the flesh of its lusts apart from Christ merely adds fuel those lusts of the flesh.

Mark 1:43

And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away,

In the analogy the man has now been cleansed from his leprosy as we, at salvation, have been cleansed of our sins.

So we might look at these next verse and seek to answer the question - After salvation, what?

Verse 43 is very strong, Jesus was very stern with the man and we are told EXBALLW, threw him out of the crowd and gave him some specific instructions.

The word for sternly admonished means a short, angry statement. The word was also used for the short of horses. This terse statement along with physically putting the man out may seem odd until we realize what the Lord was doing to pursue His purpose:

The enemies of Christ could have easily declared him unclean for his contact with the leper and aroused anger against Him.

We have seen and will see that the populous of Galilee were very distracted by miracles of healing. Unable in their shallow subjectivity to see below the surface of the physical to the spiritual.

giving this man such stern instructions we see the answer to the question, after salvation, what? After salvation Jesus our Lord calls us to obedience.

Mark 1:44

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

Jesus instructed the man to go to the Priests to offer the offering of cleansing required in Leviticus 14:2-32.

Some assume that this meant that the man had to go to Jerusalem but the first part of the cleansing ceremony occurred outside the camp, outside the Temple. There were locally Levitical priests who could begin the process.

The first offering by the way was two birds. One to be slain which looked to Jesus' death upon the Cross and the other to be dipped in the blood mixed with water of the slain bird and then set free.

Picture of the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is where new life would begin for this former outcast and that is where new life begins for us as redeemed sinners.

The man was to do this as a testimony:

The Testimony would be of Christ. In Matthew 7:5 and Luke 7:22 the power to cleanse the leper is an undeniable sign of the Messiah.

If the priests declared the leper clean but rejected the one who healed him, their unbelief would be incriminating evidence against them.

Mark 1:45

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

But there is a problem: Enthusiasm and sincerity becomes the breeding ground for bad decisions that will limit the future options of our Lord.

But he, going out, began to proclaim many things and to spread about the matter.

The initial conjunction of this verse is DE, a light contrast rather than a dramatic contrast.

The light contrast indicates that the man did not totally disobey Christ but only partially. As he was perhaps seeking a priest, he began to talk.

Enough people apparently knew the man and could see that he was no longer in bondage to the terrible disease. As he went, he talked, and then talked even more.

Now look at this man for a moment. Would he purposely intent to in any way harm the one who had just healed him?

Was he acting out of spite or malice? No - but his enthusiasm and sincerity was wrong. He was in disobedience to the Lord Jesus Christ,

Enthusiasm and sincerity are not the issues, whether the man was right or wrong is the issue and he was wrong.

Furthermore, his actions had a damaging effect on the freedom our Lord had to fulfill his purpose of proclaiming the truth.

Remember why Jesus left Capernaum in the first place. The people were distracted by the miracles and were not listening to the message.

Lessons from Mark 1:

1. Jesus Christ was mission oriented: He knew his purpose and rejected the distractions that would have prevented proper fulfillment of his goal.
2. The leper was drawn to Christ by the message: He knew accurately that the power of God was in the humanity of Christ.
3. The Lord was compassionately moved by the man's accurate understanding of doctrine.

Just as he loves it when we accurately understand his Word

4. But by disobeying the Lord and telling others what had happened, he took the emphasis off the message and distracted other who focused on the method.

5. Healing was a legitimate part of the Messiah's ministry but it was not the heart of the ministry. He came to proclaim the truth.

Principle: We must realize that even the legitimate activities that are associated with any ministry are superficial to the purpose of proclaiming the truth that is in Jesus Christ.

6. As a result of the miracles of healing, Jesus had the numbers. Many hundreds and later thousands of people followed him - but as he shifted from miracles, to parables, to proclamations of the truth, the crowds dwindled and when he went to the Cross he was virtually alone save for a few the faithful.

Principle: Many of the things that can be involved in a ministry can draw people, but in our ministries we must not let the superficial become the focal point - we must present Jesus Christ and his word of truth.

Chapter 2

In Mark Chapter One we saw Mark select certain stories about the beginning eighteen months of Jesus' earthly ministry. Mark paints a portrait of the Ruler who came to serve and how he made correct decisions, how he put together a ministry team, and how he dealt with the people who were distracted by his method over his message.

We saw that once you make Right Decision + Form a team with others who have made Right Decisions (a local church) you will be tempted by distraction.

That is why mission orientation is so critical to a local church - knowing our collective purpose which is very clearly described in Acts 2:42.

And they, the early church, continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship.

It is only because of the clear purpose that Jesus had and his mission orientation that he was able to avoid the distraction of popularity.

His miracles were designed to attract and display the power of God.

But instead they distracted the people and He was misunderstood, seen as a miracle worker rather than a communicator of truth.

It is not difficult to understand that Jesus was misunderstood. The same misunderstanding exists today as people view the message of Christ and the Church which served its Savior.

Today the message is not understood, the ministry is not understood - and as in Jesus' day this misunderstanding comes from two sources:

1. Those who view the method or the man above the message and are distracted. With Jesus, it was

his miracles that the shallow and subjective looked at rather than the message of truth.

2. But here in Mark 2 we are introduced to another group who did not understand the Savior. The religious leaders who came out of every quarter to examine the ministry of Jesus.

They brought with them a preconceived opinion regarding what the ministry should be and in their inflexibility they were unwilling to repent in their erroneous opinion.

In the parallel account found in Luke 5:17 we are told that attending the teaching of Christ there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem:

In our passage in Mark 2 we are also told that the ever present scribes were there ready to question, doubt, and reject any ministry that did not conform to their standards.

In these twelve verses we are going to see some FRIENDS, FAITH, FORGIVENESS, and confrontation:

Mark 2:1

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

We are told that following the first preaching tour of Galilee that Jesus returned to the home town of Peter, Andrew, James, and John and other disciples, Capernaum.

He AGAIN entered: This is the Greek PALIN which looks at repetition with a goal in mind.

Jesus had been in Capernaum before. It was there the first jolt of popularity hit him but it was a distracted popularity as the people got involved with the miracles rather than what the miracles taught which was a spiritual truth.

But as an illustration of giving another chance, which is the standard of grace, Jesus came to Capernaum again and he taught the Word.

The same people who weeks before had gathered at Peter's house on a Sabbath evening were there again to see Jesus.

Mark 2:2

And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even

near the door; and He was speaking the word to them.

The custom of the near East is to come over uninvited so while we may see this as an intrusion, it was not considered so in the protocol of the day.

We must see that these people came to see the miracle man, who they had previously sought, but Jesus continue with his purpose which was to proclaim the truth.

The word SPOKE is an imperfect tense of LALEW which means he continue speaking the word to them over a period of time.

The choice Mark had was to use either LALEW or LEGW. Now using LEGW would have put emphasis on the content but by using LALEW he put emphasis on the process to show that he was communicating and not healing the sick.

These many people who came to Peter's house wanted one thing but Jesus was giving them something else.

They had an expectation of what this man from Nazareth should be doing but he was not doing it.

Application: We often predetermine what a ministry should be. We have expectations and when they are not met instead of objectivity we allow subjectivity to rule. And instead of responding, we react.

And in that reaction there is an arrogance of thinking that we and we alone are right rather than depending upon the Word to teach us.

Mark 2:3

And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men

However, in the midst of the message something unusual is going to happen.

Now the palsy is PARALUTIKOS which is our word paralyzed.

He was carried on his mat, a poor man's bed, by four friends.

The construction is that they came (Main Verb) carrying (participle) their friend.

They came ERXOMIA is middle voice but here the benefit was not to themselves, but to their friend.

The word PARALYZED and the word FOUR are both adjectives which look at the state of

helplessness of this paralyzed man and the actions of the four friends.

With the adjective instead of a noun we are drawn to what was going on rather than who these people were.

It will be their actions that will impress the Lord.

Mark 2:4

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

The roof of a house in those days was made of a composition of grass, clay, tiles, and laths.

A staircase would run along the side of a home to the roof which had to be strong enough to support four men carrying a fourth.

Peter never complained about his roof being torn up.

Peter was there and all of a sudden his roof has a hole in it and he is real relaxed about the matter.

Well, these men made a hole in the roof big enough to let down their friend. Since fishing was a major industry in Capernaum they lowered the cot or mat on fishing ropes and there as Jesus was teaching, down comes this paralyzed man and, we assume, his friends jumped in after him.

Mark 2:5

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

Now we see what the Savior did as a response to all this:

The word for FAITH is PISTIS and we have studied before that faith must have an object. Here the object was what they believed Jesus Christ could do for their friend.

It is a feminine noun which means that faith is a response to something else. Here the something else is the belief that Jesus can heal this man.

Principle:

Jesus responded to the faith of the friends. Thus, the four friends and their faith brought blessing by association to the paralyzed man.

You can put yourself in a position between God and those you love to bring divine blessing to

those you love. God will bless and protect others because of his love and compassion for you.

When you pray for others it can be your faith in God and your intercessory prayers that can unleash the power of God in the life of another.

Principle: Faith can be seen by others.

Their actions of carrying their friend, coming to Christ, going up to the roof, tearing the roof away just to get their friend into the presence of Christ was a result or manifestation of their faith, which came from their belief in what Jesus could do.

Topic: Faith

Faith is found in four categories in the Word of God:

Saving faith: This is the unbeliever who has heard the Gospel putting faith in the fact that Christ alone has provided salvation.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

At salvation the object is the finished work of Christ, the God Man who died on the Cross for you.

Faith as the system of truth revealed by God to man. Here, the word faith is equal to doctrine.

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

Galatians 1:23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which once he destroyed.

Even here there is an object because as a Christian we have faith in the author of the Word of God, that it is the very mind of God and thus, not so much a thing as it is a person.

The life of faith: Includes the Faith-Rest Life in which we live by the promises of God and the comfort and encouragement of Faith with which we stand in the Christ Centered Life.

Here is where many are going into error today. They see this faith as a technique with no object and thus a completely subjective, self-centered system.

Example:

We are told that if we have problems, ill health, difficulties in life these can all be erased by our faith. So we say I have faith, but nothing happens. The out is always that we lacked faith.

Sincere Christians are trying to crank up faith to take care of all kinds of problems and situations. They believe they can move mountains because of their faith. And when they can not, they conclude that they lack faith.

Principle:

I do not have a faith that can move mountains, but I do have faith in God who can if He wants move mountains.

Matthew 17:20 talks about a faith that shall move a mountain. Old Rabbinical saying that moving a mountain is life studying the Word of God. One shovel full at a time, do we have the faith that works a patience to move a mountain a shovel full at a time?

When we see faith as a personal achievement that we can have in and of ourselves we make God subject to a technique that we can do or have.

Matthew 8:6-10 The Centurion who had faith in Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Galatians 5:22 Faith is a fruit of the Spirit that grows as your relationship in time with the Lord Jesus grows.

Dead faith: This is faith with no object and is self centered and self-serving.

James 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

James 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

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

Faith, either at salvation, in the Christian way of life, in regards to the Word of God, must never be seen as a subjective, self-centered ability or technique. When we say we have faith we are saying we trust in the object of faith and when the object of our faith is God we then and only then have something worthwhile.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

EIGHT PRINCIPLES ON FAITH:

1. Faith unleashes the omnipotence of God. His divine almighty power.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written (in Habakkuk 2, even in the Old Dispensation), **BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.**

The power of God is available to you but only through faith.

2. Faith is a one-word summary of the Christian Way of Life. Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38 all state *that the just shall live by faith.*

3. Faith is the foundation of Christian Virtue: I Co 13:13

Faith is the first part of the trilogy of *faith, hope, and love* and as your faith grows, so does hope and as hope grows, so does your love.

And on the negative side of this is Romans 14:23 *whatever is not from faith is sin.*

4. Romans 10:17 we find that *Faith increases through study of the Word of God.*
5. Faith is the substance and foundation of our assurance in Jesus Christ.

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

6. Hebrews 11:2 and 6 Faith alone can please God and when God is pleased with you, you are happy and fulfilled.

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

7. Faith Works, it has production in obedience, service and ministry, James 2:14, 17, and 26.

Ephesians 2:8-10 By grace are you saved through faith - created by Jesus Christ unto good works.

8. Faith alone overcomes the world, I John 5:4-5. *You are a winner by a margin of faith.*

BACK TO MARK 2:5

As a result and as a response to their faith, Jesus forgave the sins of this man.

Now that would have been a greater let down than the man just experienced coming from the roof - he and his friends sought healing in the physical realm and all Jesus provided was the forgiveness of sins.

But sins are something that stand between you and God while a physical infirmity stand only between you and your body.

The forgiving of sins is much greater than the healing of a physical problem.

And the physical problem parallels the spiritual condition of all mankind being paralyzed in the bondage of sins.

But the Old Testament never spoke of the Messiah forgiving sins. The Old Testament always put the power to forgive sins into the sovereign domain of God.

A bit of logic:

Only God can forgive sins (II Chron 7:14, Ps 41:4 ff)

Jesus Christ forgave this man's sins

Therefore: Jesus Christ is God

But the religious leaders, rather than allow for that possibility, immediately attacked the Son of God.

We have seen the Friends, their Faith, the Forgiveness, and now we have the confrontation.

Notice: They reason in their hearts (or souls) but they do not ask Jesus any questions. It will be the Lord who will inquire of them rather than they of the Lord.

On our first visit to Capernaum with the Lord we saw the men of the synagogue debate among themselves rather than ask the Lord any questions.

Here, subjectivity and arrogant pride, has caused these scribes to reason in their souls rather than ask a question of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reason: When you ask a question you have to admit you do not know understand or do not know something. And in our culture we have developed a false sense of pride thinking that if we ask a question we are displaying stupidity -

But we are only ignorant when we have not been provided the opportunity to get understanding. Whereas we are indeed stupid when we have the opportunity and yet reject it.

Principle: These scribes and religious leaders just crossed from ignorance to stupidity. If they would have asked a few questions and been teachable they could have crossed the barrier between ignorance and enlightenment -

Mark 2:6-12

In the frigid waters of the N. Atlantic there are countless icebergs, some little and some gigantic. If you'd observe them carefully, you'd notice that sometimes the small ice floes move in one direction while their massive counterparts flow in another. The explanation is simple. Surface winds drive the little ones, whereas the huge masses of ice are carried along by deep ocean currents.

People are very much like those icebergs, some people are driven and moved by what is on the surface. The shifting winds that change from moment to moment. They are pushed through life and Paul said tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. Others are like the large icebergs which respond and are guided by the deep and consistent ocean currents. Sometimes going directly against the ever changing winds.

In Mark, chapter 2 we see these two types of people. Those who are effected by the winds of chance and change and are tossed about and the

ones who are moved by the more powerful force, the deep current of the message of Jesus Christ.

In the previous verses we saw four men, who for the sake of their friend, tore up Peter's roof to lower their friend into the presence of the Savior.

Their tenacity, which was an expression of their faith in what they had heard about Christ, impressed our Savior.

Application: Would we tear off the roof to get ourselves to Bible class, to get a friend to Bible class?

We are told that Jesus saw their faith - The humanity of Christ was impressed and moved by their actions. He, no doubt was humored by their actions also.

This is a very funny scene. The Lord Jesus is teaching and the roof comes up and down comes this paralyzed man and his friends jump in after him.

They were men who were driven by the deep currents of the truth that was in Christ. They heard Christ was back in Capernaum, they persisted, they sought him out, all for the sake of their friend. They are big icebergs driven by deep currents.

And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, child, your sins are forgiven.

Their faith in Christ was going to bring blessing to their friend:

But, here we have what may have first seemed to be a let down. Jesus did not heal the man, instead he said:

Child, your sins are forgiven -

Jesus addressed the man as *TEKNON* which is a word that relates mankind to their birth, as part of the human race and thus, as one born under sin.

Sins stand between God and man, it will be Jesus Christ at the Cross who will take care of that barrier of sins.

While the man has a physical problem of paralysis, he is spiritually paralyzed by sins, as is the entire human race.

What Jesus did in being the proclaimer and the very means by which sins are forgiven is much greater than the healing of any physical infirmity.

But man lives in the physical, the temporal, the eternal, so this would have seemed at first to be less than what was expected by this man and his friends.

FORGIVENESS is the word AFIJMI and as early as the days of Homer meant the release of actual or legal control over a person.

In the New Testament, it has two dimensions:

1. Forgiveness of sins, as accomplished by Jesus Christ upon the Cross
2. Then acceptance because of this forgiveness

Principle: Jesus Christ died for all sins, all mankind are forgiven because of the Cross. But they do not recognize nor accept that forgiveness and are not accepted into the divine Royal Family of Christ.

When Jesus said: Child, your sins are forgiven, he was both forgiving his sins and accepting him as a child of God.

Application: God has done that for you and that is far greater than anything in the physical, temporal, external realm of life.

Here is Jesus telling this man he is solving a problem that he has that is even greater than his physical paralysis.

Mark 2:6

But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,

But now this becomes a point of contention for the small icebergs who are blown about by surface winds.

In other passages we are told that some of these scribes were Pharisees and teachers of the Law.

Mark is writing to Gentiles and simplifies the complex religious hierarchy of Israel.

Last week we saw this section revolving around friends, faith, forgiveness, and confrontation. Here is the confrontation.

The religious leaders now see an opening for confrontation, they had just been waiting for the opportunity to attack:

Now, the Old Testament never says that the Messiah will forgive sins. That is something God the Father does. In retrospect we can see that the Messiah is the Lamb of Isaiah 53 and that the Lamb of God takes away sins but the religious

leaders would have had to have faith to understand that.

We are told that they "reasoned in their hearts ..."

But they did not reason very well. If they had they would have come up with this:

1. Only God can forgive sins
2. Jesus just forgave this man's sins
3. Jesus must be God -

That would have been right reasoning, but that also requires thinking, and it requires faith.

Remember back at the Capernaum Synagogue on that Sabbath Day when Jesus cast the demon out of the man. The religious leaders could have asked him questions, but they did not.

Well, here we have a repeat. These men could have questioned Jesus, but that would have indicated that they did not understand something or did not know something.

So in their arrogance of ignorance, they attacked that which they did not understand.

Principle: These religious leaders just cross over from ignorance to stupidity. Ignorance is fine, ignorance says you do not know and you need information. Stupidity is having the information available, yet remaining in ignorance, that is stupidity.

All of us enter the Christian way of life ignorant, but some go on to enlightenment while others go on to arrogant stupidity

Mark 2:7

"Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"

They accuse Jesus of speaking blasphemies: Which is slander against God.

The interesting thing that demonstrates their pettiness is that their complaint is not even valid:

1. In the Old Testament, blasphemy, which is the Hebrew NA-ATS, is never associated with saying that sins are forgiven.
2. At the time of Christ, there were many second rate Rabbis running around saying the same thing, you sins are forgiven.

BUT THESE MEN decide to nit-pick.

Principle: If a person is negative to the truth of God, they will find a reason to attack. They have to major in the minors to do it, but they will find something and if not, they will stretch a point or make something up.

Mark 2:8

Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?"

And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

Here we see that Jesus knew what they were thinking. This was by divine revelation from deity.

Remember that Jesus set aside the independent use of this divine attributes, but at times the Father allowed him to use his attributes, here is one of those times.

Knowing is EPIGINWSKW, A full understanding.

Jesus brings to light what had been going on in the hearts of these men.

Mark 2:9

"Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?"

So he turn to them and says: Why reason ye these things in your hearts? What is it easier to say to the paralyzed man, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

Do you know what this is? It is a trick question, whatever they answer is going to get them in a bind.

The reason it is a trick question is that it is dealing on two levels, the spiritual level of sins and the need for forgiveness and the physical level of paralysis and healing.

The most difficult thing to do is to forgive sins, but it is the easiest to say. The easier thing to do is heal a physical paralysis, but it is visible and therefore provable.

But our Lord is going to validate the forgiveness of sins and his acceptance of this man by that which is easier to do but provable:

He will heal the man, he will rise up, take his bed, and walk.

Mark 2:10

But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, He said to the paralytic,

Here we have an editorial parenthetical in the first portion of this verse. Mark speaks to his readers:

But that you (that is the reader, us) may know that the Son of man has the power to forgive sins on earth -

Then we go back to the historical account: He said to the paralyzed man -

Mark 2:11

I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home.

"I say to you": Followed by three commands:

Rise, take your bed, and go to your house.

The forgiveness of sins that was declared in verse 5, questioned in verses 6-9, is now validated in verse 11.

Jesus will validate the spiritual by way of the physical, as this man was paralyzed by sins and was set free by Christ, he was also paralyzed physically and was physically set free by Christ.

When Jesus said Go to your house, he used UPAGW _which means to withdraw oneself as in a final departure.

Jesus was really issuing an order for the man not to follow him as a part of his team. As we have seen in the past, the Lord knew that people would be distracted by the miracles and if this man had stayed with Christ he would have attracted unnecessary attention to the miracles.

We are told that the man obeyed Christ, he rose up, took his bed, and walked away -

Here is a picture of the world paralyzed in sins: Christ has offered healing by way of forgiveness, but we must do as this man did - we must get up and that takes faith.

If you have ever been injured, taken a fall, ended up flat on your back, or perhaps after surgery, you

are afraid to move, you lie very still - and that is where most of the world is, even most believers.

Not having the faith to rise up, knowing you are no longer in the paralyzing grip of sins.

This man did as we must all do - he rose up.

Mark 2:12

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

Having declared forgiveness, having forgiveness questioned, and then validating forgiveness, the people now recognized the forgiveness of sins:

So that they were all astonished and should have glorified God saying: Jesus is the Christ, he is God, the Messiah

But that is not what they said: "We have never seen anything like this before."

Principle: Their astonishment was not over the truth, it was not the deep unchanging currents that moved them, it was the winds that toss to and fro, they only perceived that which was on the surface.

This is the first of five confrontations with the religious leader that Mark selects as he works towards the revelation of a plot by the Pharisees and Herodians to kill the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. Mark 2:1-12, healing of a paralytic
2. Mark 2:13-17, controversy over ritual law
3. Mark 2:18-22, dispute over fasting
4. Mark 2:23-28, controversy over Sabbath law
5. Mark 3:1-6, Sabbath healing of man with withered hand

These disputes begin here and end with a plot to kill the Lord.

So let's look at six lessons we can learn from Mark 2:1-12

1. Truth taught demands a response:

If the Word of God is taught as it should be taught it will convict, it will force a decision, it will demand a response.

2. The right response to truth is Faith:

For the friends the response was one of faith:

And their faith was rewarded, their fiend was forgiven of his sins, accepted by Christ, and healed.

3. The wrong response to truth is Rejection:

For the religious leader, their response as a reaction against the truth: They reasoned, questioned, and never came to the point of faith in the truth.

Now it is not wrong to question, but it is wrong to question and never seek the answers.

2 Timothy 3:7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

4. When we do question with the right attitude, the Lord will provide vindication of his truth.

Hence, the best thing to do in hearing a principle of Doctrine we may not understand is to ask the Father to make it clear - not reject it.

5. After forgiveness, obedience by means of faith is essential to growth.

The healed man was forgiven and then he was obedient to the instructions of Christ.

6. Back to the text for the fifth and final lesson:

They glorified God -

This verb along with the word describing their amazement are both infinitives.

An infinitive is a result, hence, they saw the man healed, get up and walk away.

That is what caused their astonishment and their glorifying of God.

Not the truth regarding forgiveness but the miracle

And we see that their glorifying of God was very hallow, they did so saying - we never saw anything like this before.

Lesson: We must have faith in Christ, knowing him so well through the truth of His Word, that we can accept the things of life that we do not understand.

Life will be full of things we do not understand, but if you know Christ as a Christian, as a growing and advancing Christian, you will know the one who understands everything.

And then you will be moved and guided in life by the deep, steady, consistent, eternal currents of the truth that is in Jesus Christ.

Mark 2:13-17

Charlene Myhra said: Lord, let it be that I follow you not merely as a leader but let me follow you as my master, the master of every step I take.

In the Gospels we see the unfolding story of Jesus Christ, God's uniquely born son, our Savior fulfilling his plan, his purpose in coming to earth to go to Cross and save mankind.

But we also read in the Gospels another story and that is the story of those who would seek Jesus - the men and women and even children who followed him as their Master.

REVIEW:

In previous lessons we examined the miracle of Christ healing the paralytic man who was brought to the Lord by his four friends. And we saw the reaction of the religious leaders to the grace of our Lord in forgiving this man's sins. They were amazed but certainly did not attribute what occurred to the power of God in Christ -

That was the first of five confrontations with the religious leader that Mark selects as he works towards the revelation of a plot by the Pharisees and Herodians to kill the Lord Jesus Christ:

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These disputes begin here and end with a plot to kill the Lord.

Mark 3:6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

Mark 2:13

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

This next scene is near Capernaum. Jesus is walking by the sea of Galilee and:

Notice: He is teaching doctrine, DIDASKW_a verb in the imperfect tense, continual action in the past.

Three types of communication:

Speaking the Word: Mark 2:2, the word LALEW and LEGW which look at the almost casual communication of the truth is a casual setting. This would be like talking to another person about spiritual truths.

Teaching the Word: Mark 2:13, this is DISASKW. Refer to formulated teaching of truth. Requires academic preparation and formulation of a message.

Preaching the Word: Matthew 4:17 of Jesus and 2 Timothy 4:2 of pastors, this is KEIRUSSW, and looks at teaching those over whom you have a responsibility. It goes beyond teaching to include the application of reproof, rebuke, and exhortation.

Here, Jesus was teaching DOCTRINE, formulated messages, to the people.

This was his stated purpose in Mark 1:38 and here he is fulfilling that purpose. He came to proclaim the truth.

Mark 2:14

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

In calling Matthew, here called Levi, Jesus broke the pattern even he had followed in calling his earlier disciples.

They had either been followers of John the Baptist or fishermen the common men of Galilee.

But now he calls to a tax-collector and says, follow me, - and he does!!

In calling Matthew to be a disciple and in Matthew's following of Jesus, our Lord demonstrates that he has authority and power to cleanse, to forgive sins, and save even the most horrible of people.

We cannot appreciate the attitude of Israel towards these tax-collectors. Israel, remember, was under Roman authority and these tax-collectors collected taxes and tariffs for the Romans who were seen as the enemy of occupation.

He is called a PUBLICAN but that is a mis-translation of the word for tax-collector (verse 15). But Matthew would have worked for a Publican.

Publican background:

1. Taxes are essential to any empire. Part of the drive to incorporate new territories into Rome was a desire for a broader tax base.

2. In early Rome the system of tax-collection became riddled with fraud and corruption.

3. Julius Caesar came up with a plan that was refined by Augustus Caesar: Use the *EQUITES*, the equestrian class of Roman Knights, as the *Publicanus*.

4. A Roman Knight would be given the privileged to bid on being the *Publicanus* for a region. An imperial contract was then issued to him to collect so much in taxes. His wealth and integrity of nobility precluded fraud.

5. He would hire locals, usually other wealthy men, to serve under him and actually collect the taxes.

6. There was always more collected than contracted for so that the collectors and even the *Publicans* could be paid a salary.

7. The one thing to remember is that these local tax-collectors were themselves men of wealth and nobility but they were hated, despised by the religious leaders of Israel.

They were not allowed in the Temple, they were snubbed in the streets, viewed as being a traitor to their country.

What is unusual about Matthew is that the name Levi would indicate that he was probably from the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe.

My thoughts about him: Here was a man who was so close to the religious leaders of Israel as he was growing up and seeing the hypocrisy, the religion, ritual, legalism - turned his back on all of it and became a tax-collector working for Rome.

Maybe a man who had grown cynical regarding what he sees, a man who looks, thinks, considers, and has until now dismissed the religion of his peers - but now there is something new in Israel, and it is Jesus Christ.

Application: I talk to many parents who bemoan the behavior and attitudes of their children. So often in the conversation I hear the mention of the fact that their children were raised in the Church.

Because of that they can't understand why their kids are going bad.

And children can be raised in a church, close to all that is going on, and if its a religion of works and empty ritual it provides nothing for these children.

Like Matthew, a member of a priestly family, close to the religion of his fathers - he grew disenchanted, then cynical, and eventually rejected it all and went to work for the Romans.

We think that just dragging a child off to church is going to solve all the problems - but the solution to all of life's problems is the Lord Jesus Christ, not some religion.

A personal relationship with Him and then a personal relationship with His Word is what is going to cut it in life - not some church of works, religion, ritual.

Matthew had all that and because he was so close to it he saw the hypocrisy of it and rejected the religion, the ritual, the works, but in doing so also rejected God himself

The problem of perpetuation:

1. Matthew was raised in a fine, wealthy, religious home but that did nothing for him in his adult spiritual life.

2. Today, many young people are being raised in fine, financially secure, religious homes and that is not preparing them for their adult spiritual life.

3. One of the most difficult things to do is to perpetuate spiritual identity from generation to generation.

Asaph, David song leader, was very concerned with perpetuation:

Psalm 78:1-7

David echoed these words in:

Psalm 145:4 One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.

4. Today, and even in recent past, the great communicators of Bible Doctrine, the great missionaries were and are not products of perpetuation.

Young people: You may have been raised in a Bible teaching church, you may have attained some level of maturity, and you may go off to college and witness to some guy who was an unbeliever for 20 years. And then you may stand on the side line while he has a great ministry for God - and where are you, doing nothing.

5. Perpetuation then takes two: Parents and children. Parents must teach their children not religion or ritual, but about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Parents must teach children to have to have a personal relationship to Christ!

6. But in grace, even those who were not products of perpetuation can be blessed and can grow and mature and have a fantastic life of growing and applying doctrine.

7. In Matthew case we see grace that is even greater. He was taught and trained, but in all the wrong things and he rejected it all. Became a traitor to his people. But now something great is going to happen -

Jesus Christ is going to come to him and say follow me and Matthew's life is going to turn around.

Luke 5:28 the parallel passage to Mark 2:14 we read that: He, abandoning all things, rising up, he followed him.

We have three things that happened as a result of Jesus saying Follow Me:

1. He abandoned everything and he rose up:

Both of these are aorist participles and precede the main verb of following Jesus Christ.

Principle: He used his volition and his faith, he made certain decisions and one was to be dependant upon Christ. He left it all - and now all that was left was Jesus Christ

2. Then he followed: And this is an imperfect tense indicating he continued to follow Jesus until he could follow him no more - and that time came at the Cross when Jesus Christ had to pay for our sins alone.

Mark 2:15

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

In response to Jesus Christ he desired fellowship with Christ and he wanted others to know Christ.

3. Called A great feast in Mark 5: Picture of fellowship, having a great time together.

A great company of publicans and sinner sat down with them.

In these verses we have the three phases of the Christ Centered Life:

SALVATION (He followed Him)

GROWTH (He wanted to be with Christ - in fellowship)

I am sure Christ sat right next to his host

MINISTRY (He invited others to come and meet Christ)

Mark 2:16

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

People from the past:

The Scribes and the Pharisees were the ones Matthew grew up around, the religious leaders of Israel. Those who taught works, religion, ritual - and here they are to pick apart the Son of God.

And the Pharisees and the scribes said to the disciples:

NOTE: They did not have the nerve to go to Jesus Christ himself so they went behind his back to his followers.

Why does he eat with tax-collectors and sinners.

And being very skilled at complaining they even made it sound worse. Used present tense verbs: Always eating with tax-collectors and sinners.

Sinners:

This is a word that was commonly used for female prostitutes. Prostitution was considered immoral but it was not illegal in Israel, Rome, or Greece.

Rather than a legal problem it carried a personal and social stigma.

Prostitution was very common in the ancient world. Most inns or had resident prostitutes.

In order to avoid that temptation Jesus instructed his disciples to find their lodging in private homes (Matthew 10:11).

The one thing a prostitute was not allowed to do is worship God, they were prohibited from the Temple until they decided to break with their

profession and be Ceremonially cleansed at the Temple (Deuteronomy 23:18).

So we have two groups: Tax-collectors and prostitutes and both groups were prohibited from Temple worship.

But they were received by Jesus Christ and many who the religious bigots would have nothing to do with, became believers and followed Christ.

Mark 2:17

And hearing this, Jesus said to them, it is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Although the scribes and Pharisees complained to the disciples, it was Jesus Christ who would answer them.

In answering them he puts them down, but I don't think they got it:

I have not come to call those who consider themselves righteous men, BUT sinners [to repentance].

As he did with Matthew when he said, one time, follow me. And Matthew who was a sinner, a rejecter of the religion of Israel followed Jesus Christ.

As we pull this together I want you to see three groups of people:

1. Matthew represents the person who has been raised in religion and rejected it all. He gets involved with the world, the money that could be made from being a tax-collector. But when Jesus calls he follows him
2. The sinners, including the prostitutes: No self-righteousness, no delusion about self. Knew exactly that they were sinners. Yet when they saw and heard Christ, they followed him.
3. The Scribes and Pharisees: The religious leaders, members of all the right councils, the big shots. Yet all they could do is stand by and complain and criticize.

Now here is the issue: What are you going to do with your life, are you going to follow Jesus Christ? Who are you going to stand with, the arrogant religious Pharisees or the tax-collectors and sinner.

They may not be the most respectable, but they are the ones who will follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Mark 2 through 3 we are seeing the attacks waged against our Savior by the religious leaders of Israel.

These attacks lead to the conspiracy to kill Christ that was formulated over a year prior to the crucifixion:

Mark 3:6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

Although a few Pharisees listened to Jesus message, received the Word of God, and believed in Jesus as the promised messiah, most did not.

Most of the religious leaders were locked into the same tragic flaw that entraps religious people today. A tragic flaw of arrogance that puts SELF over and above the Lord and his Word.

Some of these people were good people. Some were following divine laws for the human race. They were involved in Establishment Good. Others were following the good that is part of Satan's plan of Evil.

In Mark 2:18-22 we see a group of religious people attacking the Lord Jesus Christ. These attacks were based upon something they were doing which the Lord did not do.

Rather than seek the truth and attempt to find out why - they attacked and criticized the Lord of Glory.

Remember that these criticisms occur outside Matthew's home. While Jesus is inside with tax-collectors and sinners, the religious crowd is outside.

They have already voiced a complaint of association. How dare this man Jesus eat with tax-collectors and sinners. These people who were not even allowed in the synagogues and the Temple. Yet Jesus has explained that these are the ones who know they need a physician to heal their spiritual hurt.

Mark 2:18

John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they came and said to Him, Why do John's disciples and the

disciples of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?'

John the Baptizer had been put into prison by Herod Antipas. Although some of his disciples had become followers of the Lord Jesus, others had joined with the Pharisees upon the removal of John.

In Israel at the time of Christ, the Rabbis had established two days a week for fasting. These were on Monday and on Thursday. So we can assume that the feast at Matthew's house was on one of these two days.

The Pharisees and John's former disciples were fasting while Jesus, his disciples, the tax-collectors and sinners were feasting.

Hence, their complaint: Why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?

Fasting:

1. Under Old Testament Law, fasting was never commanded although it was observed by the Jews.
2. Fasting is: Taking time normally used for eating and sleeping and using it to study the Word of God, or for prayer.
3. Fasting is a result of proper priorities in life. The food of the Word and the fellowship of prayer being more important than eating and sleeping.
4. Fasting never impresses God. It cannot persuade God. It has merit but only when the time is used for spiritual growth.
5. These religious leaders got impressed with their own fasting, regulated it, commanded it, and expected others to follow their lead.

Matthew 6:16-18 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

So it is from a hypocritical position of human good that these Pharisees were critical of Jesus and his disciples.

In verses 19-22, Jesus gives three short parables to explain an important point:

You cannot mix the old or false with the new and true.

Mark 2:19

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

In this short parable, Jesus is taking a social truth and putting alongside a spiritual truth.

The children of the bride chamber are the guest invited to the wedding. In Galilee, where this occurs, it was not common to have groomsmen, only invited guests at a wedding.

A wedding is a time of celebration and not a time of fasting or mourning. At a wedding the priority is to have a great time, be happy, celebrate.

As Jesus represents the bridegroom, and is present with mankind, there can be no mourning, no fasting, but only celebration.

Mark 2:20

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

But there is coming a time when fasting will be acceptable:

This is looking ahead to the Cross, the days of betrayal, trial, and crucifixion.

But the fast is to be in THAT DAY, singular.

Which looks specifically at the Cross, a day of mourning. But is followed by days of celebration of the resurrected Lord.

So this statement is teaching that there is proper timing, and the proper timing for fasting is not then while the Lord is present.

Mark 2:21

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

Back before the days of pre-washed, pre-shrunk clothing, you had to be very careful in putting a new patch on an old garment.

The old garment had been shrunk, the new patch would not be shrunk. First time the patched garment was washed, the new patch would shrink, and rip the old garment.

Principle: You cannot mix the old with the new, else both are ruined.

The old garment here is the Old Testament and all the other Rabbinical laws that were being enforced by the religious crowd.

The word OLD is from PALAIOS which means old as in worn out or useless.

The NEW PATCH is the new ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in preaching the truth in grace.

These cannot be mixed. Later on the Lord will teach that even a little leaven leavens the whole loaf. Galatians and Colossians, especially chapter 2, teach that the old is out.

Principle: Cannot mix together old law and new grace.

Mark 2:22

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

The KJV word "bottles" is in the Greek New Testament, *wineskins*. These were made of the stomach of the goats and had a certain pliability to them. As the wine fermented they would stretch, but once stretched they could not be used for new wine, which expands upon fermentation, again.

Very often, to speed up the fermentation process, the new wine in their new wineskins were hung in the chimney. Now if they burst because of an old wineskin being used, it not only wasted the wine, but would put out the fire.

By analogy, when the believer combines the new wine of grace with the old wineskins of the law, the result is QUENCHING the Holy Spirit.

The Lord goes on to teach the correct process for wine and wineskins and by way of analogy, for the believer:

Principle: The new in a point in time ministry of the Lord in grace and truth must be put into the believer who is new as to their use as new spiritual creatures.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Lessons to learn from Mark 2:18-22

1. The disciples of John went with the wrong group upon the imprisonment of John. Without a leader these disciples of John made decisions based upon religion rather than relationship
2. The complaint regarding fasting dealt with something that was not even a part of the Old Testament Law. Man will elevate his legalisms to divine command in order to find justification for his actions of the flesh.
3. Jesus taught that even with the superfluous, the non-essentials, there is proper timing. There is no time for mourning when you are celebrating the presence of Christ
4. You cannot combine the New with the Old, worn out, and useless. If you try you will render both useless.
5. We are new wineskins, new containers, for the new ministry of grace and truth. During the giving of these parables there were two groups present. One group was inside Matthew's house feasting with the Lord. The other group was outside, involved in a legalistic fast and complaining about the other group.

The group that was outside saw themselves as respectable and they probably were in their society - but respectability can be a trap that ensnares a person into arrogant thinking.

The assumption would be: If I am respected by men, then God must respect me also - and that is pride, arrogance, and blasphemy

Man may praise us, give us the applause, but never forget what you are in the plan of God: a sinner saved by grace!

2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

I Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

The people inside with Jesus, Matthew, and the disciples; the tax-collectors and prostitutes, had no delusion about themselves. They knew they were sinners in need of a Savior.

The people on the outside, the respectable religious leaders, thought of themselves as being something, and thought that Jesus had to conform to their standards, in their pride and arrogance they attacked and would soon try to kill the Lord of Glory.

Where would you be? Outside fasting with the religious crowd of complainers or inside feasting with the Lord?

Galatians 6:3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

Mark, Chapter Two tells of the conflict, the controversies, the confrontations, that eventually lead to the conspiracy by the religious leaders to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ.

As our Lord faced his antagonists, he consistently presented them with the Truth, the very Word of God which was His Word.

So often, in the midst of conflict, our first option is to compromise. In the area of the non-essentials, compromise may be a virtue - but too often the church today and its people, have compromised on the essentials, they have allowed compromise over that which they have no right to allow compromise - the Truth of God.

A story is told of a hunter out hunting for bear, who had his gun aimed at a large bear and was ready to pull the trigger. Just then the bear spoke in a soft, soothing voice saying, Isn't it better to talk than to shoot? Why don't we negotiate the matter? What is it you want? The hunter lowered his rifle and answered, I would like a fur coat. That's good, said the bear. I think that's something we can talk about. All I want is a full stomach; maybe we can reach a compromise. So they sat down to talk it over. A little while later the bear walked away alone. The negotiations had been successful--the bear had a full stomach, and the hunter had a fur coat!

In negotiation and compromise, you can end up the loser!

Previously we saw that our Lord was not about to compromise with those who attempted to bring him into the bondage of legalism. At issue was the Rabbinical Fast Days: Mondays and Thursdays.

In His defense, the Lord presented three parables of Truth:

Each parable taught that you cannot combine the old with the new nor the false with the true.

The interpretation dealt with the Lord's ministry of grace and truth as compared to the religious leader's false system of petty laws and rules.

By way of application (One interpretation and many applications) we can take these parables of the new patch on old clothing and new wine in old wineskins and apply their truth to ourselves - we are new creatures in Christ.

Why do we think that we can go back to some old system of the flesh, the thinking of human viewpoint, the thinking of the Law, or any reliance on the strength or the trends of personality.

We are new creatures in Christ and we are the recipients of all the provisions of Grace that were provided by God in His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Ephesians 4:20-24 Paul questions how they have learned Christ: *If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

Principle: You are a new wineskin, a new piece of cloth, you have a new purpose, a new power, a new position. Don't combine the old Law with the new Grace, the false with the true.

In this, the fourth of the five controversies with religious leaders, the Lord dealt with a legitimate Law of the Old Testament regarding the Sabbath Day.

Mark 2:23, 24

And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath,

and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain.

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

What we have here is an Old Testament Law regarding the Sabbath Day of rest, the interpretation of that law, and also another Old Testament rule regarding the picking of grain in a neighbor's field.

Principles of the sabbath and the grain field:

1. First of all. Deut 23:25 indicates that it was permissible for those who were traveling in a grain field to pick grain to eat at that time:

When you come into the standing grain of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the grain with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbor's standing grain.

2. The Old Testament Law regarding the Sabbath indicates that no work is to be accomplished, no harvesting of crops, no reaping of what is sown.

Leviticus 23:3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

3. So the question is, does the casual and permissible picking of grain constitute working or merely eating? On a Sabbath Day in Israel, food was prepared the previous day to be eaten on the Sabbath. So eating was permitted - but what about picking the grain that was to be eaten?

4. Here is the interesting thing regarding our story: The Pharisees gave their interpretation of these Laws and one would normally think the Lord would give His - but he did not.

Principle: The Lord did not engage in a debate with the Pharisees, no point and counter point type of arguments. He just stated the facts -

Application: We argue too much about that which is true. Sometimes, in witnessing, we win the argument and lose the soul.

These Pharisees already stated not only their interpretation but also their attitude:

They were argumentative, they were antagonistic.

Would they have reasonably listened to a dissertation on the distinction of picking grain and harvesting grain, do you think with their preconceived ideas that they would have been persuaded?

NO! And many people you run into today will be in exactly the same situation. You could present the greatest arguments, the most sound logic, you give the best evidence, and you will get no where because of the attitude of negative volition.

So what do you do? The same the Lord did, bring the discussion back to the person of Christ.

Look down to verse 28: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.

Principle: When you are dealing with antagonistic people, argumentative people, the best thing you can do is focus the discussion on the person of Christ - not you or your church or a specific doctrine, but on Christ.

And if they are negative to Him who has done everything for them, then you leave them in the Lord's hands.

Illustration:

Charles Bradlaugh, an avowed unbeliever, once challenged the Rev. H.P. Hughes to a debate. The preacher, who was head of a rescue mission in London, England, accepted the challenge with the condition that he could bring with him 100 men and women who would tell what had happened in their lives, since trusting Christ as their Savior. They would be people who once lived in deep sin, some having come from poverty-stricken homes caused by the vices of their parents.

Hughes said they would not only tell of their Savior, but would submit to cross-examination by any who doubted their stories. Furthermore, the minister invited his opponent to bring a group of non-believers who could tell how they were helped by their lack of faith. When the appointed day arrived, the preacher came, accompanied by 100 transformed persons. But Bradlaugh never showed up.

Principle: Make the issue Christ! Christ did, he made the issue Christ, if these antagonists were to persist in their negative, argumentative viewpoint, it would be the Savior who would be the issue.

Christ's response: A Story and a Principle

Jesus was not involved in the picking of the grain, so his position was unique in that he could defend his disciples while being outside the line of attack.

You might wonder also where the Pharisees came from. They were following Jesus around, as did many people. But while many were following him to learn from him, the Pharisees were following him to entrap him.

Mark 2:25,26

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

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

Jesus refers here to 1 Samuel 21 and David as he fled for his life from Saul.

Jesus knows that these religious leaders know this Old Testament story. He asks them if they have read it -

The word is ANAGINWSKW _which means not only to read but to read and intensely understand.

All reading at that time was out loud. Silent reading was not figured out until the monastic period in the third century A.D.

Jesus establishes that the prerequisite of reading and understanding is necessary for any theological discussion.

HENCE, this is a very sarcastic statement by our Lord.

These Pharisees prided themselves on their knowledge of the Scriptures, but the Lord now ask - have you not even read this portion?

In 1 Samuel 21, David is fleeing for his life. Jonathan has warned him that his father the king, Saul, wants to kill David.

Saul suspects that David is to be the next king and his anger towards young David is intense. David's life is on the line so he flees and enroute needs two things, food and a weapon.

The Tabernacle had been temporarily set up in the village of Nob, their David can find a weapon, Goliath's sword, and food.

But the only food available is the showbread that was placed in the Holy Place. Twelve loaves baked fresh every day, and represented the promised Messiah as the bread of Life.

NOW THE PRIESTS were allowed to eat of the bread, but David was not a priest - but David was the anointed of God, anointed to be the next king over God's Old Testament people.

The priests: Abiathar and his father Abimelech, while in fear regarding what they were doing, decided that David's life was more important than day old bread.

Principle: They considered the higher law. They saw David's survival as being more important than a minor law regarding who can eat and who cannot.

If there had been a pharisee around in David's day he would have starved to death.

Illustration:

We have rules around here, take this piano. A rule is that it not be moved. Moving pianos get pianos out of tune. But what if there was a war, and we had to turn this place into an aid station. Most Churches were during the Civil War. We would move the piano, the pulpit, the pews and anything else. A higher law would be in effect.

Another rule, more personal and a true mandate to believers:

Coming to Bible Class: Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some.

But there are times when a higher law goes into effect and you miss Bible class. Illness, work, even a family vacation, being out of town. There are legitimate reasons to not follow the mandate, but they had better be a reason pertaining to a higher law or principle.

Or when you are a young Ranger corporal and you are on duty in Panama while Bible class is going on. You are under a higher law -

Mark 2:27

Jesus said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

Jesus Christ is going to teach these religious Pharisees about a higher law, a higher principle that will completely defuse their legalism.

And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath:

The reason God gave a Sabbath to Israel was to provide a day of rest. The Sabbath was created by God, given to man as grace.

These religious leaders took the grace that God had given and turned it into a yoke around the neck of the people.

That which was a gift became a burden -

And that was not God's intention, plan, design.

But people today have done the same thing with grace in the Christian way of life:

Believers take that which is given in grace, given to man by God for his enjoyment and edification, and they turn it into a yoke of bondage.

Illustration: The Local Church and the opportunity to learn the Word of God -

You mean you have to go to Bible class, you have to go to church.

God in his Grace gave us the privilege to gather together. Yet some make it into a yoke of bondage.

Illustration: Evangelism, collecting spiritual scalps. And then giving a bragamony on how many people you witnessed to.

How about giving, a grace opportunity. But man comes up with gimmicks and legalisms. Like paying a tithe or pledge cards and other tricks to put believers under a burden to give, give, give -

The ideal and the real:

The Bible reveals the ideal plan of God. But it also reveals the real.

The ideal was to rest on the Sabbath, the real, however, had Israel engaged in battles, attempting to survive on the Sabbath.

For David, the real situation was that if he did not eat he was going to die. The ideal was that the showbread was reserved for the priests.

The real situation took precedent but only when a higher law, a higher principle was to be followed.

There is only one way to know when the real supercedes the ideal - and that is to know the Word of God.

Apart from the Word of God you could make two mistakes:

1. You could set aside the ideal grace of God for something you think is more important and it is not more important. That was Saul's problem in I Samuel 13. He thought he could set aside the ideal of only priests offering sacrifices because there was no priests around.

But he was wrong because he did not know what the Bible had to say about offering sacrifices.

God was really trying to delay his entrance into battle with the Philistines by delaying the arrival of Samuel the priests.

Saul put his real situation above the plan of God

2. The second mistake is that without doctrine you will turn grace into a legalistic standard.

Like no stripping of grain and eating on the Sabbath.

The Rabbis made 360 Sabbath laws. The Sabbath became a day not of rest, but of trying to live up to some legalistic standard.

The young soon to be missionary worked very hard at developing a devout life. He arose every morning at 5:00 and prayed for an hour. Then he would read his Bible. Back to prayer before going off to chapel service. He spent every waking hour reading, praying, handing out tracts. Soon he came to the new colonies and while there even sacrificed the opportunity to marry because he felt God's calling to be more important.

But eventually he was recalled from the mission field, a failure. He went home in despair. And then one night while walking past a mission, he heard the Gospel and only then became a Christian.

John Wesley spent years in bondage to things that were given by God as grace. It was only after he received Christ as his savior that he recognized that God's gifts were made for man, not man for the gifts.

And by using the grace of God, he was never a spiritual failure again.

Mark 2:28

So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

The Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, is Lord of the Sabbath.

It was created by him as a day of rest for Israel. Just as he has created Grace for us today.

Chapter 3

Through this series of confrontations with religious leaders that Mark includes in Chapters two and three, we see Jesus Christ presenting truth.

Basically, he was shutting down the arguments of these Pharisees, scribes, and other supposed leaders of spiritual Israel.

NOW WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE WRONG IN your attitude, you have an important choice to make. You can either repent, change your mind and line up your thinking with what is right - or you can dig in, and in stubborn arrogance allow your wrong attitude to result in wrong action.

Principle: There is nothing wrong with being wrong, but there is everything wrong with staying wrong.

A.W. Tozer related a story about a governor of a mid-western state who disguised himself and went into prison for a day to learn of the conditions (no one told him only senators and congressmen go to prison):

While talking with a personable young convict, he felt a strong desire to pardon him. What would you do, he asked casually, if the governor were to offer you a pardon? The convict said, The first thing I'd do is cut the throat of the judge who sent me here. The governor was saddened as he broke off the conversation and left. That convict stayed in his cell.

The arrogant, religious legalistic leaders of Jesus day and the those of the same ilk today are no different than that convict. Jesus gave the chance after chance, he provided pardon after pardon for their sins, yet they decided to dig in and their decision to continue in error lead to the actions of decadence.

No where in the gospels do we see the evil, vile character of the Pharisee more clearly than in Mark 3:1-6.

Mark 3:1

He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered.

And Jesus entered again into the synagogue (of Capernaum).

Jesus' purpose is still his priority, he came to proclaim the truth and in doing so he took the opportunity to teach in the synagogue.

The word for AGAIN is PALIN _which looks at the repetition of an act as these acts lead to a specific goal.

Like hammering in a nail, the repetition of hammering is towards the goal of making the nail flush with the surface of the wood.

Jesus repetition of going to the synagogue was to arrive at the goal of revealing himself as the Savior

In the second half of verse one we have some curious exegesis:

The presence of the man is indicated by both a verb and an adverb making his presence in the synagogue very specific, as if he is there for a specific reason.

We also have two participles to indicate that his hand had been crushed.

The participle shows action and the first one is passive indicating that his hand had been crushed by someone else. It is also a feminine participle that shows the hand received the crushing from a source apart from the man or his actions.

In other words: This was no accident.

And then we add that statement to verse two:

Mark 3:2

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

And they (Pharisees and Herodians of verse 6) watched him carefully [to see] if on the Sabbath he will heal him, in order that they might accuse him.

That is a tremendously loaded statement!!!

The wording indicates that what we see going on in verse 1 and 2 is part of a plot to get Jesus to heal this man on the Sabbath.

The circumstances strongly suggest that these religious leaders crushed this man's hand to see if Jesus would heal him.

They crushed his hand and sent him to the synagogue and then sat back and watched -

Principle: Evil has no regard for the innocents. These evil men were willing to sacrifice this man's hand just to catch the Lord Jesus Christ in what they determined was a sin, healing on the Sabbath.

They have come to this point of decadence because of their constant rejection of the truth presented by the Lord, they are, as we will see, hardened in their souls.

1. Of the 360 Sabbath day laws established by the rabbis, one prohibited healing by touch on the Sabbath.
2. This absurd law had nothing to do with the Old Testament law of God. It was man's plan given a position superior to God's plan.
3. This combination of evil and legalism was doubly decadent and lead to a plot to catch the Lord in a supposed fault.

The word for *accuse* is KATJGOREW and is used in the New Testament for the evil accusation of those who opposed the Lord and the evil accusations of Satan against believers in Revelation 12:10.

The prefix KATA means to be against so the idea here is that they were already against the Lord and just waiting and plotting to catch him in a fault.

Principle: They had pre-judged the Lord and his actions and were now out to find justification for their pre-judgment,

Application: As Christians we are not to judge others much less pre-judge others based upon our own bias and prejudice.

But too often we do. We have our standards, some that are even anti-biblical, and we judge others by those standards.

We become judgmental, assuming, and involve ourselves in unrealistic Ambition, Competition, and Expectation.

Mark 3:3

He said to the man with the withered hand, Get up and come forward!

In the synagogue Jesus calls to the man to Rise in the midst of the people.

A command and the man was obedient to that command.

With this Jesus now has a visual aid of this man with a painfully withered hand standing in the midst of the people.

In his perspicacity he will use the evil plot to communicate compassion and truth.

Jesus, in his discernment, doctrine + the situation, knew exactly what was going on.

Mark 3:4

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

Then Christ directs two questions to the Pharisees:

1. To do good or to do evil?
2. To save life or to kill?

But they were silent: They could not answer even the most simple question.

The answer to both questions is obvious, but because they were involved in this conspiracy of evil, they could not even answer the simplistic of questions.

Illustration: Have you ever caught your child in a lie, and as you question them they do not even give answers to the simple unrelated questions.

Another place you can see this is in a congressional or senate hearing.

Did you live in Washington, D.C. at that time? Could you repeat the question - I did not understand the question - I refuse to answer that on the grounds -

Later on James would write that we believers must: Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation (James 5:12).

What Jesus did was bring the confrontation down into some very simple terms and some very absolute terms:

While the world sees everything in various shades of gray, God deals in absolutes :

1. Either saved or unsaved
2. Either spiritual or carnal
3. Either divine viewpoint or human viewpoint
4. Either divine good or human good
5. Life or Death

As Christians with doctrine we can live our lives according to God's absolutes. We can know the truth and we can know what really matters in life, the absolutes.

Too many believers today see a God who is sloppy in his dealings with mankind. A God who holds no absolutes. But God's Word tells us that He has determined certain absolutes and we are under that determination.

Some think that if you get close to salvation, you will make it. There is no close about it - you are either saved or unsaved, that is it.

Mark 3:5

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

The Lord's response to their silence and their decadence:

Anger is ORGEI which is legitimate anger that is based upon knowledge and understanding.

The word LOOKING is an aorist middle participle which looks at resulting anger in a point of time, and precedes the next participle.

Grieving must have a cause and here the cause is their hardness of heart.

HARDNESS is the word PWRWSIS which was a type of marble found in the ancient world. Eventually it was used for a callous formed on a broken bone or on a hand.

We would call it scar tissue on the soul, or hardness of heart.

The human soul is a delicate thing and a terrible thing to waste:

Principles on scar tissue:

1. We tell our children to Just say no - Knowing that the more you say no to the influences of evil, drugs, sex, booze, the easier it becomes to keep on saying NO.

2. Just as saying no to evil brings resistance, saying no to spiritual things builds resistance to spiritual things.
3. As you say no to God, no to the Savior, no to the Word of God, no to Bible class you build a resistance to the relationship God wants with you.
4. Every time you exercise negative volition to the things of the spirit of God and say NO, you build scar tissue on your soul. It becomes easier and easier to say NO.
5. Solomon referred to this in Proverb 5:12-14
How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

6. Just as scar tissue is insensitive to feeling, scar tissue on the soul results in insensitivity to God and to others. This insensitivity is seen as these religious leaders in Mark 3 planted an man with a withered hand in the synagogue to try to trap the Lord in a supposed fault.

7. Scar tissue is removed for the unbeliever at salvation and for the believer as he takes in the Word of God. For too many Christians, saying NO to God and his perfect plan of spiritual growth has become too easy through their scar tissue and insensitivity.

Mark 3:6

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

The reaction of the religious leaders:

And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

They could have given the glory and praise to God, but they did not - instead the Pharisees took counsel with the Herodians to destroy Jesus.

1. Pharisees: Religious Jews
2. Herodians: Secular political Jews

Principle: These two groups had nothing in common, even hated each other under normal circumstances.

But they had a common enemy and they were willing to join together to destroy the Lord.

The word for DESTROY means to utterly destroy and when used of a person means to kill -

So these religious leaders who tempted Christ to heal on the Sabbath, contrary to their laws, thought nothing of plotting a death on the Sabbath.

That is hardness of heart, scar tissue of the soul, to refuse to allow healing on the Sabbath and yet to plan a murder on the Sabbath.

How does a person get into such a decadent way of thinking? By refusing the truth that is presented and today scores of Christians are refusing to hear the truth of God as it is taught from his word -

Your soul is too important to waste, don't let scar tissue make you into a Pharisee.

In the section from 3:7-15, Mark covers an extended period of time by describing the Galilean ministry of Jesus and his disciples.

Here is where we see the move from growth to ministry on the part of the twelve disciples.

They were trained and while this training would continue even long after the ascension of Christ, they were ready to minister to others.

Jordan Grooms said: That if God calls you to minister to others do not stoop to be a king.

And every believer in Jesus Christ is called to a ministry, both collectively and individually. We all have the ministry of ambassadors of Christ, we all have the ministry of evangelism and reconciliation, and as well we all have spiritual gifts that allow us to minister to others in a specific and peculiar way.

But too many Christians today walk away from their ministry and stoop to become kings -

Mark 3:7, 8

Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and also from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him.

This is still part of Jesus' first preaching tour of Galilee. There would eventually be three separate tours of this northern region of Palestine.

As our Lord left Capernaum and went to the shore of the sea of Galilee we see that Mark makes special note to include his disciples -

Soon we will see that Jesus will ordain twelve men to be with him and to send them out to communicate the Word of God.

The word DISCIPLE is the word MAQEITEIS and is found 261 times in the NEW TESTAMENT. but every time is in either the Gospels or the Book of Acts. It is not once used in any epistles or the Revelation.

It is usually translated with the idea of one who learns from another. A student or a pupil. But it is really much stronger than that.

A disciple was devoted to his teacher. A disciple gave unhindered loyalty and obedience to his teacher.

And if the teacher is the perfect Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, that is fine - but if the teacher is an imperfect man who may or may not be controlled by the Word and the Spirit, there is a problem.

The ancient Greeks held this word is such high esteem that the noted Socrates refused to have disciples feeling he was unworthy.

A disciple could only be a disciple to a DIDASKALOS which in secular Greek was a Master teacher or great and high regard - higher than even Socrates.

The concept of this word was so highly regarded that the latter Greek philosophers abandoned its use for others words such as friend, follower, child.

In the Rabbinical Judaism of Jesus day, the disciple was to the Rabbi as a servant or slave to a master. He would serve him as a servant as well as learn from him. Only after a disciple had spent years learning from a Rabbi who was considered a HAKAM, a scholar, could have authority to teach.

Why am I telling you all this:

Well, today the church seems to be throwing around a lot of talk about disciples, discipling, discipleship.

And they are all out of step with the Word of God.

If you are going to disciple someone you must put yourself in a position of being wiser than Socrates, as scholarly as the most revered Rabbis, and on equal footing with the Lord Jesus Christ -

We are disciples, but we are disciples to the Lord Jesus Christ and not to any man. It is to him that we pledge loyalty and upon him we declare total dependence.

And you cannot be totally dependant upon the Lord Jesus Christ if you are also dependant upon some group leader who sees you as his disciple and who is your discipler.

Now Jesus had disciples and we can be disciples today, disciples of Jesus Christ.

But our Lord is seated at the right hand of the Father, he is not here to directly teach us or disciple us.

Hence, the relationship we now have with Christ is different than the relationship the twelve disciples had.

We have a relationship of AMBASSADORS of Christ:

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

At the end of verse 8, after telling of all the areas of Palestine from which these people came, Mark includes a statement of motive -

Hearing the things he does, they came to him.

We have a participle and a main verb. The participle is the word HEARING WHAT HE DID and the main verb is that they CAME TO HIM.

Still the same old problem, the people came to Jesus not because of his message of truth but because of the miracles he did. In the minds of the people, the gracious miracles became a distraction to what Jesus Christ was really all about - He came to proclaim the truth.

Mark 3:9-12

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

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

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

And He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was.

[The notes are missing for verses 9 to 12. wd]

Mark 3:13

And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him.

In Luke 6:12 we are told that Jesus accompanied his solitude in the mountains with prayer.

Both in Luke and here in Mark his purpose is very clear. He is choosing twelve disciples, followers who will not only continue to learn from him but also be sent to minister in His name.

Mark 3:14, 15

And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons.

The King James word ORDAINED sounds very special but really it is just the simple word for making someone into something, giving of an office, or appointing.

Twelve: The number of tribes of the Old Testament and since the message will go to and the kingdom be offered to the Jew first, it was fitting that twelve disciples take the message to the twelve tribes.

Each activity mentioned is a present, infinitive indicating that it came as a result of something else. The something else is the training that they had received and would continue to receive.

Principle: Growth must precede ministry and ministry must be a result of growth.

1. To proclaim: As Jesus' primary function of ministry was to proclaim the truth, he now delegates this to his disciples. They now will also proclaim the truth.

And as Ambassadors of Christ we also have that ministry

2 Corinthians 6:7 Paul is a minister of God: By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.

Ephesians 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2. To have authority: The authority here is EXOUSIA which is delegated power or authority.

The disciples were not to have their own power but the power of God. They were not to stand in their own strength but in the strength of God.

Just as we as Ambassadors of Christ stand firm dependant upon him.

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

2 Timothy 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Mark 3:16-21

And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, Sons of Thunder)

and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him.

The listing of the twelve disciples. [There are no discussion notes for this passage. wd]

Mark 3:20,21

And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal.

When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, He has lost His senses.

And He came into a house, and again the crowd comes together so that they were not able to eat bread.

Here is the multitude mentioned back in verse 7-8 who came out of every quarter of ancient Palestine.

They had partially dispersed but now that Jesus was at a specific house, the crowd gathered around again.

Remember three things about this crowd:

1. They followed after Jesus for the wrong reason: They were impressed by the miracles and not by the message.
2. They were demanding of Jesus, wanting him to heal them and wanting him to perform for them.
3. They were rude, to the point that they almost mobbed Jesus in verse 9. And now they will not even leave him alone long enough for him to eat.

But Jesus continued to minister to them -

Just as we have seen with the religious antagonist who repeatedly attacked Jesus, he is patience, he has his priority in mind, and he continue to give out the truth.

Even when it is not appreciated nor accepted, even when he is attacked and rudely treated, even when he cannot eat, the message he had to proclaim was more important.

And having heard (about the strain of the Galilean ministry) his relation (mother and brothers mentioned later on in verse 31) went forth to seize him, because they said, He is besides himself.

His family, those physically related to him were concerned about him.

They could see that Jesus was under stress, harassed by crowds, rudely treated, and not eating. So they went out to grab him, get him away from the crowds, and they even concluded that he was besides himself.

The phrase beside himself is OTI EXESTEI .

Means to be bewitched, or amazed to the point of being irrational. Besides self, incapable of caring for self.

Literally means to be displaced, put out of position. It is contrasted in 2 Corinthians 5:13 with a sound mind, so this would mean to be unsound mentally.

So the earthly family of Christ concluded that he was not of a sound mind, that he was not able to care for himself.

Their solution was to take him away from the people, but that was contrary to the priority of Christ which was to proclaim the truth to the people.

So his family thinks he is mentally unsound, the next section tells us that the religious leaders thought he was of Satan

If you have some enemies you are to be congratulated, for no man ever accomplished much without arousing jealousies and creating enemies.

In the ministry of our Lord we will see the great things he accomplished as well as the enemies who opposed him.

The curious incident of verses 20 and 21 sets a foundation for the Lord's statements at the end of this chapter. We will for the moment skip these two verses and take them up following our current lesson.

In Mark 3:22-30 we have the first time the religious crowd openly accuses Jesus of being an agent of Satan.

They have attacked the work of Christ, the message of Christ, the followers of Christ, and now they attack the power of Christ. But as we will see, this type of denunciation carries with it very far reaching consequences - the consequences are called the Blasphemes against the Holy Spirit.

Mark 3:22

The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul, and He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons.

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the ruler of the demons he expels the demons.

Here in Mark 3 the scribes make this accusation.

In Matthew 12:31-32 and in Luke 11:14-21 the same accusation is made by the Pharisees. You see the religious crowd did not like Jesus Christ. They saw him as a threat to their power base, a threat to their control over the people, and even a threat to their economic system of graft and corruption.

So they attacked. Through these controversies in Mark, chapter two and three, we see them getting more and more hardened in their attitude towards the Savior.

Beelzebub: A heathen deity believed to be the prince of all evil spirits. Break down of the word actually means the god of dung, referring to all moral impurity. The Philistines saw this deity as the god of flies. Since Satan is the ruler of all the fallen angels and demons, this is a synonym for Satan himself.

So these scribes and later the Pharisees ascribe the mighty works of Christ to Satan.

We saw in Mark 3:5 that the Lord was grieved over the hardness of their hearts, this scar tissue on their souls resulting in an ignorance of God and an insensitivity towards others.

The human soul is a delicate thing and a terrible thing to waste. When abused by negative volition it can turn a person into a monster:

Mark 3:23

And He called them to Himself and began speaking to them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

The Lord basically tells these scribes, who were very bright men, the lawyers and recorders of their day, that they were not making sense.

And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

And he then gives them two parables, a principle, another parable, and an application directly to them.

He goes from parables of reason to statements of warning.

Mark 3:24

If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

First parable: And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

Mark 3:25

If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

Second parable: And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

Mark 3:26

If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!

Principle: And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

These two parables and the principle regarding Satan demonstrate the inconsistency of the statement of the scribes.

Interesting to note that these learned scribes were champions of logic - but in the face of Christ their logic, their training, breaks down.

Principle: All the education in the world, all the I.Q. you may have cannot interpret Christ and his message - that requires FAITH.

And these scribes did not have faith in the person of Christ.

As for the parables: The Lord's simple statements of truth show that division within anything cannot stand.

Mark 3:27

But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

Third parable: Again we have a simple truth. To rob someone you first have to tie them up in order to take their goods.

In the parable the Lord has entered into the domain of Satan and he has bound him, and now the Lord can plunder the evil house of Satan. This cannot be done if Jesus was empowered by Satan.

Later in his ministry the Lord will tell his disciples that they will have the power to call upon God to bind the strong man, Satan, and render ineffective his works on earth.

Mark 3:28-30

Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter;

but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin because they were saying, He has an unclean spirit

We have had parables and principles, now we get down to the specifics of the situation:

There are Five Sins Against the Holy Spirit:

1. Acts 5:3 Lying against the Holy Spirit: The story of Ananias and Sapphira lying to the apostles regarding their pledge. Here you are lead by the spirit to do one thing and then rationalize your way around what you have been lead to do.

2. Grieving the Holy Spirit: Ephesians 4:30. Production of P.A. Sins from the area of weakness of the Sin Nature

3. Quenching the Spirit: I Thessalonians 5:19. Production of Human Good from the SIN NATURE This is not Establishment Good but human good with it motives and influences of sins. Examples: legalism, giving money to gain approbation, doing good out of guilt to soothe the conscience.

4. Resistance of the Holy Spirit: One of the two sins against the Holy Spirit produced by the unbeliever. Acts 7:51 The Holy Spirit convicts the unbeliever. of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-11). In this sin the unbeliever. resists this convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. And rejects Jesus Christ as Savior.

5. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit: This is resistance but not just to the ministry of the spirit but to the spirit himself.

In Mark 3, Matthew 12, and Luke 11 the religious crowd is evaluating the supernatural ministry of Christ but rather than find its source in the divine they attribute it to the Satanic.

As long as they continue to blaspheme the Holy Spirit in that manner, they will never even get to the point of being convicted by the Holy Spirit in order to make a decision regarding Christ.

Hence, this sin can and is being produced today by the unbeliever. who gives a nod to the supernatural but attributes it to power other than the one true God.

They are under a self inflicted condemnation and liable for eternal sin - never convicted of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Application: I would go so far to say that an unbeliever can resist the Holy Spirit many times and can do so for years, but once they go so far as to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, I think they are the living lost - so hardened with scar tissue that the only belief system they will ever hold would be demonically induced and influenced.

These scribes attributed the divine power of God in Christ to an unclean spirit.

They recognized the supernatural, but did not seek the right source of such unexplained power.

AND PEOPLE ARE DOING THE SAME thing today. They see the supernatural, but do not seek God and His Son Jesus Christ, but rather invent deities after their own images, spirits, ancient masters, even gods from other space - never coming to the point of conviction by the spirit of sin, God's absolute righteousness, and the potential of eternal judgment.

Paul Little, the Christian writer has observed that collapse in the Christian life is seldom a blowout, it is usually a slow leak.

In Mark Chapter three we are going to see the danger of distraction, that potential of collapse that is a slow leak of losing perspective, shifting priorities, and no longer pursuing the proper goal.

Now in Mark 3:20 and 21 and then Mark 3:31 through 35 we see the establishment of a precedent - a precedent of priority and avoidance of distraction. -

So in verses 31 through 35 he clarifies his position and establishes a precedent for distraction avoidance.

Mark 3:31

Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him.

A.T. Robertson describes this as a pathetic picture of those who do not understand what Christ was all about.

They want to take Him away, to care for Him, and while they may have noble intentions, their intentions are wrong.

Mark 3:32

A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.

The crowd relates the presence of his family to Him:

The crowd saw nothing unusual in this. They do not see this as a distraction. In calling to him they used the middle voice, IMPERATIVE MOOD OF COMMAND of Behold, IDOU.

They would have assumed that he would have gone with them and that this would even be for his benefit. But it would have been a distraction to his purpose.

Mark 3:33-35

Answering them, He said, Who are My mother and My brothers?

Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, Behold My mother and My brothers!

For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.

Jesus is going to use this situation to establish a principle:

By making this statement, our lord demonstrated avoidance of distraction - the distraction of family.

Distraction defined:

1. Simple dictionary definition is: A mental intrusion or cause of confusion especially in the attainment of a goal or desire.
2. Lack of concentration and disorganization are the ingredients of distraction
3. Distraction keeps you from doing or accomplishing what you have previously decided you want to do.
4. Distraction is in the area of want to's, not Don't want to's. This brings up an interesting concept. You never want to do what you set out to do in the midst of distraction, you will, in distraction, opt for the distraction. That is what distraction is all about. Having made a decision to want to do something, you are distracted from that goal or desire. However too many Christians never even decide they want the very best that God has for them.

5. Every believer has goals which are unique to them, individually. These require flexibility as the Lord directs and guides you in His perfect plan for your life.

6. But all believers have a goal mandated to them by their Heavenly Father - The goal of spiritual growth:

2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever.

7. With the pursuing of that goal without distraction, all other activities of the Christian way of life fall into place including witnessing, prayer, giving, worship, and ministry to others.

You see, our Father made it very simple for us. Grow in the Grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ and everything else will fall into place - unless you are distracted.

Distraction can come from either legitimate or illegitimate sources

We could develop an entire list of legitimate things in life that can distract you from what is really important. And as we go through the Gospels we will see some of these.

Here, the potential distraction is from a very legitimate source, family -

Jesus family wanted him to stop what he was doing and go with them. But what he was doing was more important than being with his family.

How can family be a distraction:

1. Your family may discourage you from going to a church.
2. Your family may distract you from going to a church where the Word is taught (traditional family church).
3. Your family may discourage you from some form of ministry or Christian service
4. Parents: Your children can be a distraction to your spiritual growth. Put your children's pleasure over where you are supposed to be or over what you are to be doing in the plan of God.
5. Or you may just put your relationship with your family above your relationship with your Lord:

Matthew 10:36-37 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that

loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Now when your family is an encouragement to you as you grow in Christ and as you serve him, that is great. But if you let your family become more important than sticking with the Lord and His word, you have become distracted.

Alexander Hamilton: "Men give me some credit for genius. All the genius I have lies in this: When I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. I explore it in all its bearings. My mind becomes pervaded with it. The efforts that I make are what people are pleased to call the fruits of genius. Rather, they are the results of Concentration."

The secret to success in any endeavor is total concentration.

Jesus Christ is concentrating on his mission, to proclaim the truth.

His family thinks he cannot care for himself, the religious crowd thinks he is demon empowered, the crowds are following him to see miracles - it would seem that everyone except his disciples had no idea of what our Lord was doing nor why.

Examples of Distraction

These are legitimate activities that can become a distraction and thus are wrong activities when placed above your intake of the Word of God.

1. Jobs, business, money: God is your heavenly Father and He has the responsibility to provide for you in logistical grace.

Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

We may occasionally have to put a job or business responsibility above Bible class but that is only occasionally.

Key question: Ask ourselves, does God want us to do this rather than be in class growing in grace?

2. Recreation, sports, hunting, leisure time activity:

All legitimate activities of life and necessary. We even noted in John 2 that the Lord and His disciples attended a wedding feast and at other times enjoyed the company of dinner parties.

I Timothy 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

But when these keep you out of class they become distractions to your spiritual growth

3. Family, friends, visitors: We must place our relationship with the Lord above our relationships with people.

Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

The husband and father of the home is required to provide for his family the means of spiritual growth.

Principle: You don't ask children if they want to come to Bible class and husbands, you don't ask your wives - you state, we are going to Bible class tonight.

4. Illnesses of self or others: While some illness indeed require you to stay down for the count, too often we let little physical problems distract us for the opportunities we have for spiritual growth.

Also watch out for your children who end up not feeling well every time Bible class rolls around. If its a communicable illness then a parent should stay home with them unless they are old enough to stay home by themselves.

Again, don't let Satan win the round by using illness to distract you.

Philippians 4:12-13 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.

When you start to feel ill or a family member starts to feel ill to the untimely point of distraction from Bible class, remember that it is the Lord who can strengthen you.

5. Fatigue: You get too tired or you get too busy to accomplish the goal of the Christ Centered Life which is to grow in Christ through the inculcation of Doctrine:

Principle: If you are too often too tired or too busy for Bible Class you are too busy.

You may be tired but are you too tired to eat, to vegetate in front of the T.V.?

Paul in 2 Corinthians 7:5-6 talked about being physically tired:

For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforts those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.

6. Homework: Your kids may pull this on you. They say they have too much homework to go to Bible Class.

But this is a matter of enforced priority with your kids. You can teach them what is really important in life by teaching them that the study of the WORD OF GOD. comes first.

Yes: Bible Class is more important than School.

Usually just a problem of organization of time and concentration

7. Church - Wrong one, no teaching, no growth: There is no virtue in going to Church. Many believers go to Churches where they walk away with nothing more than an hours rest.

The church is to be a place where you take time out of the ordinary Christian Life to come and be taught and encouraged.

The only expression or application of the doctrine in your soul in church is worship but too often we have nothing in the soul to apply in worship.

Church distraction comes when you stay in a church for all the wrong reasons. Family or friends or atmosphere or tradition or whatever - and yet get nothing that you can take with you and live your Christian life.

8. Social Causes - Even good ones: In our society and in our culture there are many good causes you could get involved with.

But Satan has used social and political issues to distract many believers. You can't go to Bible class when you are sitting on a picket line or sitting in the slammer.

Social causes are legitimate but the extent of our involvement but be regulated by our greater priority which is to grow in Christ.

We can vote, we can write letters, we can speak out, but not to the point of distraction.

9. Routine leading to Boredom: We all like activity and excitement. Nothing wrong with adding a little spice to life.

But the Christian life is a life of routine on the one hand and tremendous excitement on the other.

ROUTINE: Learning the WORD OF GOD., growing in Doctrine

EXTRAORDINARY: The Application of Doctrine in your life.

Some people church hop for excitement, go here and go there looking for excitement rather than digging in for the long haul of learning the WORD OF GOD., the very mind of Christ.

How to avoid distraction: Setting a priority and sticking with it. Okay, sounds great, but how do we do that?

1. First of all you have to decide what is really important in life. Whatever you hold as being important will establish a priority in your life.

We are limited in our determination of what is and what is not important.

Illustration: What you thought was important a few years ago may have no value to you today.

Reason: As we mature, as we grow, especially in the plan of God, our desires change

But as Christians we can look to our Heavenly Father and he in His Word has told us what is truly important in life:

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

God who has created us, our Father who provided His Son as our Savior tells us what is really important.

By faith we are to seek His kingdom and we are to seek His righteousness and everything else will fall into place.

2. We can see the establishment of priority in the Life and Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Right here in Mark 3:35 Jesus tells us what is really important to him, even more important than family, brothers and sisters and even mother: those who do the will of God.

Principle: Jesus Christ set you as a priority in His life even to the point of going to the Cross for that which he established as being truly important in life.

3. If Jesus set us as a priority we must set Him as the priority in our lives:

Jesus Christ must become the most important person in your life. And then His Word, the Bible, will become the most important thing in your life.

4. The pattern of Priority can be in four stages:

- a. Thinking and concentration on priority #1
- b. Then organize your life around priority #1
- c. Then organize your thinking around priority #1
- d. Concentrate on the details of priority #1

Principle: You already do this, your life is organized around, and your thinking is concentrated on some priority in your life, something you think is the most important person or thing in your life - but if it is not the Lord and His Word you are spending a lot of time and energy involved with the wrong priority and your are distracted from what is really important, your Lord and His Word.

The next step is taking the priority to the Lord: Only he can give you the strength to stick with the priorities of life.

He will motivate you, encourage you, teach you, stabilize you so you can have the endurance necessary to reach his goals for you.

PASSAGES: Three Brave Men of God:

JOB

Job 13:23 How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.

DAVID

Psalms 25:4-5 Make me to know thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

Psalms 39:4 LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am.

HABAKKUK

Habakkuk 3:19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.

JOB, DAVID, AND HABAKKUK all knew what the truly important things in life were, that their relationship with God went far beyond any temporal or human priorities.

And they had the BOLDNESS to go before God and say MAKE ME attain to all that you have for me.

Chapter 4

Aaron Burr, the third Vice President of the United States, was reared in a godly home and admonished to accept Christ by his grandfather Jonathan Edwards. But he refused to listen. Instead, he declared that he wanted nothing to do with God and said he wished the Lord would leave him alone. He did achieve a measure of political success in spite of repeated disappointments. But he was also involved in continuous strife, and when he was 48 years old, he killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. He lived for 32 more years, but through all this time he was unhappy and unproductive. It was during this sad chapter in his life that he declared to a group of friends, *Sixty years ago I told God that if He would let me alone, I would let Him alone, and God has not bothered about me since.* Aaron Burr got what he wanted.

Now Mark jumps over a large period of time in the ministry of the Savior that is included in Matthew and Luke. In those other Gospels we see that Jesus, after selecting the twelve disciples, gives the famous sermon on the Mount.

That message, found in great detail in Matthew 5 through 7, outlines the law of the kingdom of God offered to Israel. But the religious leaders rejected, the people were distracted - they wanted miracles not messages, and even his family thought him unable to care for himself.

In Luke 7 we are introduced to three heroes of faith, a Roman Centurion who has great faith, a widow who is blessed by the Lord, and a harlot, Mary of Bethany, who anoints Christ's feet.

We are told of these three because as we see large scale rejection and distraction to those who do not understand not will even listen to the message of

the Lord, there are those individuals, Gentiles, widows in the pain of loss, and even harlots who lives will be changed forever through faith in Christ.

And while individuals are believing in Christ, the Lord also speaks of condemnation on those cities where he has ministered and yet they have not heard nor understood nor believed in Him.

While the Lord has given to the point parables up to this point, we now begin a section in which parables, not miracles, dominate.

There is a shift from the spectacular which was a distraction to the specific which will deliberately serve to bring truth to those who are ears to hear.

The first of these parables is the Parable of the Seed and the Sower (the parable of the Soils), it is not only given to the people but also later explained to the disciples and close followers of Christ.

We are going to study the nature of the parables some of our Lord's comments regarding the purpose of parables. Later we will examine the parable itself.

Mark 4:1

He began to teach again by the sea. And such a very large crowd gathered to Him that He got into a boat in the sea and sat down; and the whole crowd was by the sea on the land.

Two important words are used to introduce this section:

AGAIN is the word PALIN _which means the repetition of an act for a specific purpose or goal in mind.

Mark 1:38 states the Lord's purpose: He came to proclaim. That was his mission and all that he is doing is being done to fulfill that mission.

The word TEACH is the word DIDASKW _which is one of five word found in the NEW TESTAMENT. for communicating the truth of God:

- 1) PAIDEUW: To train or instruct one younger or under authority.
- 2) LALEW: To speak in a conversational manner
- 3) KERUSSE: To herald in advance (John's ministry)
- 4) EVANGELIZW: To proclaim the Gospel

5) DIDASKW: To preach, teach a crowd of people
In our passage, Jesus is DIDASKW, preaching, teaching, instructing a large crowd.

And there assembled to him a very large crowd, so that embarking into a ship he sat in the sea. And the crowd was toward the sea on the land.

The crowd pressed upon him so much that he took refuge in a small ship and taught them from the ship.

Remember back in Mark 3:9 the crowd who sought after his miracles became so unruly that he told his disciples to have a small boat standing by.

Principle: That Jesus had to go into a ship to avoid the press of the crowd shows us that the crowd had no concern for the person of Christ nor his safety. In Mark 3:20 they would not even give him enough time to eat.

Mark 4:2

And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching,

Now here is the shift from miracles to parables:

1. PARABLE: The Greek word PARA + BOLEI which means to throw alongside.

Truth is thrown alongside life and life then interprets truth. Requires concentration, listening, thinking

2. The miracles were a display of God's power but also distracted the people. They became more involved with the miracles than the message.

3. There are three times in the Lord's ministry when parables were the method of communication. Each time was a time to separate the ones willing to hear from the ones wanting to be entertained.

4. Jesus' mission was not to amass a huge following but to reveal the truth of God. As various groups reject the message the message was hid in the parable.

5. This shift sets up a pattern for both the CHURCH AGE and the believer.

The first century of the church is marked by miracles and signs, but with the completion of the canon (the Bible) the shift is to truth. From the spectacular to the specific revelation of God.

And in our lives we may go through a period of the spectacular as God is caring for us as a Father would care for a helpless infant, but then we grow up and begin to concentrate, listen, and think on the Word of God.

6. Now Jesus will continue to heal and continue with miracles but they will lessen and be more for those who have put their faith in him than for the crowds of hangers-on.

Mark 4:3-9

Listen to this! Behold, the sower went out to sow;

as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up.

Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of soil.

And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

Other seed fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.

Other seeds fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

And He was saying, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

As Jesus begins this parable he places heavy emphasis on listening, paying attention, concentration: Three times the Lord commanded the people (and us) to hear:

Two commands: Hear ye, behold -

The word HEAR is present active, to keep on hearing what is being said in the message. The Active Voice is the voice of discipline, disciplining yourself to keep on hearing. No mind wandering, no thinking about other things, concentrating on the message.

The word BEHOLD is an aorist, middle which looks the point in time benefit to the one listening to the Word.

"Who has ears to hear, let him hear." Again a command to keep on hearing that which is taught.

This is really a command to everyone, do you have ears, do you hear? Then listen to the Word of God.

In verse 23 there is the same challenge: If you have ears, hear.

Principle: As the Lord begins this ministry of parables he includes commands and challenges to concentrate.

A miracle takes no concentration. The spectacular power of God causes amazement, not thinking. A parable requires concentrated thinking.

Dr. Thomas R. Edgar, professor of NEW TESTAMENT. at Capital Bible Seminary make this observation: The NEW TESTAMENT. church was not characterized by power - it was characterized by problems addressed in the epistles.

Man's problems and God solutions takes precedent over miracles of power, and we must listen, think, and apply the Word of God to deal with problems and solutions.

Mark 4:10

As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables.

And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked him the parable.

Anyone who has ever communicated anything, to a class, a church, to your kids, can take comfort in this verse.

Jesus had given the parable, but only later, when the twelve and the few others were alone with the Lord, did they ask: what are you talking about?

Mark 4:11

And He was saying to them, To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables,

Jesus separated those who followed him into two groups. The ones on the inside and the ones on the outside. The criteria was their attitude towards the Word of God that Jesus spoke.

If they were positive to the Word, learning, thinking, applying, they would know the mysteries of God.

MYSTERY is the word MUSTEIRION and referred to the things known by members of ancient Greek societies. Things unknown by those who were on the outside.

Principle: Those positive to the Word, learning, thinking, applying doctrine know these things.

Later on Paul would write in I Cor 2:10 That God hath revealed them [these mysteries] unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

But the ones outside are the crowds who follow after Jesus for the miracles, the family who does not understand the mission, the religious leaders who attribute his power to Satan.

For them everything is a parable, they understand the story of the parable but do not see through to its spiritual truth.

Mark 4:12,13

so that while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven.

And He said to them, Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?

One of those difficult passages:

In order that seeing they may see and not perceive and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest they should turn and it should be forgiven them.

This is a paraphrased quote from Isaiah 6:10.

Render the hearts of the people insensitive, Their ears dull, and their eyes dim, Lest they see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and be converted.

The passage in Isaiah looks at the prophets ministry of communicating the Word to the people so that they are without excuse. The Hebrews could never say that they did not have the Word taught in their midst. God even made the Word available to them when they had already shut their eyes, their ears, and their hearts.

Now what Jesus did was quote a paraphrase of that passage from the Targum of Hillel, this Hebrew work translated the Old Testament into Aramaic. By quoting this paraphrase it becomes the Word

inspired by God while not replacing the Isaiah passage.

It does have a different thrust than Isaiah and can be clarified with an improved translation of one word:

LEST the Greek word MEIPOTE followed by two subjunctive mood verbs, they should turn and it should be forgiven them.

The subjunctive mood is a mood of potential, so we go back to the word LEST and translate it as a potential:

Unless they should turn and it (Their rejection of Christ) be forgiven them.

So right here the lord gives us the secret for understanding the parables.

And the principle for understanding the Bible, and what we must do to know what God is revealing to us.

- we must be with those on the inside.

You are either on the inside or the outside. If you are on the outside you might listen, but you will not hear, you might see but you will not understand.

I Corinthians 2:9-10 Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

If you are not a christian, you are on the outside:

You must move to the inside, in Christ and Christ in you by believing in Christ as you Savior.

If you are a christian you can still be on the outside:

Out of fellowship with your Savior. And unless you turn and are forgiven this message of truth will be a riddle, a parable to you.

And you come into fellowship with Christ by confession of known sins.

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Matthew 11:28 Jesus Christ has said to us: Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

And when you come unto Christ, he and the Father are there to come unto you -

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

William Ward: It is not enough to own a Bible, we must read it. It is not enough to read the Bible, we must learn it. It is not enough to learn it, we must believe it. It is not enough to believe it, we must live it.

It is very appropriate that the parable ministry of our Lord begins with a parable about the Word and how it is received. We are the subject of the parable of the seed and the sower because this parable is really about the soil in which the seed is sown. We can see in this parable how we will receive the Word of God: if we will learn it, think it, and apply it.

We have examined Jesus' purpose, the problem, and the procedure he adopted to solve the problem.

HIS PURPOSES: Mark 1:38 He came to proclaim the Truth

THE PROBLEM: Mark 3:35 Not all are willing to do the Will of God.

THE PROCEDURE FOR PROBLEM SOLVING: Mark 4:11-12 The communication of the Truth in parables.

By teaching in parables the antagonist will understand the story but not the doctrine. They will have no point of contention. The believers will understand both the story and the doctrine.

As we study the life of Christ we see problems and solutions. Indeed the story of the early church is not a story of power but of problems and problems solved.

I talk a lot about problems, they are common to us all. And I talk a lot about problem solving because there is not problem that does not have a biblical solution.

I was asked to elaborate on the problem solving devices or doctrines. And I will and even now I am to a certain degree. We have seen that the key to problem solving is making proper decisions and that all other problem solving doctrines relate to that key solution.

As we continue to study any portion of the Bible we will be elaborating on the problem solving doctrines.

Now with this first parable the Lord gives the parable and then later, the disciples and close followers of the Lord ask Him what the parable meant.

The ones who were not believers probably thought Jesus was giving a lesson in how to plant seed, that he may have been the minister of agriculture for Galilee. But the believers knew there was something more.

Mark 4:14

The sower sows the word.

Since Jesus' stated purpose is to proclaim the Word, the sower is Jesus, the one who communicates the Word.

This parable presumes the presence of communication which demands a communicator. Paul would elaborate on this need of a communicator in:

Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

The WORD is the Word of God and it is sown on all kinds of terrain or soil. There is no exclusivity in the sowing of the Word, it is to go to all.

Principle: The communication of the Word of God, especially in a local church, must be made available to all who wish to come and hear the word. No special groups of key people, you are all key people in the plan of God.

The lord then describes four types of soil on which the Word is sown and what happens in each case.

Mark 4:15

These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.

These are the ones who have some momentary interest with the Word but that is it. They hear (aorist tense) and they have some cognizance of what was said but that is it.

The word HEART does not occur in the passage, the Word never gets to the heart, just the NOUS the mind.

Satan works on this type to keep the Word which is heard from ever becoming personal.

Historically, especially in the U.S., there have been preachers who had a certain popularity based upon their ability to communicate. Many people would come to hear them but the Word never got to the personal stage with them.

They would hear, they listen, but the gospel of Salvation in Christ never becomes personal, never becomes something that involves them.

Satan, the evil one, the devil, takes away the Word. the word for TAKES AWAY means to take by force.

Satan will stop at nothing to keep the unbeliever an unbeliever.

Principle: The word may be entertaining but its purpose is not to entertain.

John summed up the purpose of the Gospel this way:

John 21:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

The unbelievers by the wayside are left by the wayside, never believing in Jesus Christ.

The other three types of terrain or soils are all believers.

Mark 4:16,17

In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away.

They receive the word of God and respond with appreciation or joy.

RECEIVE is present tense, keep on receiving

JOY is XAPAS from the same root as GRACE and it is a response to what God has given them.

But they have no root. There is no depth of doctrine in their souls. Their understanding is superficial like so many believers today who have a lot of talk and enthusiasm but no daily walk in the Word. They never get past the Christian platitudes and bumper sticker type of theology.

So when affliction or persecution comes on account of the Word, because of their position as a believer, they fall apart.

Affliction refers to the problems of life that come as test of the depth of doctrine. Persecution is opposition from others because of the Word in you.

Both of these categories of problems can be great opportunities for the application of doctrine but these Stony ground believers give up when the going gets rough.

Because doctrine is not in the thinking it is not going to be applied. Instead they are at the mercy of human viewpoint and become offended which is a word meaning to be displeased, indignant, resentful.

The problems they face can even turn them against the Word they had learned.

This then is the believer who is distracted by problems and persecutions.

Mark 4:18,19

And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word,

but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Here is the believer who doesn't have his priorities straight. Instead of having a passionate desire for the Word, his life lusts after other things.

He is all wrapped up worrying about the present age. The believer who worries rather than trust that God His heavenly Father is in control.

Now WORRY is a sin, it is an expression of our lack of faith. We may have certain cares and fears in life but we must make sure they are the right ones.

We should fear that we let any promise of the Word go unclaimed.

We should care that we might miss out on some precept of Divine truth.

Application: I know this past week I taught some things that some of you desperately need. I know some of the problems you are facing and the doctrine was given that could have encouraged, comforted, even solved your problem - but you were not here.

Do you care for the wrong things, do you worry rather than take every opportunity to build your faith through the hearing, learning, thinking, and applying of the Word of God?

These thorn believers are also deceived by the deceitfulness of wealth. They are seeking wealth thinking that it can solve their worry problem.

These believers also have a passionate desire for other things, things other than money, in which they seek pleasure and happiness.

Man is a passionate being, and we have to decide where our passion is going to be directed.

And we must have a passion for the things of God. You never sustain fulfillment apart from God's gifts to you. He can make you happier than you have ever believed possible.

What is the most important thing in life to you? As you learn, think, and apply the Word of God I can tell you what it will be - the most important thing in life will be the Word because it will reveal to you the most important person in your life, Jesus Christ.

These misdirected priorities are said to come in and choke off the Word.

We have a passive participle which puts the thorn believer in a passive position of being intruded upon by worry, caring about the wrong things, wealth, and a wrongly applied passion.

This is not a position of any strength whatsoever, the passive verb see these wrong priorities enslaving the believer who does not seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and allow God to add all things to him.

The result of failing the priority test is that the word becomes unfruitful.

Now if you had an orchard and you have trees that did not bear any fruit, you would cut them down and use them for fire wood.

WHEN YOUR PRIORITIES ARE misaligned you bear no fruit for yourself and none for others.

Mark 4:20

And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

THE GOOD GROUND BELIEVER:

These believers WELCOME the Word. The word is a compound of the word for receiving.

The prefix PARA means ALONGSIDE so the word is received or welcomed along side of you as a trusted companion.

In the ancient world and even in the Near East today you never let someone you do not trust along side of you. So here the Word is trusted to come along side.

ALSO the word welcome is middle voice indicating that the good ground believer welcomes the Word because he knows it will be of value to him, that it will benefit him.

The result is bearing fruit and this is the application of the Word.

The best way to keep the Word is to give it away. As you apply it to God and your attitude towards Him, to self, and to others you increase momentum and build inner strength.

The momentum of application is seen in the increasing number of yields, first thirty, then sixty, then one hundred fold. In that day a yield of 10 to 1 was considered good and here the Lord jumps right to a 30 to 1 yield.

Principle: The more you get involved in the cycle of learning, thinking, and applying doctrine the more you get out of the doctrine you learn.

More fruit will generate from even the smallest seeds of truth.

Lessons learned from this parable:

1. The unbeliever is being pushed around by Satan. He is at the whim and will of the evil one. He does not have the dimension of Divine control in His life.
2. Some believers are pushed around by problems and people. They have enthusiasm but no depth of doctrine so even as believers they lack the

dynamics of day by day Divine control in their lives.

3. Other believers are pushed around by wrong priorities. They worry and care about the wrong things. they think money can make them happy, they have misdirected passion. They to are living from a position of weakness rather than divine strength.

4. But others are seeking the manifold fruit of the Word in their lives. And this is a reality because they welcome the Word to their side as a companion and they know the Word will change their lives.

Our Lord in Luke 18:27 told his disciples:

The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

We have our orders - all things are possible.

In the three short parables that followed the parable of the Seed, the Sower, and the Soils; the Lord encourages the positive believer to continue to press the advance to maturity in Christ.

In the parable of the soils there were four types who received the Word.

1. The ones by the way side - the unbeliever.
2. The rocky ground believers who were superficial in their learning of doctrine and easily distracted by problems.
3. The thorn believers who never got around to setting proper priorities of the Lord and His Word first.
4. The good ground believer who welcomed the Word as a companion and accepted the changes that would occur when the Word was established deep in the soul.

For this positive believer who is welcoming the Word, the Lord then gives three short parables that encourage and gives them, and us our orders to press the advance to growth in Christ.

Mark 4:21-24

And He was saying to them, A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand?

For nothing is hidden, except to be revealed; nor has anything been secret, but that it would come to light.

If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

And He was saying to them, Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it will be measured to you; and more will be given you besides.

The Parable of the Lamp

In these five verses we have the parable, the meaning, the challenge, the conditions, and the promise. Let's see how this unfolds.

The parable itself is very simple. The lamp does not come, does it, in order that it may be placed under a bushel or under the couch? Does it not come in order that it may be placed on a lampstand?

The Lord uses some very common items to explain a divine truth. It is very evident that you do not light a candle or oil lamp and set it under a bushel basket. Nor do you put it under a couch. Under the basket it would suffer from lack of oxygen and go out. Under the couch it could catch the couch on fire.

The statement given in this verse is better translated:

Things are hidden so that they can be manifested.

If a lamp is hidden away you bring it out into the room so it can give off its light. Even today a 100 watt lamp turned on and set in a closet is rather ridiculous.

Now in Matthew 5:16 which is a parallel account of this parable, Matthew includes the Lord saying:

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The LIGHT the Lord speaks of is the Word that is now welcomed by the positive believer and is hidden or covered in the soul. JUST AS THE good-ground believer yields fruit thirty, sixty, a hundred fold. The light is hidden in you - in order that it may come unto the open.

Welcoming the word as described in v 20 includes learning and thinking Bible Doctrine. The yield of the word and the manifesting or uncovering of the light is the application of the Word. What you hear, what you learn, what you think on will determine what you apply in life. Here the Lord sows the seed, the Lord light the lamp, that is His job and fulfill his purpose: He came to proclaim.

Our job then is to think on the Word and apply it. Let it shine forth.

In Matthew 5:16 we are told to let it shine before men and it doing so we bring glory to God. The threefold application of doctrine includes:

To God: In Appreciation and Adoration

To Others: In Service and Sacrifice

To Self: In Determination, Desire, Destiny

Therefore, the reason the Word is given is so that you and I will learn it, think it, and apply it.

Here is the Challenge

If (and you do) have ears to hear, let him hear.

This statement is a challenge to just about everyone. the Lord uses a very common denominator - do you have ears? The word TO HEAR is an infinitive. The ear is designed to hear, that is its purpose. Not to see or smell but hear.

So then the command: Let him hear which is saying that we have what is required to hear, so hear the Word.

That is what the ears were designed for - the hearing of the Word of God. So the Lord tells us to use the ears to hear Doctrine. But what we hear is also critical in the process:

This verse includes a command, a principle, and a promise:

The Command: Take heed, or be on the look out, as to what you hear. In our current information age there is a lot of things to hear. We need to be discriminatory, especially when it comes to hearing the Word as to what we hear. We need to use some simple sense in deciding what we are going to hear. Is it from the Bible or from a news magazine, is it divine viewpoint or simply some of man's better ideas. Is it giving you doctrine with which to press the advance or is it just entertainment.

Principle: With whatever measure ye measure, it will be measured to you. We have both the noun and verb of METRON where we get the English word METRIC.

First the noun: With whatever measure. Measure here, is a standard. A learned basis for future decisions. The Greek philosophers used this word to describe that which can measure all things.

Plato was the first to identify the absolute measure as being God himself.

In Romans 12:3 it is a measure from God by which to measure self.

In Ephesians 4:13 it is the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Therefore, the measure we should learn should be the absolute standard of God.

But there are other more basic and human viewpoint standards or measures.

The first verb form of METRON - Ye measure out.

Here is the application of the measure or standard that you have learned. You learn a certain principle and then you use it.

The second verb form of METRON looks at the results: And it will be measured to you.

This is a future, passive, indicative and looks at the outcome of the doctrine you have learned and its future application. The passive voice brings in the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the application of Doctrine to Experience.

Principle: You can not successfully apply a false standard or measure. If you have been listening to and learning the wrong information, when it comes to applying it you will not have success. God the Holy Spirit will not use that which is not accurate, correct, and learned from the Word.

We have a similar statement in our technological society - Garbage in - Garbage out.

The Lord just said it with a bit more flare.

The Promise: And it will be added to you.

The word "added" implies that the reward of correct learning, thinking, and applying of doctrine will be out of proportion to what is heard. This promise is amplified with the next verse.

Mark 4:25

For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

The believer who "has" is the one who has done the work of verses 20 through 24. He has welcomed the Word. He has manifested or applied the Word to God, others, and self. He has heard [with his ears. He has learned and is thinking on the right measure, the standard of divine

viewpoint. As a result, God will make available to him more doctrine.

The more you learn, think, and apply, the more "understanding" you will have. This divine addition will be out of proportion to what is learned. You may learn a very simple principle of doctrine or promise of the Word that can save your life at a future time. For the believer who has little, his learning of doctrine is a matter of convenience apart from diligence. And without diligence in thinking there is little understanding. Since the doctrine he has is not a consistent part of his thinking or applying, the little he has is soon lost.

Application: If you have two sons, and you give them both gifts and one disdains the gift, abuses it, neglects it - while the other uses, cherishes, and honors the gift - to which son would you be more likely to give even more?

God our heavenly Father gives to the believer who had the most, and gives more and more. Because that believer will use all the doctrine that is given

So these verses and this parable looks at a process that begins with the teaching of the word and ends up with it application to life.

STAGE #1: The Communication or Sowing: God's provision includes the Local Church, Gifted communicators (The Pastor-Teacher), the Filling of the Holy Spirit, and the process of teaching.

STAGE #2: The Perception or Hearing: Getting the doctrine that is taught in a local church into the Mind. Perception requires a common language, paying attention, taking heed to what you hear. This doesn't imply agreement or disagreement, only perception.

STAGE #3: The Faith Stage: Here is the transfer of doctrine to the human spirit by faith and the work of the Holy Spirit. This is where the Holy Spirit takes truth and makes it an intricate part of the soul. Here is where you apply faith to the process.

STAGE #4: The Application Stage, measuring out doctrine: At this stage you are pursuing opportunities to apply the doctrine you have in your soul.

I Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason

of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

At the application stage doctrine is now a part of you, you are thinking divine viewpoint rather than human and when the opportunity arises to apply - you apply, measure out the Word.

At the application stage God the Holy Spirit will also bring up to memory center the specific doctrines you need to apply to life.

Principle: Through this whole process God causes the doctrine you are learning, thinking on, and applying to grow, to increase, and will always provide you with more.

A scientist recently observed that if a single grain of wheat was allowed to produce and reproduce unhindered in any way for eight years that it would provide enough grain to feed the whole world for one year.

I do not think that we as Christians yet know what God could do with even one seed of doctrine allowed to bear fruit, one beam of light allowed to manifest forth the truth in the life of the believer.

There was a time Napoleon Bonaparte was on a ship crossing the Mediterranean Sea. He was joined on deck one starlit evening by a group of scientist who began discussing the different theories of the origin of the world. Most of them denied that the cosmos was the creative work of an all-powerful God in heaven. Napoleon listened intently, and at first made no comment. Finally, singling out one scientist who was vehemently denying the existence of God, the little General pointed to the heavens and exclaimed, "And who made those stars? Natural science? Or did they make themselves? Gentlemen, I don't agree with you at all-not at all!"

I do not believe that Napoleon knew the intricacies of space and relativity nor did he even know the vast greatness of the heavens, but he knew and had faith in the one who seethe stars into the night sky.

Last week we saw in the parable of the lamp four issues:

1. We must be sure that what we hear is sound biblical truth. v 24 Take heed what you hear -
2. We must not only hear but learn Bible doctrine. That is to be our measure for life.

3. We must think on what we have learned. This is the thinking that makes doctrine a priority in our lives

4. And then we must apply the Word: This is the meeting out of the measure mentioned in v 24.

When such men as Hus, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin realized that salvation was by faith alone, they changed the course of Christian history. It was nearly 500 years ago that they took there stand against current religious thinking of their day and at peril of life proclaimed believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be salved.

And it has taken nearly 500 years to answer the next important question:

AFTER SALVATION - WHAT?

What are we who are saved by faith to do when it comes to living the Christ Centered Life?

If we are saved by faith - we must also live by faith!

And it is that living by faith that Jesus addresses in these next two short parables. v 26 And He said, this is the kingdom of God -

The word KINGDOM and the phrase KINGDOM OF GOD is a source of confusion for many believers.

Mark uses this phrase nearly 20 times, Luke nearly 40.

The confusion with this term has occurred with people trying to put more into it than the Holy Spirit intended.

The terms Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Christ, Kingdom of Heaven all refer to the rule of God and His divine authority.

God's rule, God's sovereign right, God's power and authority are all included in these kingdom terms.

For us the Kingdom begins at salvation, is sought after in the Christian way of life and is our eternal abode face to face with Christ - as God's children we are under God's rule.

So in this Parable Jesus is going to explain how the Christian way of Life, the Christ Centered Life works. And it works by faith.

The three short parables we find in verse 21 through 32:

1. The Parable of the Lamp: How the Christian way of life works: hear, learn, think, apply. The Process.
2. The Parable of the Sower: The Perseverance in the process and the life of faith.
3. The Mustard Seed Parable: The power of the life of faith.

Mark 4:26

And He was saying, The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil;

This is the kingdom of God [by analogy], if a man might cast the seed on the ground.

We have already noted in the parable of the sower that the seed is the Word of God (verse 14).

The sower here, however, is not the Lord, but the believer who takes in Doctrine and plants it in the fertile ground of his own positive soul.

So Jesus is talking about us, the Christian who welcomes the Word, who is learning, thinking, and applying doctrine.

We are to sow the Word into our souls.

The verb here, as are four of the next six verbs, is a subjunctive mood. THAT MEANS a mood of potential or possibility.

The reason the Lord chose that mood in which to give this parable is because we have free will.

He provides the Word, that is His sovereign decision. But what we do with the Word is up to us.

We make decisions every day to plant the Word, to wait for the Word to have its perfect work in us, and to apply the Word.

Not all believers are willing to do this. Not all believers are not positive. Some live a fragmented Christian life going from distraction to distraction.

One principle that this parable bring out is Patience. Patience in letting the Word planted in your souls grow in you and bring about the change in you that conforms you to the image of Christ.

James 1:4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be mature and complete, wanting nothing.

Mark 4:27

and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows, and he himself does not know.

The patience of letting the Word grow in you is described inverse 27:

And might sleep and might rise, night and day, and the seed sprouts and lengthens, and how it does this he knows not.

Something that you do, something that is done, and something that is not known in this verse:

1. The patience and the endurance of routine. The one sowing the seed doesn't plant it, then every day run to the field to see if it sprouts. He is patient. In the same way we may learn a principle of truth, some promise or doctrine. Do we look everyday to see if it sprouts?

2. But while we are exercising patience, God the Holy Spirit who sustains all things both in the world and in our souls, is at work.

One of the many ministries of God the Holy Spirit to the child of God is taking the Word and making it work within the believer's soul.

The Spirit transfers the seed of biblical knowledge to the human spirit, there is goes from being just the facts to the full knowledge of the promise or the principle.

3. This work of the Spirit is what Jesus referred to when he spoke of the sower not knowing how the seed grows. We know that the Spirit is at work, but exactly how the Spirit does this work we do not know.

In like manner we know when we plant a seed and we add patience we can expect the seed to sprout, lengthen, grow.

As believers we are often told in the Scripture that we are to know with a confident understand the many things that God has for us. But there are certain things we cannot know, we cannot understand them.

1. Job 12:9 tells us that we will never understand the intricate working of the divine plan in nature.

We do not know how the swallows know to return to Capistrano every year on the same day but they do, and we know they do.

2. In Eccl 8:7 we are told we cannot know the future, but we know there is a future.
3. Eccl 9:7 reminds us that we do not know the time of our death but we all know we will die.
4. And in Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32 we are told we do not know when the Lord will return but we live with that as a blessed assurance that our Lord will return.

In the same way we do not know how the Spirit takes a spoken word of truth and makes it a reality, an applicable truth in our souls - but he does and we live the Christ-centered life by that fact.

Mark 4:28

The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head.

This shows us that the process of truth working in us is an automatic process of the Spirit.

For of its own accord the earth bears fruit, first grass, then an ear, and then the full grain in the ear.

Of its own accord is AUTOMATEI " • where we get the word, automatic.

The process is automatic because it is a process worked by the Holy Spirit.

Our part is very simple: We hear the Word, We learn the Word, and then we are patience as the Spirit works the Word in us.

The Word grows in us just like the seed grows to an ear of grain.

Mark 4:29

But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.

When the Word is grown in us, we harvest it in application and use.

But when the fruit permits, immediately the sower sends forth the sickle, because the harvest has come.

Application:

The harvesting of the grain is the applying of what the Holy Spirit has cultivated in your soul.

Based upon this Parable we have three questions and answers:

1. How will sitting in Bible class learning the Word change my life? - I don't know.
2. How will reading my Bible strengthen the inner man? .I don't know.
3. How will learning specific principles and promises of doctrine result in having divine truth to apply? Don't know.

But what I do know is that the Holy Spirit will work this work in you as surely as the grass grows and the grain comes to harvest - Of that we can be sure.

Paul describes this process and this work of God as a renewing of the mind:

Romans 12:1,2, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, willow God.

In these parables of Christ we see the part we play and the part God plays in the renewing of our minds that conforms us to the image of Christ.

1. We attend to the learning of the Word. We go to Bible class we hear the Word, we concentrate and are taught Divine truth.
2. We apply patience in letting the word have its perfect work in our inner man.
3. We also take the offensive, press the advance as we apply the Word to self, to others, and our relationship with God. ÜRÜÇ4. Through this process God the Holy Spirit is working in us to bring about God's desired results.

Our part then functions by FAITH and God's part functions by GRACE.

We combine faith and grace and the result is a full harvest of truth that we can use to live every day.

So the answer to the question AFTER SALVATION, WHAT? is really the same answer that is given for Salvation.

We hear, We learn, and we live by faith -

And that life of faith and the power of faith is exactly what the next parable describes:

Mark 4:30-32

And He said, How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it?

It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil,

yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade.

One small seed of truth when combined with faith can grow into a tremendous application of doctrine that spreads out and brings benefit to self and to many.

So then our life is a life of faith, we learn by faith, we live by faith, and we grow by faith.

Now it seems that there is considerable confusion about faith today. I have heard people say that they don't live by faith but by facts, that they wish they had faith, but they do not, some people even try to crank up faith think that doing something apart from common sense is a leap or step of faith.

But faith is something that is a part of everyone of us.

We learn facts by which we live, by faith.

2 + 2 = 4 NOW HOW do we know that? By faith in someone who told us that there is a number 2 and a number 4 and that the +sign means add, on and on.

Everyone one of you exercised faith in the chairs in which you are sitting when you sat down. That takes faith.

You see, the value and substance of faith is only as good as what you put your faith in.

Frank Clark stated: Troubles and problems are what give a fellow his chance to discover his strengths, or his weaknesses.

And Reese Howells said: You do not know what faith you have until it is tested.

As Jesus and his disciples set out to cross the Sea of Galilee we will see a problem that is a test of faith.

In the parables that precede this event, the Lord has taught the disciples that the life of the Believer is to be a life of faith.

As salvation is faith in Christ, the Christian Life is faith in the written Jesus, the Word of God.

In this miracle of the stilling of the storm we are going to see:

1. The revelation of the Word of God
2. The attitude in which faith is lacking
3. And an attitude and action of faith

In the previous parable we found just how much faith it takes to live the Christian life - not much. A mere mustard seed of faith joined with the absolute truth of the Word of God grows in the fertile soil of the believer's soul.

Now the real issue in the life of faith is not how much faith you have, but in what are you placing the faith you have?

FAITH needs direction and the direction of faith must be sure, absolute, and sound. And the only place to find that is the Word of God, the Bible.

Nothing else is worthy of the life of faith.

Faith is not a leap into a nothingness that may or may not be there.

Faith is the substance or reality of things that are established by God's promise and therefore our sure hope and faith is proof of things that are invisible because we see that faith works (Hebrews 11:1).

So here in Mark 4:35 through 41 we have an opportunity to apply faith:

Mark 4:33-35

With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it;

and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.

On that day, when evening came, He said to them, Let us go over to the other side.

In Matthew 8:18 (the parallel account) we read that the impetus to sail to the other side of the sea of Galilee was the multitude that continued to

follow Jesus wanting to see miracles rather than hear the Word.

In Matthew 8:18 the force of the Lord's statement is made stronger as he Gave a commandment that they pass over to the other side of the sea.

Mark 4:36

Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him.

This event occurs at the end of a long day of public teaching and giving of parables and their interpretation. The mob was there to see miracles but Jesus taught the positive ones parables.

The fact that they left behind a great multitude, the fact that many of the people in other ships attempted to follow them, and the fact that once in the ship he fell asleep shows us three very important things:

1. His mission orientation: Jesus was fulfilling his ministry of proclaiming the truth. When volition was negative or misplaced on the miracles rather than the teaching of God's truth, he would leave and minister elsewhere.

He was not to be distracted from his mission. Not even by those things that seem close to what his mission might be. How many pastor's today would turn their back on the large crowds?

We must be mission oriented: We all have a common mission and that is to grow in Christ, but we also have individual mission which require the application of the doctrine we have learned.

2. Secondly, when we see that the Lord fell asleep we know that he was fatigued after a long day of public ministry.

This action of fatigue and sleep remind us that we are seeing the humanity of Christ.

Deity doesn't get tired, deity doesn't sleep. Here we see the humanity of Christ in this ship and we see Him in His humanity testing doctrine and faith and power that is now available to every believer.

It is often difficult for us to relate to our Lord's earthly ministry because we keep remember that he is the God-man. But here we behold Jesus in His humanity, tired yet fulfilling his mission to proclaim the truth.

3. Also we see that the Lord needed to get away, alone with his disciples. The people in the other

ships would be driven away by the storm. He needed to be in the ship with his disciples because the disciples are now going to be tested regarding the truth they learned that day.

The test will answer the question: Do they have even a mustard seed of faith?

Mark 4:37

And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up.

Great storm is MEGALEI AVEMOU

We get the word MEGA, big, huge from MEGALEI

It means a storm of hurricane proportions. The Sea of Galilee is below sea level and the sun heats it up by day. The surrounding mountains bring cooler air sweeping downward and then when they hit the rarefied air over the Sea of Galilee, intense storms develop. What was a tornado on land, because of hurricane over the water.

So while a storm of this intensity was not unusual, this storm is unique. This storm was sent by God as test, an opportunity for the disciples to have faith in the Lord, to trust in His Words.

Mark 4:38

Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?

The contrast of faith and fear:

And He was in the stern sleeping on the pillow.

The oarsmen and rudder men used a leather pillow as a cushion in these large fishing boats. The Lord was in the stern [rear] of the ship sound asleep.

And they [the disciple] awakened him and said to him: Teacher, does it not matter to you that we are perishing?

The storm is raging and Jesus is sleeping: Why? Because he has faith in the Father that He is not going to die for the sins of the world by being drowned in the Sea of Galilee.

In His humanity, Jesus had faith in the Father's destiny for Him, faith in His plan.

His sleep was a sleep of faith but he was not the first to sleep in a ship during a storm.

In Jonah 1:4 ff we have the sleep of Apathy

A different sea and a different set of circumstances. Jonah is running away from the Lord's mission for him.

Jonah is so apathetic he is pathetic

He is asleep during a storm but asleep for all the wrong reasons. This is no sleep of faith.

He even wishes himself dead, throw me over the side. But God had other plans for Jonah.

The humanity of Christ, asleep during the storm, is for us a picture of faith-rest.

And for those twelve disciples in the ship with the Lord, it should have been an example of faith -

But instead it became a motive of panic.

Here is where the disciples do something we do all the time, they failed the test.

Matthew included a fuller account in which they wake Jesus and say:

Lord, we are perishing, save us.

Now many of the disciples were experienced sailors, and they had tried everything their profession had taught them to bring the ship under control, but nothing had worked.

So they called upon the Lord, just as many of us who after trying everything call upon the Lord for Salvation. He is the only one who can save.

And even as believers we so often go our own way, trying everything and then realize that only the Lord can keep us from perishing.

Too often when the storms of life hit we fail the tests by not realizing that our Savior is greater than any of the storms we may face.

Also in this test we see a test of the Word:

What did Jesus say to the disciples? Did he say Let's go out into the middle of the sea and drown?

Or did he say: Let us pass over to the other side?

They hear him, they even acted upon his instructions, but when the pressure of the storm was on, they forgot what Jesus had told them.

Before we even get into the stilling of the storm we need to make a few observations:

1. When they left the shore they left with a purpose, but the storm caused them to forget their purpose.

2. The danger of the storm poised an opportunity for faith, faith in Christ and faith in His Word.

3. Christ's faith in His Father's plan allowed him to sleep, a picture of faith rest and an example to the disciples and to us.

4. Their cry for help is a cry born out of desperation. But so often it is out of desperation that we will call upon the Lord.

We are too often too strong, to self-reliant, to recognize our need for Jesus.

5. They had failed the test prior to waking Jesus and now they express a lack of understanding about his care and concern for them.

Does it not matter to you that we are perishing?

In the subjectivity of panic they assumed an attitude on the part of the Lord. An attitude of indifference and a lack of care.

Jesus Christ who came from heaven to earth to give himself as a sacrifice for their sins is now accused of not caring for them.

And here is a problem that we have today. We fail to see how Jesus Christ does care for us.

The fact that he was with them in the midst of this storm shows that he did care.

He cared enough to give them the test of the storm.

Mark 4:39

And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Hush, be still. And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.

And he cares enough to still the storm and then teach them a lesson on faith.

And he arose, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, be quiet, be muzzled. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

The one who created the wind, who made the sea now calms these tremendous forces of nature.

Having rebuked the storm he now turn his attention to the disciples:

Mark 4:40

And He said to them, ""Why are you afraid? How is it that you have no faith?

Why are you so fearful, have you not faith?

Now the word for fear in this verse and the word for fear in the next verse are two different words:

Here we have DEILIA which means cowardice and timidity. Never used in a positive way, always negative.

In the next verse we have FOBOS which means a respectful fear.

Then the charge: Have you not faith?

The Lord had taught them, the Lord was with them, the Lord had said let us go over to the other side.

The object of faith was there, but they chose to not put their faith towards the person and words of Christ.

Mark 4:41

They became very much afraid and said to one another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?

And they feared a great fear - FOBOS - Respect and awe

And they said to one another, Who then is this man, that the wind and the sea obey him?

With this they are beginning to get the point, this is not a mere man, this is the God-Man, the unique person of the universe, Jesus Christ.

A FEW PRINCIPLES:

1. Storms will enter our lives. But every storm is an opportunity to apply faith and doctrine
2. Even in the midst of the most violent storms, you can rest the rest of faith. Combine faith with promises and your mission
3. We need never fear being tossed to and fro for the Lord is with us.
4. The choice is ours: Faith or fear. When we have fears we need to take them to the Lord and he will calm us as he calmed the sea.
5. One thousand years before this night on the sea of Galilee the writer of Psalm 107 knew where faith must be placed.

God will always provide the solution to the problem prior to the problem. The solution is there, will you learn it, think it, and apply it?

Read Psalm 107:21-32

This anonymous Psalm provides encouragement for the disciples while they were at sea and for any of us in the midst of storms.

Chapter 5

Abraham Jeschel stated: There is an evil which most of us condemn and are even guilty of: the indifference to evil. We remain neutral, impartial, and not easily moved by the evil around us. Indifference to evil and the master of evil himself is more universal, more contagious, more dangerous.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is going to be confronted with evil in the opening verses of this chapter, he will not ignore it, there will be no indifference, he will do battle the master of evil and his demons.

Mark 5:1

They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.

And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.

Jesus and his disciples have made the night crossing of the Sea of Galilee.

As we saw last week, this voyage became a test of faith for the disciples. A test they failed when they panicked in the midst of the storm.

Although they failed they were able to see a manifestation of the power of Jesus Christ as having authority over nature.

So far in mark we have seen:

1. Jesus entering the public ministry
2. His determination to fulfill the objective of proclaiming the truth
3. We have seen the opposition from all sources and have seen Him undistracted in his mission
4. Now in this portion of Mark, Mark 4:35 to Mark 8:26, we see Mark selecting certain events that authenticate the power of Christ.

It is in this section that we see the power of our Savior, of our friend, Jesus Christ.

Previously, we saw the power He had over nature in the stilling of the storm. Now we will see that his power is even over evil and the despotic power of Satan.

Mark 5:2

**When He got out of the boat,
immediately a man from the tombs with
an unclean spirit met Him,**

And when He had come out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met Him.

Matthew tells us there were two demon possessed men while Mark and Luke mention on the worse case.

The man is described as having or being in or indwelt by an unclean spirit.

These are both datives, an adjective and a noun indicating that it was to the advantage of the demon, the unclean spirit, and to the advantage of his master Satan to indwell this man.

Today we so often brush off the idea of demon possession, which is only possible for the unbeliever, you can be influenced but not possessed, as something out of Hollywood.

And yet when we ignore or even disbelieve in the existence and power of Satan we play right into the hands of the evil master.

Hal Lindsey said it first: Satan is alive and well on the planet earth.

We read in the Bible many instances of startling and dramatic outbreaks of Satan's evil power and demonic activity.

This was heightened when Jesus Christ was on earth preparing to complete the Father's plan for our salvation.

While we may not see these dramatic outbreaks of evil today except in cases of Satan worship and in more primitive cultures, that does not mean that Satan is not at work.

He has had centuries to refine his tactics of distraction and destruction and he is still hard at work.

Five things to remember about Satan:

1. Satan can present himself to the world as an angel of light.

**2 Corinthians 11:14 For even Satan
disguises himself as an angel of light.**

2. Satan and his demons know God exists and will encourage talk about God apart from Christ.

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

3. Satan can quote the Bible and use it for his advantage:

Matthew 4: The temptations of Christ

4. Satan accuses the Christian before God: Zech 3:1, Job, chapters 1 and 2. But Jesus is our defense attorney, I John 2:1-2

5. Satan hates you more than anyone else, his hatred for you goes beyond our imagination (I Peter 5:8). He is our enemy.

Mark 5:3-5

**and he had his dwelling among the
tombs. And no one was able to bind him
anymore, even with a chain;**

**because he had often been bound with
shackles and chains, and the chains had
been torn apart by him and the shackles
broken in pieces, and no one was strong
enough to subdue him.**

**Constantly, night and day, he was
screaming among the tombs and in the
mountains, and gashing himself with
stones.**

This demon possessed man shows us the horrific evil that befalls the unbeliever who finds himself in the grasp of Satan and his demons.

He had his dwelling among the tomb: KATA OIKOS, his home was with the dead.

This is an identification of his physical condition in society, treated as if he was dead.

But it was also an identification with his spiritual condition - he was spiritually dead.

Principle: The strength of demonic power is far greater than human power or any power system man can come up with.

We also see that occasionally the people of the area would catch him and bind him with.

Application: We must never think we can oppose Satan, his demons, or his evil system in our own strength.

And he was constantly crying out: PANTOS KARZW, a meaningless repetition of guttural cries.

Aristophanes uses KARZW for the croaking of a frog which he paralleled to politicians in his play the Frogs.

He inflicted himself with wounds. At times he would so despise the demons that indwelt him that he would inflict harm upon himself.

Have you ever hurt your toe so badly you thought about cutting it off to end the pain. That is the way this miserable man felt all over all the time.

In these verse we see who can do what for man:

What can Satan do for man: Having him living like an animal, in the tombs, with the stench of the dead.

Cairo, Egypt, the city of the dead inhabited by the poor.

What can man do man: Bind him with chains

What can man do for himself: Cut himself with stones, self induced misery.

Conclusion: The only one who can really do something for you is the one who came to save you, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 5:6

Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him;

In a moment of self control, the man runs to worship Jesus:

The words bowed down before him, are PROSKUNEIW which means to worship from the Egyptian for bowing down and kissing.

But it is only for a moment, an aorist tense, because the demons catch on as to who this one is, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Mark 5:7

And shouting with a loud voice, he said, What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!"

As the demons take over, one of them speaks for them all:

And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What do I have to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most

High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!"

The demons recognize who Jesus is: Jesus, Son of the most high God, and claim they have nothing in common, nothing to do with each other.

The reference is to the humanity of Christ which the demons recognize but they never recognize his deity.

Principle: To deny the deity of Christ is demonism

They plead that Jesus not torment them. Putting the man they indwell as the object of torment, but Jesus is not about to torment the man but the demons.

Mark 5:8

For He had been saying to him, Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!

Is parenthetic, going back to what Jesus had said when the man fell at his feet:

When Jesus said that, one demon was exercised, but another then spoke to Jesus. So now Jesus cross examines the remaining demons:

Mark 5:9

And He was asking him, What is your name? And he said to Him, My name is Legion; for we are many

And He was asking him, "What is your name?" And he *said to Him, "My name is Legion; for we are many."

A legion in Roman times would be from 1000 to 6000 demons. That is a vast number.

They had possessed this man and through him terrorized the region of Gadara and Decapolis.

Knowing that Jesus had the power from God to exercise, expel the demons they decide to argue.

Mark 5:10

And he began to implore Him earnestly not to send them out of the country.

They had had quite a work in this region which was seen as a center of unbelief and Satanic activity.

It was in this region, at Tiberias, that John the Baptist was arrested, imprisoned, and beheaded.

They did not want to leave this region and if they were exercised they would be interned in TARTARUS, angelic hell.

Mark 5:11, 12

Now there was a large herd of swine feeding nearby on the mountain.

The demons implored Him, saying, Send us into the swine so that we may enter them.

They come up with a plan, a plan born out of desperation, a plan that probably would not work anyway, but still held for the demons a thread of possibility.

Now there was a big herd of swine feeding there on the mountain. And {the demons} entreated Him, saying, "Send us into the swine so that we may enter them."

Mark 2:13

Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about two thousand of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

So Jesus give his permission:

So repugnant was the presence of demons that the pigs, in fear and panic, ran over the cliff.

We have people today who pray for the power of the spirits. Who seek spirit masters to indwell them.

We have people today who do not even have the good sense God gave a pig.

Mark 2:14-17

Their herdsmen ran away and reported it in the city and in the country. And the people came to see what it was that had happened.

They came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they became frightened.

Those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon-possessed man, and all about the swine.

And they began to implore Him to leave their region.

The townspeople hear and come out to see what is going on.

According to Luke 8:27 at the beginning of this encounter the man wore no clothing. Now he is seated and clothed.

Principle: Jesus dealt with his spiritual problem first, then his social problem.

Application: The greatest help we can offer the world is spiritual, then and only after the spiritual help can we offer social help.

The social gospel gets the order reversed and deludes the gospel of Christ.

Now notice also the reaction of the people, they want Jesus to leave.

Rather than seek the power of God, they mourned the loss of the profit they would have made from the pigs.

Principle: There are always those who will think more of profit and pigs than their salvation and the Savior.

Mark 5:18-20

As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed was imploring Him that he might accompany Him.

And He did not let him, but He said to him, Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you."

And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

The response of the man now cleansed from the demons.

With his faith now in Christ, leading to obedience to the Lord and a desire to serve the Lord, he first wanted to go with them.

But Jesus would not allow him to. But instead to stay and become a great witness for Christ.

Where once there was evil a light now shined out of darkness.

But I want you to see one last thing.

Mark 5:21

When Jesus had crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him; and so He stayed by the seashore.

Look at the opening words of verse 21.

And when Jesus had crossed over again in the boat to the other side -

Jesus and His disciples took a night voyage across the Sea of Galilee, enduring the storm, the hardships of the night, the rejection of the people to help one man.

A whole day and night of round trip travel to see the salvation of this poor miserable man.

Principle: There was no limit on Jesus love, no journey was too far, no difficulty too big.

What are our limits as we now represent Christ as his servants, as his ambassadors, taking the gospel to a lost and dying world?

E. Stanley Jones said: Your Power is either dead or dedicated. If dedicated to God you are alive with God and posses surprising power. If power is saved up, taken to care for its own ends, it is dead.

We are living in an age of power but too often is a power that is dead because it is a power not dependant upon God

In Mark chapter five, after the beginning of the ministry of parables in Mark four, we see a return to a ministry of miracles on the part of our Lord. However, the miracles which are selected and recorded by Mark are intended to be a demonstration of the power of Christ. While the miracles of Mark 1-4 were broad, and involving many, these miracles are specific and involve only a few.

From Mark 4:35 through Mark 8:26 we see the authentication of the power that God the Father gave and embodied in Jesus, the son of God.

We have seen power over nature, over demons, and now over death and disease as well as the power over the mishandling of the Word, superstition, and the abuse we can suffer at the hands of others.

We have in this section a miracle that occurs within a miracle.

Remember: Jesus and his disciples had crossed the Sea of Galilee by night, ministered to one man,

and then returned, showing us the Lord's concern for even one sinner who would come to Him for salvation.

Here again we are going to see Jesus ministering not to many, but to individuals who are helpless and apparently hopeless.

As soon as Jesus arrived near Capernaum, the crowds again began to assemble.

ASSEMBLED is a passive voice, caused to assemble by what they had heard about the power of Christ. Some wanted only to be entertained by the miracle man from Nazareth, others would listen, learn, and believe.

We can assume he was preaching to the people and in the midst of this an important high ranking Jewish official comes into the midst of the crowd.

Mark 5:22,23

And one of the synagogue officials named Jairus came up, and upon seeing Him, fell at His feet, and entreated Him earnestly, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, that she may get well and live."

Now we will come back to jairus and his daughter later, but right now I want you to see just things:

1. He came and worshipped the Son of God: Fell at his feet
2. He sought the power of God not for himself but for his daughter. He was desperate, his daughter whom he loved was dying.
3. He did not presume the plan of God nor the actions of Jesus. He wanted Jesus to come with him, but then said that you may lay hands on her, that she may be saved, that she may live -

He may have been helpless, but once he turned to the Lord he was no longer hopeless - he put his hope in the Son of God. And then put his faith in Christ not presuming upon Christ.

The little subjunctive mood verbs are significant in that they show that while he recognized the power of God in Christ, he did not demand that the power be used according to his demands.

In these two miracles we see something that is lacking in the church today. A true dependence upon Christ not only depending upon his power but also upon His sovereign use of that power.

We have Christians today who are demanding that God's power be used according to their whims and wishes. They have assumed an authority that they do not have.

Even when it comes to holding off demons and the forces of evil, Christians today are demanding that God do this and do that. And that type of demanding is not seen in the New Testament:

EXAMPLE: Paul in

2 Corinthians 12:7-9, And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me - to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Principle: It is God alone who has the sovereign authority and power to abolish all other powers, not you.

Application: Our part is to move into dependence on Christ and his sovereign exercise of power.

Now the two people of these miracles demonstrate that dependence.

Mark 5:24

And He went off with him; and a large crowd was following Him and pressing in on Him.

As Jesus goes off with Jairus the crowd follows and in the crowd is a certain woman.

Mark 5:25-27

A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak.

The physical condition of this woman was bad enough, but we cannot appreciate how bad it was unless we understand the tremendous social and religious persecution she was under:

1. She had no control over her physical problem. She was an innocent but it is on the innocent that religion and legalism so often prey.
2. The religious crowd would have assumed this was punishment for some past sin
3. Because she was considered ceremonially unclean she was not allowed to sacrifice, not allowed in the Temple, and her husband would have been forced to divorce her.
4. Socially she was considered an outcast and only one caste better than a leper.

In the midst of this persecution we are told what she did. A series of aorist participles preceding a main verb:

1. She endured or suffered much at the hands of the physicians:
2. She had spent all her money on doctor bills
3. She was not cured
4. She became even worse
5. She heard of Jesus
6. She came after Jesus
7. [Main verb] She touched his cloak

Principle: She was on a frantic search to solve a problem.

TWO PRINCIPLES COME from this:

1. Every problem in life has a biblical solution
2. Every problem in life is allowed by God to bring you into dependence upon His Son Jesus Christ

While her problem was physical it illustrates for us a spiritual problem. We gain great insight into God's plan when we view every healing miracle as being an illustration of God's power over our diseased spiritual condition:

1. Her issue of blood for twelve years result in an inability to produce, no fruit, no production of offspring
2. The unbeliever has an issue of blood that results in no production of fruit spiritually.

Isaiah 64:6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our

righteous deeds are like a filthy menstrual cloth; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

3. The carnal believer lacking the power of God also has an issue of blood preventing production in the Christian Way of Life.

And man can do nothing to help, only hinders and abuses - only the power of the filling of the Holy spirit can turn this around.

4. But like the unbeliever and the carnal believer, she tried so much and suffered so greatly before she came to the Lord.

Reminder for us: We must go to the Lord first, forget human merit, forget what men say they can do for you spiritually, the only real physician for spiritual healing is the Lord.

Yet people continue to seek extra spiritual solutions to their spiritual problems. We must go to the right person with our problems.

Mark 5:28

For she thought, If I just touch His garments, I will get well.

Her actions were a result of contemplated thought. But the thought she had was based largely on the false premise of superstition.

That is why by the way the procession to Jairus' house stopped. Jesus needed to deal with this woman's false premise of superstition.

If I just touch his garment, I shall be well.

That is not true, the garment Christ wore had no power in it. It was special, but the power was in the one wearing the garment.

The word GARMENT here is more specifically referred to in Matthew 9:20 as one of the four tassels on the garment.

Remember that Mark wrote for Gentile readers while Matthew wrote for Jews and the Jews were told that this woman reached out for not just the garment but for the tassel on the garment.

This was a tassel commanded on the robes in:

Numbers 15:38 Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their

generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue.

This tassel consisted of eight white threads wound around or braided seven times and then double knotted eight times, then 11 times, and then 13 times.

The numbers represented Hebrew letters that spelled the phase YHWH is ONE.

Its purpose was to remind Israel of all the commandments of God.

Numbers 15:39-40 And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the \Lord,\ so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, in order that you may remember to do all My commandments, and be holy to your God.

So this woman reached for that which represented the commandments, the very Word of God.

Excluded from the Temple, barred from sacrifices, she reached for the Word.

And what happened when she touched the tassel?

Mark 5:29

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

Now if the story ended there she would have begun a superstition that all one had to do was touch the tassel, and probably would have started a church called TASSEL TOUCH CHURCH -

So Jesus stops everything to personally confront this woman who was now healed.

Remember also that the crowd did not know she was healed and would have still seen her as an unclean outcast, but that never stopped Jesus from stopping to help the outcast.

Mark 5:30,31

Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, Who touched My garments?

And His disciples said to Him, You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, Who touched Me?

The power that went from Christ is DUNAMIS, a word that always refers to supernatural power.

Romans 1:4 Given by the Father to the Son

Romans 15:13 It is the power of the Holy Spirit

And is now given to us: 2 Cor 4:7, 12:9, Ephesians 3:20, and 2 Timothy 1:7

But always remember the gift is to be used as God's sovereign omnipotence and according to His will, not our demands.

Jesus, tossed about by a crowd, bumped and buffeted by many, stops and asks Who touched me -

The disciples come near to mock Jesus.

You see the crowd pressing in on you and you say, Who touched me? Everyone is touching you -

Mark 5:32

And He looked around to see the woman who had done this.

This was a very dramatic moment for this woman, she knew she had been healed. She would have been grateful for that but Jesus wanted to make sure she was eternally grateful.

Jesus wanted her to move away in her thinking from her religious superstition, move though the Word represented by the tassel on his garment, to a personal relationship with Him.

Do you know where most people are today, back here in superstition, never coming to the Word and never coming to a personal relationship or dependence upon Christ.

History goes through cycles of rationalism, to skepticism, to cynicism, to mysticism.

And while we live in a very technical age we are also in an age of mysticism - techno mystical thinking.

This woman had been so abused by the doctors, society, and religious Judaism that she was skeptical if not cynical, and Jesus would confront her and keep her out of mystical superstition

Mark 5:33

But the woman fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.

Jesus stops and looks around and his eyes rest upon this woman, he approaches her and she comes to him and worships the Son of God and tells him the whole truth, opens herself up to him in all honesty.

No longer a possibility, no longer the touching of a tassel, no longer a superstitious hope - now a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, her Savior.

Mark 5:34

And He said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction.

Now here is where instruction begins. Something has happened, she has been healed, she will now learn how.

Very similar by the way to the new believer who knows he is saved but may take many months of Bible class to begin to learn what happened when you believed in Christ.

He called her DAUGHTER showing to everyone around a relationship existed.

Your faith has healed you: Faith must have an object and the object of her faith is the one she reached out to touch, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Principle: When you reach out in faith make sure it is for Jesus Christ.

Not some superstition, not some human solution, reach out for the one who can solve the problem of salvation and every other problem in life.

Go in peace and be healed of your affliction.

SUMMARY OF LESSONS:

1. While this woman was helpless she was not hopeless. You are never hopeless when Christ is present.
2. Religion is always quick to condemn and slow to offer help. Religion help no hope for this woman.
3. Legalism traces every problem to sin without looking at the blessing that can come from suffering.
4. God does not help those who help themselves. God helps the helpless. Take your problems to the Lord first.
5. While we may be dealt with poorly by those who distort grace we must look beyond man to perfect Son of God.

6. And as Jesus stopped to respond to the silent cry of this desperate woman we must be sensitive to the cry for help that are around us.

It is when you are at the end of your rope, when all options are gone, when you are desperate, when you seem to have no where to turn that you are in place to witness the power, the force, the dynamic, of God through Jesus Christ.

Mark 5:35

While He was still speaking, they came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?

Those who had been standing by at the house come with some bad news, Jairus daughter has died.

But in communicating this tragic information they add a statement:

Why still trouble the teacher - Here is where they from the objectivity of death to the subjectivity of what the Lord could and could not do.

They had assumed the Lord could heal the girl, but had no thought that he could do anything now that she had died.

This is a picture of the limitations that humans place upon the power of God.

And this pictures what we so often do today. We go beyond the objective understanding of a situation and try to subjectively figure out what God can and cannot do.

Jairus, hearing all this, would have been torn between the compassion he felt for the woman Jesus had just healed, and the desire he had to get Jesus to his home as soon as possible to heal his daughter.

We can only imagine how he now felt knowing that his daughter was dead.

Mark 5:36

But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, said to the synagogue official, Do not be afraid any longer, only believe.

But now notice how Jesus intervenes in the situation:

The statement shows that while Jesus heard the report, he did not heed the report.

The bad news was given to Jairus but now Jesus gives two commands to Jairus: Do not keep on being afraid. Only believe -

Jairus had exercised faith in coming to Jesus and now Jesus is telling him to keep on having faith.

The word believe (a verb) is the same as faith (noun).

The object of faith is Jesus Christ and now Jesus Christ is telling him not to be afraid, only believe, have faith.

Here is where we see the strong faith of Jairus. Under the pressure of death he kept on having faith.

Now it is easy to have faith in christ, in his word, to trust God when everything seems to be going your way.

But how about when the pressure is on. When all is at loss. Jairus was under the tragic pressure of just hearing that his daughter has died and yet we do not see him asking why, or falling apart, or getting bitter.

And this is not because he did not have a great love for his daughter, but he had a greater love for his Lord and he listened to what the Lord said - have faith.

Mark 5:37

And He allowed no one to accompany Him, except Peter and James and John the brother of James.

Jesus dismisses the other disciples and the crowd, and now with Jairus and his three closest disciples he goes to the house.

We have a definite article before Peter but not before the other two which binds these three together as a unit. Peter, James, and his young brother John are often with Jesus when Jesus displays his greatest power and truth.

And here is the first time they were privileged to privately accompany the savior and see his great power and compassion.

Mark 5:38,39

They came to the house of the synagogue official; and He saw a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing.

And entering in, He said to them, Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep.

The people who were loudly weeping were paid mourners.

CRYING ALOUD is ALALAZW the word used to describe those who were paid to attend to the dead and mourn their passing.

Jesus asks a question: Why make a commotion and weep?

The simple answer, the girl died and they were being paid to weep.

But then a statement: EXPANDED: She is not dead to stay dead.

Mark 5:40

They began laughing at Him. But putting them all out, He took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and entered the room where the child was.

The lack of faith that comes from unbelief goes beyond mere disbelief, to ridicule. They laughed him to scorn.

The word means to deride, to jeer, to scorn. And just like we see today, the world laughs - but God always has the last laugh.

Psalms 2:4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.

Application: If you have ever endured the laughs of those who ridicule you for your faith just remember, they laughed at your Lord and also remember, your heavenly Father will have the last laugh.

Here we see that Jesus was the MASTER of this house. He threw the mourners out -

Any home where Jesus is invited in becomes His home, He is the Master of our homes as he was the Master of Jairus' home.

PUTTING THEM OUT is EXBALLW throw out, as Jesus would throw the money changers out of the Temple he now throws the mourners out of the house.

This is no weak Jesus, this is the Lord who created all things and holds all power in his hand, King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

But now we note that there are those who are inside and outside:

OUTSIDE / INSIDE:

The Crowd / The Parents

The Mourners / The three Disciples

The other Disciples / The Girl

The ones on the outside are the ones seeking the spectacular, the ones being paid to do a job, and the other disciples who are not yet mature enough to witness what the Lord will do.

But on the inside, in fellowship with the Lord we see the parents who are there by faith, the three disciples who are ready to learn more of the Lord's power, and the girl, who is in need of the power of Christ.

Inside we see faith, a desire to learn, and need. And that is where the Lord is.

Outside we see those seeking profit and those who seek the spectacular - and just like today, the Lord is not there.

Mark 5:41

Taking the child by the hand, He said to her, Talitha kum! (which translated means, Little girl, I say to you, get up!).

He used the Aramaic phrase: TAL-I-THA KUM, which Mark translates into Greek, Little girl, I say to you, arise.

The words TOOK BY THE HAND means to take possession, to control, to take command of - she was in the control of Jesus Christ.

Mark 5:42

Immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded.

The LAW OF CORRESPONDENCE comes into play in this miracle. What we see in the physical realm the death of this girl, is true of all mankind in the spiritual realm.

As she was physically dead man is spiritually dead. And yet the Savior holds the solution.

This was a resurrection:

1. Resuscitation: To be brought back to life to eventually die again.

2. Resurrection: To be brought back to life never to die again. The Lord Jesus Christ only.

3. Translation: Enoch, Elijah, and Church Age believers at the Rapture. To be alive on earth one moment and face to face with the Lord the next.

We are told that those who were there, here parents and His three disciples, were astonished with great astonishment.

EXISTEMI MAGAS EKSTASIS And while this had been used negatively of some who were just amazed at the power of Christ, here it is an aorist tense.

They were amazed at a moment, but then their amazement became obedience.

Mark 5:43

And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this, and He said that something should be given her to eat.

This was not a miracle for the crowds. More and more often the Lord will extend his compassion, grace and power to those who have faith in him while retreating from those who want only the excitement of a miracle.

And then we see how careful the Great Physician is of details, he request that they bring her food.

First he gave her new life, then he gave her food.

She had been ill and in her weakened state she now needed nourishment -

And just as the Lord provided physical food for her new life, we can rely upon the Lord to provide food for our spiritual life - spiritual food, the Word of God.

Three lessons from this miracle:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ has power over life and death.

John 11:25 Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies.

2. To witness the power of the Lord we must be with Him by faith.

3. And that faith triumphs over the fears we have and ridicule we face as we live our lives in fellowship with the Savior.

Chapter 6

Rejection is the easiest thing in the world to handle, when it comes from those you do not like anyway. The real test of rejection is when it comes from those you like, from those you know, from those from whom you desire acceptance.

In Mark 6:1 through 13 we see two paragraphs that fit together in a very interesting way. First we see Jesus rejected by his own people in Nazareth and then we see Jesus telling the disciples to prepare for rejection themselves.

Three Principles must be kept in mind as we study these passages:

1. Negative volition will actively seek an excuse for its unbelief.
2. You do not cast the pearls of the gospel before the swine of unbelief.
3. Jesus Christ will never call upon us to endure anything that he himself has not also endured.

Mark 6:1

Jesus went out from there and came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him.

And He went out from there, and He came into His home town; and His disciples followed Him.

The word HOME TOWN means one's native place. While Jesus was born in Bethlehem he was raised and worked in Nazareth, about 20 miles southwest of Capernaum, a day's journey.

To the people of Nazareth they say Jesus as one who left their town a year before to become an itinerant Rabbi.

Now he returns, having gained considerable fame and with his students. No longer is he the young man who left home and family to teach and preach, he is now well known and has twelve disciples and other followers who sit at his feet for instruction.

Robert Lewis Stevenson said, "Home is the place you go where they have to take you in.

In his humanity he had A legitimate expectation, and that was to minister truth to the people of his home town.

We too often fail to see the humanity of Christ.

We know that he was fully God but what we most

often see in the Gospels is the man Jesus Christ. And that is where we can see that he will never put us through anything that he has not endured from the same source of power that is available to us.

He expected, from his humanity even desired a welcome and a ministry to the people he grew up around; but we will see that this is not the case in Nazareth.

While they will welcome Jesus back and even afford to him certain privileges, their welcome will be tainted because it will be on their terms. They will receive the Jesus they want, the one is defined according to who they think he is and doing this, they will reject the Lord of Glory. J

Mark 6:2

When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands?

The synagogue service in Israel was designed to allow visiting Rabbis to have the opportunity to deliver a message.

It was considered a privilege to have the ruler of synagogue invite you to speak. This privilege was extended to Jesus Christ.

It is important to bear in mind that he was asked to speak.

It is also important to know that any speaker could be questioned regarding his message. The synagogue service still held some of its simplistic beginnings and the opportunity for question and answer interchange was one of the foundations of the service.

Now we see the reaction of the people.

A series of three questions [expanded]:

1. From where does this one get these things?
2. And what wisdom is this that has been given to him?

3. And [from where] comes the powerful deeds done? through his hands.

Principles of their questions

1. They were astonished, imperfect tense. The word means to lose control of yourself. The imperfect looks at a continual action in the past. They kept on being astonished.

The disciples were astonished at the raising of Jairus' daughter but their astonishment quickly became obedience. Here we have these people of Nazareth who begin to speak from their astonishment.

2. They did not ask Jesus these questions, they asked each other. They would rather hear the opinions of their peers than the truth from the Lord.

There was a time to question the speaker but they ignored him and would prefer opinion over truth. This is pure subjectivity, ignore the source of truth even when it is standing right in front of you.

3. Their questions took issue first with the source of his information. In the next verse they take issue with the Lord's qualifications.
4. Their first two questions attacked the source and the quality of his wisdom. Now they were left with only two sources, either God or Satan. And they were too subjective to except God as a source of this man's teaching so their unspoken conclusion is Satan.
5. In the third question they questioned the power behind his miracles. And yet he had not performed any miracles in Nazareth at this time. They were pulling in irrelevant information and bringing charges against that which did not even matter at this point.

But that is the way subjectivity and negative volition works, they even attack the irrelevant.

6. And also they displayed poor manners. Jesus was an invited guest speaker and you let your guests have their say and you do not attack them. You invited them to speak, let them speak.

Mark 6:3

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas

and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us? And they took offense at Him.

And then they turn on him personally, assuming they knew all about him.

No longer is he the distinguished Rabbi with his students, now he is the carpenter. Again, negative volition loves labels and they will assume his position, not as what it is but as to what it was. He is no longer a carpenter, but they refuse to move on in their thinking.

The greatest insult is when they called him "The Son of Mary." In the Jewish culture you are always the son of your father even after your father has died. His name was Jesus ben Joseph, but to insult a person you name him the son of his mother.

Then they mention Jesus' brothers and sisters. James and Jude we know later as the ones who wrote epistles that bear their names. Of the others we have no information.

And then the conclusion of their reaction: "And they took offense at Him."

The word "offense" is SKANDALIZW, they were scandalized that he should dare to teach them.

This word is also used for stumbling block and they saw Jesus as a stumbling block.

Principle: Truth taught becomes a stumbling block to negative volition.

These question in verse 3 represent the lowest form of attack, they attack, malign, criticize the person himself.

Principle: While Jesus was impeccable, the sinless Savior, we can apply this today with the statement: "It is not the man but the message that counts."

Mark 6:4

Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.

And here Jesus applies another important principle of life that we too must apply:

It is not what happens to you in life that counts, but how you respond or react to it that matters.

Through the Old Testament history of the prophets we can see that they were most often

rejected by their own people. We see that indeed: familiarity breeds contempt in the minds of subjective people who are negative to the truth.

The people of Nazareth distracted themselves and rejected Jesus Christ.

Reason for distraction: Pride and arrogance.

They remember when Jesus was merely a carpenter and refused to see him as one who now had the message of truth. Three areas of rejection:

1. In his native place: His home town
2. Among his relatives
3. In his own house

Applications abound from this statement today.

1. The most difficult people you will have to witness to is the ones you are close to.
2. This is true on the job, in the home, at school. We will see the greatest test of rejection come from those whom we desire the most acceptance.
3. And yet we can handle this rejection because it is nothing that our Lord also did not face.

Mark 6:5

And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

The negative volition that existed in Nazareth was so extensive that the people did not even bring the sick to experience the touch of the master's hand.

NAZARETH LOST ITS capacity for blessing.

There was little Positive Volition; result, no blessing.

Mark 6:6

And He wondered at their unbelief. And He was going around the villages teaching.

The word "marveled" is QAUMAZW, and on only two occasions do we find this very human response expressed by the Lord. Once in the positive in Luke 7:9 where Jesus marveled at the faith of the Roman centurion of Capernaum. He said he had not seen such great faith even among his own people. And here in the negative as he marvels at the faithlessness, the unbelief of his own people.

But it is through this very human response to rejection that we can learn how we too will suffer rejection and how we too can learn to handle rejection.

Principles:

1. Our Lord never calls on us to endure anything that he has not endured. Any test is an opportunity to apply the doctrine that God has given us. And rejection is a test.
2. We may have expectations of acceptance but reality may hold rejection.
3. Rejection is only a test when we are rejected by those from whom we desire acceptance.
4. We may marvel, be surprised at the rejection but we must never let that distract us. We must apply the divine principle of acceptance.
5. While man may reject you, even family and friends, the God of Heaven has accepted you - though faith in his son you are forever a part of his family.
6. Therefore, when man rejects us keep your focus on Jesus Christ and as we read in Ephesians 1:6:

To the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Someone once asked Francis of Assisi how he was able to accomplish so much. He replied, "This may be why: The Lord looked down from Heaven and said, Where can I find the weakest, littlest man on earth? Then He saw me and said, I've found him. I will work through him, and he won't be proud of it. He'll see that I am only using him because of his insignificance.

In his humanity he was surprised that he was rejected but he did not allow the lack of fulfillment of his expectation of acceptance to defeat him.

Instead he did two things:

1. He went around the villages in a circuit teaching.
2. And then he sent out his twelve disciples to minister in His name.

The rejection he received in Nazareth would prepare the disciples that they too will be rejected.

And again I remind you of the **principle**: The Lord will never put us through anything he has not gone through, by way of rejection, a test, and even temptation, but he did not sin.

Mark 6:7

And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits;

The word SEND OUT is a pres infinitive of APOSTELLW. To send out as a result of something else.

It is the verb form of the word APOSTLE which refers to an official representative. It was used in Ancient Greek for the high admiral of the Greek navy who personally represented the king and the apostles word was the word of the king.

It is a word that carries tremendous authority with it. And it was a gift and office in the early church prior to the completion of the Bible. There are no apostles running around today except those who are so appointed by self in arrogance.

They were sent out two by two: There are three reasons they were sent out in pairs:

1. For their own safety. Many areas of Galilee were dangerous. The robber barons preyed upon the weak. The story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 illustrates the dangers that could befall a lone traveler.
2. For encouragement and mutual support: Even today we see the greater effectiveness of believers working together and ministering to each other in encouragement. Discouragement will come and that is when there is strength in numbers.
3. For a legal witness: Jesus refers to the Old Testament law:

John 8:17. Even in your law it has been written, that the testimony of two men is true.

And so by sending out the disciples in pairs there were two who would proclaim the testimony of Christ.

We also see that he gave them power over unclean spirits.

We see this authority, the word refers to delegated authority, over unclean spirits or demons mentioned in the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and Revelation.

This was an essential authority that the disciples needed because Satan and the demons had

launched a full out attack against Christ and, thus, against his representative the apostles.

But this divine authority is not extended to the believer today. Instead we are told:

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

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

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Even the great Apostle Paul did not have this same authority:

1 Thessalonians 2:18 For we wanted to come to you, I, Paul, more than once, and [yet] Satan thwarted us.

2 Corinthians 12:7 And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me - to keep me from exalting myself.

Therefore, our power over Satan and his fallen crew is though putting on the assets God provides, resisting the temptations of the Devil, through prayer to the Father.

But these disciples had a delegated to them a divine prerogative of authority over the demons. There would be no demonic interference with their mission.

Mark 6:8,9

and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff no bread, no bag, no money in their belt but to wear sandals; and He added, Do not put on two tunics.

The Lord describes what they should take with them.

And the Lord instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belt; but to wear sandals; and He added, Do not put on two tunics.

This is not a call to poverty, but a call to urgency. They were to travel light and be quick about their business of proclaiming Christ.

The prohibition against carrying a bag is interesting in that normally the word was used for a bread bag. Common in the ancient world.

But the Lord already said, no bread, making the prohibition against a bag for the bread redundant.

But the bread bag was also used by beggars to hold out like the tin cup, so this prohibition is against going about begging.

In all this the lord is going to teach the disciples that He can care for them even when he is not with them.

This is one way to teach Christ centered dependency. There are many ways the Lord will use to get believers to realize that they can depend upon him. Sometimes he may send us out with nothing and we will see that

2 Corinthians 3:5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God.

These disciples would learn what we must also learn, that even though absent, the Lord provides for us. And we can depend upon Him.

Mark 6:10

And He said to them, Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town.

This advise was given in light of a problem in Jesus' day with itinerant Rabbis who traveled to the villages and would move from house to house improving their quarters.

If a family invited them to stay, they would stay only until a better offer came along. Then they would move up to a better home, wealthier hosts, more servants.

But the disciples were not to impose upon the hospitality of many nor accept a more attractive offer once they were settled.

This requirement of the Lord for his disciples has an application to us -

Principle: Be satisfied with what the Lord gives you.

Philippians 4:11-13 Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

We need to develop an attitude of contentment regarding the grace that God gives to us. If he should give another more grace by way of logistical support, then rejoice for your fellow believer - do not envy them.

Mark 6:11

Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you go out from there, shake the dust off the soles of your feet for a testimony against them.

Now here is the main thrust of Jesus' advice:

The shaking of the dust off the feet was a common custom among the Jews when they would leave the home or business of a Gentile.

Here the disciples, visiting Jewish villages, were to treat rejection as if the ones who were negative were nothing more than Gentiles.

This act of contempt was to be done as a testimony against the unbelief of those who would not receive the message of truth.

God provides the truth, and when rejected the ones who reject do not have to answer to the disciples, but to God himself who provided the truth.

The disciples were to separate themselves from those who rejected the message of repentance.

With evil, human good, human viewpoint, and Satanic systems being so prevalent in our society, the Child of God must be well aware of the biblical mandates and application of those mandates regarding separation. The correct application of separation is part of fulfilling the greater mandates of loving the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Ephesians 5:10,11, "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord and having no

fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

Topic: Separation

Romans 16:17-18, Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Romans 12:2, And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind -

Ephesians 5:11, And have no fellowship (do not speak favorably of) with the unfruitful works of darkness (Satanic systems), but rather reprove them.

Separating from Other Believers

Romans 16:17-18, Mark them which cause - offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.

Separate from believers who are continually out of fellowship, especially when this leads to certain types of sin.

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 Certain sins manifested by even believers are too dangerous to be around. You protect your soul by such separation.

Separate from believers who reject the system that God has provided for his people in this Age. Includes those who reject Bible Doctrine, the Local Church, or the authorities God has established in his church.

2 Thessalonians 3:6, Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that idly walketh not according to the tradition which ye have received of us.

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15, And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonishing him as a brother.

Separate from believers who are involved in religious heresy and apostasy.

2 Corinthians 6:16, Regarding idolaters: - Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.

2 Timothy 3:5, Having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Separation from Unbelievers

Believers must separate themselves from unbelievers in any area where doctrine may be compromised by majority rule or by a binding decision of others or the authority within an institution or organization.

1. Marriage. For a believer to marry an unbeliever is prohibited by the Word of God.

2 Corinthians 6:14, Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

2. Business partnerships where decisions made by others or by a majority could involve you in unbiblical action. In any joint business endeavor, be willing to lose what you have at risk to protect your soul, your integrity, your standards.

3. Social Organizations. Most problems here come in the majority rule format these organizations functions under. Fraternities and sororities may have compulsory drinking, dating, sex, etc.

In any relationship with unbelievers or even believers who do not stand firm on God's Word, consider your position and be able and willing to cut your losses and get out.

Principle: Separation is always in relationship to your own soul. The most valuable thing you possess is your soul. The most important relationship you have is with the Lord. Do not fail to separate from anyone or anything that would harm your soul and your friendship with Jesus Christ.

Mark 6:12,13

They went out and preached that men should repent.

And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.

The message and actions of the disciples:

The word for PREACH means to make a public proclamation with such gravity, formality, and authority that it must be heeded.

And the message was a message of repentance. To change one's mind and the people who received the message of the disciples regarding Christ were to change their minds regarding their sins, their arrogance, their legalism - and turn to Christ.

Because of the authority they had been given, they cast out many demons and also, they healed many anointing them with olive oil that was an ancient medicinal treatment practiced in the ancient world.

One principle comes through these instructions of the Lord and the ministry of these disciples. A principle of urgency.

They were to travel light, stay in one place, quickly move on when encountering negative volition, and proclaim the simple message that calls for a decision, repent, change your mind and believe in Christ.

And we are under that same urgency today. A personal urgency to believe in Christ, to make his word the most important priority in our lives. We may not have the time tomorrow. The day is at hand.

And an urgency that should be a part of our ministries as we seek to tell others about Christ and His Word.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon used to tell this story: "A certain duke once boarded a galley ship. As he passed the crew of slaves, he asked several of them what their offenses were. Almost every man claimed he was innocent. They laid the blame on someone else or accused the judge of yielding to bribery. One young fellow, however, spoke out, 'Sir, I deserve to be here. I stole some money. No one is at fault but myself. I'm guilty.' Upon hearing this, the duke seized him by the shoulder and shouted, 'You scoundrel, you! What are you doing here with all these honest men? Get out of their company at once!' He was then set at liberty while the rest were left to tug at the oars." The key

to this prisoner's freedom was the admission of his guilt.

The ministry of the disciples quickly spread the message of Christ throughout Galilee. Eventually the news got to the palace of Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee. Mark calls him a king which would be in keeping with Roman chain of command under the Emperor.

This reference to Herod begins the only extended discourse in the Gospels that deal with someone other than the Lord Jesus.

Here we are informed of the martyrdom of John the Baptist who was Jesus half-cousin and the forerunner or herald of the public ministry of Christ.

In this section we are going to see the family Herod in the worse light, which is appropriate because they were very evil.

We are going to see intrigue, machination, paranoia, guilt reaction, and sin.

We are given an example of how man deals with a problem apart from dependence upon the truth of God.

Mark 6:14

And King Herod heard of it, for His name had become well known; and people were saying, John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why these miraculous powers are at work in Him.

There are seven members of the Herodian family mentioned in the Bible by the name Herod.

This is Herod Antipas who was called a fox by Jesus in Luke 13:31-33 and presided at the trial of Jesus in Luke 23:7-12.

He was the Son of Herod the not so Great who ruled Palestine from 37 BC to 4 AD. He was the one who killed the baby boys in Bethlehem trying to eliminate the one who truly was the King of the Jews.

He also had an affair with a woman by the name of Cleopatra after Mark Antony and Julius Caesar were done with here and had a son named Herod Philip by here, and that Philip is mentioned in this section (see verse 17).

The family Herod, while ruling over the Jews were not of the house of Israel. They were Idumeans

whose root at in Edom and are descendants of Esau, not of Jacob.

And they were opportunists. Pompey, upon conquering Jerusalem, opposed Herod's father, Antipater - but soon the family was in power and continued so for almost a century.

Mark 6:15

But others were saying, He is Elijah. And others were saying, He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.

As the report of the power and miracles of our Lord became known their was speculation as to who he was.

This report of what people were saying shows us that there really is nothing new about the New Age.

These people would rather believe in the reincarnation of Elijah that believe that Jesus is the Christ.

Mark 6:16,17

But when Herod heard of it, he kept saying, John, whom I beheaded, has risen!

For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her.

Herod, suffering from guilt, doesn't buy the reincarnated Elijah theory. He believes that Jesus is the reincarnated John the Baptist.

The Greek text makes this a very emphatic statement - "Whom I beheaded, John, this one was raised."

Sounds like Herod Antipas had been reading too many Steven King novels - he imagines that John has returned from the dead to haunt him.

I think we can easily see that Herod is suffering from guilt over putting John the Baptist to death.

Principle: A lot of very weird religious thinking can develop from guilt reaction:

1. We have people today who believe in reincarnation because they are so guilty about their own messed up life that they want a second chance.
2. Others, spurned on by guilt, reject any thought of heaven or hell. They are so guilt ridden and

afraid that they are going to hell they reject the concept.

3. Some get so guilty over the lousy job they are doing as Christians that they begin to believe that they were not really saved, that it didn't take or that they did not do enough. So they add to salvation through faith in Christ alone.

In verses 17 through 29 we have the reason Herod Antipas has such guilt, he murdered John the Baptist.

Mark 6:18

For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.

To summarize the story:

John was preaching against Herod's divorce from his wife and his nieces (Herodias) divorce from her husband Philip (Cleopatra's son) - and their marriage.

Herod threw John in his dungeon to shut him up.

Mark 6:19,20

Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death and could not do so;

for Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed; but he used to enjoy listening to him.

Herodias wanted him dead but Herod knew that severe political implications could result so, being an opportunist, would not allow her to have him put to death.

Mark 6:21-23

A strategic day came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his lords and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee;

and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests; and the king said to the girl, Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you.

And he swore to her, Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you; up to half of my kingdom.

But on Herod's birthday, Herodias daughter Salome (Cleopatra's granddaughter) danced the dance of the seven veils for him and his drunken friends, he said she could have anything she wanted up to half his kingdom.

Mark 6:24-25

And she went out and said to her mother, What shall I ask for? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

Immediately she came in a hurry to the king and asked, saying, I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

She quickly conferred with mommy, who said, ask for John's head on a platter (That idiom comes from that historical event). And Herod Antipas was now under obligation to give her John's head -

Mark 6:26-29

And although the king was very sorry, yet because of his oaths and because of his dinner guests, he was unwilling to refuse her.

Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded him to bring back his head. And he went and had him beheaded in the prison, and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother.

When his disciples heard about this, they came and took away his body and laid it in a tomb.

I think we can see why Herod was guilty. And being an unbeliever he had nothing else that he could do but react to his guilt and come up with some weird conclusions that John has returned from the dead.

But we too have things that could cause guilt in our lives but we are Christians, and we are told in the Word of God that Jesus Christ is the solution to our guilt.

Colossians 2:13-14 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having

forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Part of the good news of the gospel is that yes, you could be guilty regarding all kinds of things, but NO, there is no reason for guilt.

Webster defines guilt as: A painful feeling (emotion) of self-reproach resulting from a belief that one has done something wrong or immoral.

Guilt is one of the most common emotion known to man. It is a reaction to wrong that has been done, sins committed, and at times even supposed failures.

For the Christian, guilt is a major stumbling block to advance and a gateway to religion, ritual, and legalism.

The Solution to Guilt

In Colossians 2:12-14 Paul presents Jesus Christ as the solution to our guilt. He has taken us from death to life, has forgiven our sins, has taken our debt from us and nailed it to His cross.

The work of Christ on the Cross included Redemption, unlimited atonement, regeneration, imputation, justification, propitiation, positional truth, and expiation. Of these, it expiation that removes the guilt of sins from the believer.

EXPIATION means to make atonement or satisfaction, to pay the penalty for sins, to suffer for sins. It is derived from the Latin for appeasing the pious, or to appease God in his declared penalty for sins.

When Jesus Christ died on the Cross for sins he propitiated the Father (I John 2:2) which means that he satisfied the justice of God. The manward side of propitiation is expiation, we must recognize that he did pay the penalty of sins.

2 Peter 2:24 And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

The last phase, by His wounds you were healed, would be better translated, by his wounds you were made whole.

The emphasis is on spiritual wholeness, not physical. And part of our spiritual wholeness is the elimination of guilt reactions,

At salvation, recognition of guilt as a sinner leads to belief in Christ who has taken our sins from us and nailed them to His Cross.

In this sense, guilt is not a feeling nor emotion but a fact of status quo. We are guilty and we need a Savior who has paid the penalty.

As a believer, we will have feeling of guilt over wrong that we have done. But anything more than recognition of our guiltiness would be reaction. Whereas the proper response to our guiltiness is to confess our sins.

In confession we look back at the Cross and the work of Christ and we Confess, forget, and move on. The sense of guilt that becomes a feeling or emotion drags us back to our sins.

Guilt then denies the very sufficiency of our Savior.

Two problems of guilt

Problem #1: Guilt Paralysis

1. In Guilt Paralysis the person does not believe that God can forgive him.
2. This is guilt reaction personalized and denies the work of Christ on behalf of self.
3. For the unbeliever this guilt becomes a barrier to believing in Christ because the guilty sinner believes that some of his sins are too great to forgive.
4. To the believer such guilt becomes a stumbling block to advance in the Christian way of life, a reason for rejecting Christian service, an excuse for no growth.
5. With either the unbeliever or the Believer in guilt, Satan has won a tremendous victory. He has prevented salvation, he has prevented growth and service.
6. This type of guilt is a subtle arrogance, believing that you could do something that threw the perfect plan of God. That your sin is too great to forgive, that you fell through the cracks.
7. Hence, guilt paralysis prevents dependence upon Jesus Christ - no salvation for the unbeliever, no growth for the Believer.

Problem #2: Guilt Reaction Activity

1. Once a person in guilt rejects the work of Christ to take care of that guilt, guilt reaction will seek a way to deal with the guilt by human means.

2. Few people can live with guilt, many people take their own lives because of guilt. Guilt is a terrible companion to life.

3. Humanism well trains us for getting rid of guilty emotions and feelings by counter action.

As child we are told that if we are bad we must try real hard to be good. Do something bad, follow it up by something good. Counter balance the failures of life by having successes in life.

4. In human relationships, within a marriage, a family, a business, or even a church, this type of approach to others is not necessarily wrong.

We hurt someone, we become aware of it, we have feelings of guilt, we take steps to resolve the matter. Very simple human activity.

5. In our spiritual relationship with God and in our union with Christ, this type of approach is disastrous and leads to religion, ritual, and legalism.

We now see why Paul talked so extensively about Christ the solution to our guilt (Col 2:12-14) prior to dealing with religion, ritual, legalism in Col 2:16 and following.

6. With guilt reaction activity the guilty sinner attempts to nullify his guilt by another activity which is from self. If he is guilty over sins, try a little human good.

It has been estimated that over 80% of all the charity and benevolence done in the U.S.A. is done out of guilt rather than a true desire to help.

Most of the other 20% is done for a tax deduction.

7. This type of reaction activity is usually found when the guilt is over some overt sin which is either criminal or sexual in nature.

Example, a person is involved in adultery so they pledge (to themselves) to go to Church every Sunday with their spouse.

Someone cheats on their taxes or steals embezzles funds from their company and attempts to nullify their guilt by giving money to charity.

8. In the extreme, this guilt reaction activity can become a lifestyle of legalism, religion, and ritual.

A person's whole motive for being in a church or a religion can stem from their guilt over sins.

9. Any guilt reaction action sets up a false system that takes a person away from the glories of Christ and prevents dependence upon the Savior.

Principle: We must rid ourselves of thinking that our sins are too great for God to forgive and we must rid ourselves of thinking that we can do something that will mollify our guilt.

Now herod antipas had done a horrible thing and should have legally suffered for it but he did not. He was the king, and he was also an unbeliever so he suffered under guilt reaction.

But for you, as a Christian, there is something far better, there is freedom in Christ -

Galatians 5:1, It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

We often say it even to encourage ourselves, Jesus Christ can provide us with all our needs - we hope, we pray, we trust. The miracle we are going to examine this morning proves it, he is able and he is willing to provide for us in every area of life.

We have noted that in this portion of Mark we are seeing the vindication of the power, purpose, and person of Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

In the miracle of the feeding of the 5000 we have the only miracle of our Lord that is recorded in all four Gospels.

Hence we see that this is a miracle of great importance because it portrays Christ as the bread of life and the one who is able to provide for his people.

We have a progression in this account that shows the People, the Problem, the Provision, and the Proclamation.

Mark 6:30,31

The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught.

And He said to them, Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while. (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)

First we see the return of the disciples from their mission of presenting Christ in the villages of northern Galilee.

Here the disciples are called APOSTLES and apart from the listing of the followers of Christ in Matthew and Luke, this is the first functional use of this term as applied to the disciples.

The Apostles would speak on behalf of Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords.

As they reported to Jesus what they had done and what they had taught, Jesus calls them to stand down from their mission and rest.

Application: Simple, men need rest and as our Lord provides times for service he also provides time for rest.

We also see in this the concern, care, and compassion our Lord has over us. He may call us to go out to labor and minister but he will also call us to times of rest and refreshment.

Principle: He knows what we need even more so than we know what we need. Times of labor and times of rest.

In what is going to occur we will see the combined nature of the deity and the humanity of Christ.

Here we see that in his humanity he recognizes the need for rest, also in his humanity he will see the need for food - and from the omnipotence of his deity he will provide the food.

Now is time for rest.

Mark 6:32,33

They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.

The people saw them going, and many recognized them and ran there together on foot from all the cities, and got there ahead of them.

However, this is not going to be a very restful time because the people would not allow him to be alone.

On the part of the people this is a display of poor manners. They would not allow Jesus and his disciples to enjoy a time of much needed rest.

But we notice that Jesus does not criticize them for their deportment. Instead he deals with them where they are, and with what they need.

Mark 6:34

When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

So instead of rest the Lord is confronted with a great crowd of people. Later, at verse 44, we find that the crowd numbered about 5000 people.

The first response of our Lord is a response of compassion.

Now in a crowd of 5000 some would be there to learn about Christ while others would be there to just see the performance of miracles. Some for the right reason, some for the wrong reason.

But regardless of their motive the motive of Christ is clear, he had compassion on them.

The word for COMPASSION is the same root that we have for the word EMOTIONS.

There are four things in the Gospel that caused the Lord to have compassion on people:

1. Here and the parallel account of Matthew 14: The need of the people for a shepherd.

This looks at the desire for truth on the part of the believer and that this moves the Lord to compassion.

2. When man recognizes the will of Christ and His power from God to make us spiritually whole. This is illustrated by the leper of Mark 1:40

3. When man cries after Christ for spiritual sight. Illustrated by Bartimeus at Jericho who cried after Christ, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David (Matthew 20:34)

4. When death takes a child away from a parent. The widow of Nain whose only son died drew compassion from Christ in Luke 7:13. This physical death was a picture of spiritual death.

So our Lord is moved to have compassion on us when we desire to be taught, desire spiritual sight, desire to be spiritually alive, and depend upon His will and power for all this.

The people that followed after Christ were as Sheep not having a Shepherd.

The greatest encouragement to a communicator of the Word is the desire of people to learn, think, and apply doctrine.

So we see that Jesus Began to teach them many things.

Mark 6:35,36

**When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, This place is desolate and it is already quite late;
send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.**

The people were so caught up in the teaching and the learning of truth that time slipped by and soon the hour was late.

Now remember verse 32: They were in a desert place.

The disciples wanted Jesus to stop giving spiritual food so that the people could go and buy actual food. But this would have been an interruption of the teaching ministry.

The disciples were actually suggesting a distraction to the teaching of truth which was the Lord's primary objective at this point in his ministry.

Mark 6:37

But He answered them, You give them something to eat! And they said to Him, Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?

So the lord is going to solve the problem. We have the people, 5000 of them, too many We have the problem, no food. The first suggestion is for the disciples to go and buy food.

This suggestion was made to demonstrate the inability of the disciples to solve the problem.

The 200 denarii was equal to about \$40.00. This was the amount held by Judas as the treasurer of the disciples. And \$40.00 was not enough to buy food for 5000 people.

So they came to a point of inability and correctly looked to Jesus Christ to solve the problem.

Principle: We often hit those times in life where we can do nothing. Times of inability teach us the Lord's ability.

Mark 6:38

And He said to them, How many loaves do you have? Go look! And when they found out, they said, Five, and two fish.

So the Lord told the disciples to find any food among the people:

In John 6:8-9 we read that it was a young boy who had the five loaves of bread and the two fish. He gave these to the disciples and they take them to Jesus.

Not much to pass around among 5000 people, but the Lord Jesus Christ can take that which seems insignificant and make it of great significance.

Mark 6:39,40

**And He commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass.
They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties.**

The word for GROUPS or COMPANIES in verse 39 is SUMPOSIA (Our English word Symposium):

The words originally meant drinking party then any party of guests. Both the Jewish and Roman banquet table were similar. Three table (low to the ground) forming three sides of a square. Served from the center. So the people sat in this fashion.

The word for companies in verse 40 is PARASIAI doubled to be .

This word looks at the orderliness of the seating arrangement. Neither the seating nor the groups were haphazard in any way.

Now put yourselves, for a moment in the place of one of the 5000. You have sought out Jesus Christ, traveled a distance to be with him. You have spent the day being taught by Him. Bible class was so good that everyone forgot about the time.

The hour is late, there is no food, except for a few loaves and a couple fish. And now Jesus is telling you to sit down in banquet style on the ground?

That takes faith is the one telling you to do something that makes no sense whatsoever.

They sat down and they prayed - nearly 2000 years earlier Jesus also prayed over an insignificant amount of food and the one who would make a dairy wagon break down in front of George Muller's orphanage did not need a dairy

wagon, he though his power created a feast out of what would have been famine.

Mark 6:41

And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all.

Some critics say the people pretended to eat to not hurt the Lord's feelings. If this were so how did they end up with baskets full of food left over.

Mark 6:42-44

They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish. There were five thousand men who ate the loaves.

The pieces left in each of the disciple's baskets were the very pieces Jesus had originally broken of the original five loaves. There was no diminishing of what was there originally, only the adding too or the increase of.

Five thousand people ate, five thousand people were satisfied, and they had food left over.

In verse 44 as noted earlier we see that there were about 5000 present with Jesus that day in Galilee.

Summary and lessons

1. While it was rude to interrupt the Lord and His disciples during a time of much needed rest, it did show that the people had a desire for sound doctrine.
2. Because they were as sheep without a shepherd, Jesus would fill their need. He would teach them, providing for them spiritual food.
3. While taking in spiritual food their arose a potential distraction, the need for physical food.
4. From His humanity He had compassion of the people. From his deity, his omnipotence, he had the power to provide for them.

He took the problems, no shepherd to give them spiritual food, no one to give them physical food, and used them to bring the disciples and the people into greater dependence on Him. Every problem -

5. Jesus took what seemed insignificant and made it of great significance. In the same way he takes what is overlooked by the world and uses it to advance his plan.

1 Corinthians But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong.

6. Our Lord is more than our Lord over the spiritual things of life. He is the Lord of everything in our life. He provides for us spiritually and he provides for us materially and physically.

7. Remember that the baskets came back just as full: The Lord's provision, his grace, never is diminished.

And by way of application, the best way to keep what you have is to give it away. When you extend grace to others, you always end up, if not with the same amount, even more.

Never can take too much grace, never can extend too much grace.

8. When you take what the Lord gives, you do so by faith. Remember they sat down in ranks and in order and waited upon him.

And when you take what the Lord offers you will be completely satisfied.

In the same way, spiritual hunger must keep on being fed with spiritual food.

Matthew 5:6, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

9. Any miracle we read of in the Gospels reveals the power of Christ in our lives. As he provided bread and food for the five thousand. he provides spiritual bread for us. This miracle reminds us that Jesus is the bread of life:

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.

We as Christians may often find ourselves in a helpless situation, but with Lord, no situation is ever hopeless

In Mark 6:45-52, Mark is giving evidence of Jesus' power and authority. With this we also see his care and concern over those who have chosen to follow him.

Mark 6:45,46

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away. After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray.

They had retreated to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee when the 5,000 hurried after him to be taught the Word.

Now Jesus sends his disciples, the twelve, back to Capernaum and its fishing village of Bethsaida.

He then dispatches the 5000, many of whom would have been on their way to the Passover in Jerusalem. Then he left went to the mountain to pray -

A precedent is set for us by our Lord's actions.

1. In his humanity he saw the importance of prayer. Our ministries to people must be balanced with our prayer relationship with God.
2. Our time in prayer is easily distracted, so as the Lord sent the disciples away and the people away and then went to the mountain, we too must make time and arrange circumstances to take time to pray.
3. The Lord's actions were part of prayer preparation. Prayer includes three parts, preparation, prayer itself, and prayer pursuit.
4. The content of the prayer is not given, but the concern the Lord expresses over his disciples allows us to see that he was probably praying for them.

Mark 6:47

When it was evening, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on the land.

At this point Christ is separated from his disciples, in much the same way he is currently separated from his church.

Mark 6:48

Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them.

1. "Seeing them" As Jesus prayed for the disciples he also would, at points in time, see them, check on how they were doing. Now he was in a mountain but in his omniscience he saw them, and in his omnipresence, he was already with them.

2. Straining at the oars is a present passive participle that refers to distress or torment. They were rowing and getting no where, as a matter of fact they were being blown off course and would end up in Gennesaret or Gadara, on the S.E. shore.

The passive voice tells us that this distress was put upon them by the wind, not by their inability to handle a fishing boat. The present tense tells us that the distress continued.

The harder they worked in their own power, the less progress they made.

This is a very typical situation relating to us today. We are in the sea of the world, tossed about, straining at the oars of life and getting no where, often being blown off course.

But Jesus Christ our savior is praying for us and keeping an eye on us. We are never in the sea alone.

Just as the disciples were learning that the storm was great and they were unable to get anywhere, we also will be put into the storms of life to learn of our own inability.

Any problem that tosses us around, that causes distress, that makes us lose ground teaches us of our weakness and the Lord strength.

Problems bring us to depend upon Christ rather than ourselves.

Verse 48 continues: **at about the fourth watch of the night, He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them.**

1. Jesus gave them time, until the fourth watch (3 to 6 am) to become fully aware of their own inability to solve the problem. This was a test, now Jesus is watching over them, but giving them time to become aware of their helplessness.

2. In the same way we do not experience immediate deliverance from the tests we face. The Lord gives us time in the turbulence to see that we need him.

3. He came to them walking on the water. The one who created water walks on the water. This shows us that no matter where we are, Jesus will come to us once we realize we cannot do it ourselves

Principle: We are never out of sight nor out of help with the Lord. I don't care where you may end up, he will be there to help.

5. We also see that he was walking right by them, but they cried out. The Lord never forces himself upon his people, he waits for their cries of help.

Mark 6:49

But when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out;

The word for ghost is FANTASMA , our word PHANTOM

Now we see the rest of the Jesus' prayer:

1. Prayer preparation: He sent the people away and went away himself to pray.
2. Prayer itself: He stayed in prayer until the early hours of the morning - praying for his disciples.
- 3 .Prayer pursuit: Having prayed for the disciples he now go to them.

But they did not recognize him.

Application: How often in our own lives has the Lord been there to help in a time of need and we do not recognize him. He pulls us out of the storms and we thank the weather man, or chalk it up to luck or good fortune.

Principle: We need to see the mighty hand of the Lord in our lives and we need to acknowledge his power in our lives. When you start seeing how often the Lord is there to pull you up, stand you on your feet, you will begin to have a response of appreciation to his grace.

Mark 6:50

For they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately He spoke with them and said to them, Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid.

When they cried out and were troubled, immediately the Lord spoke to them and they were calmed.

Jesus gave them a quick three point message of truth:

1. Take courage: An idiom that literally translates to be of good cheer. But goes belong mere M.A. joy to M.A. of courage. Courage is a result of the confidence you have in God. Confidence in God results in courage before man and nature.
2. It is I: This is the same thing Jesus said to Moses 1500 years earlier. I am who I am, the ever existing one, God himself. Recognition of who Jesus is also means that you recognize what he can do.
3. Be not afraid: The result of applying confidence in God to courage, the result of know Christ and his power, is - no fear.

We know that the Lord will never put us through a test that he has not endured and now we see that he will never put us through a test for which he does not provide the way of victory, in himself, for us.

At this point we have one part of the story that Mark does not record:

Read Matthew 14:28-31 The Story of Peter:

Matt. 14:28 And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.

The word IF is a first class conditional, "since it is you - command me."

Peter always wanted to get into the act. His personality was that of an extrovert and he so often wanted to out do everyone else. And Jesus honors his request:

Matt. 14:29, And He said, Come! And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

When Jesus commands Peter to COME, we see three things:

1. Peter is out on the water: Place of maximum testing. Peter voluntarily place himself in a position of danger yet knew the Lord was there. Peter was not thinking of self.
2. He was being held up by faith in Christ alone: Nothing else, no ability of his own could keep him on top of the water.

3. Going towards Jesus keeping his eyes on Him: His focus, his priority, was Jesus Christ.

And that should be the situation for us all, not thinking of ourselves but of our Savior's command, being held up by faith alone without thought of our ability, and keeping our eyes upon Jesus Christ.

But just as we do, Peter took his eyes off the Lord and put them on the surrounding danger -

Matt. 14:30, But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me!

Let's give Peter some credit at this point, at least he did not try to swim to shore - he cried out to the Lord - save me.

We must always remember that we will fail, but even in our failures we can have a victory if that failure teaches us about our weaknesses and Jesus' strength.

Matt 14:31, And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt?

Jesus was immediately there to save. Peter's request is a present imperative, a command to keep on saving. Peter remember the Lord had bid him to come and thus could require of him to save, not just them, but forever.

It was Peter's doubt in that caused him to sink, but Jesus did not abandon him. Even when we are faithless, the Lord is faithful.

The word for LITTLE FAITH means little of quality, not quantity. Peter's faith was small because it was taken off of Christ and placed in his own ability - and in his own ability he was sinking.

Principle: We all sink at times of misplaced faith, but Jesus is always there and he is the only one who can pull us out.

Mark 6:51

Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished,

Jesus coming into the boat is an illustration of fellowship being restored. And as soon as fellowship is restored, the sea no longer holds any danger for them. But their reaction was one of astonishment.

The Greek text tells us that this astonishment was very great and exceeding in themselves. While they kept their astonishment to themselves, they at the same time could not figure this out.

Mark 6:52

for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

This is the reason they could not figure this out.

We say that hindsight is twenty-twenty. We can read this and we can figure it out, we can see that Jesus had the power to create food for 5000, to walk on the water, to still the sea. But they could not -

Their hearts were hardened, too often they had seen the power of God and they now were hardened against what was spectacular.

So much had been revealed to them, so often they missed the point, and continued to rely on their own ability that now scar tissue had developed on their souls - not extensively, but enough that they missed the point again.

Jesus Christ has the power to come to us in a time of need and provide help to the helpless.

We can see that, they could not - but in the same way Jesus Christ may be at work right now, in your life, and you may miss it completely.

The end of this miracle is a challenge to us, look into your life, search for the power of your Savior at work.

We in the church so often cling to tradition or the expectation that comes from our tradition, that we fail to see the truth. And that is a legacy of the people of Jesus day who had a false expectation, a tradition expectation of who the Messiah was to be and how he was to behave. They got stuck in tradition, refusing to change, refusing to see the truth.

Mark 6:53

When they had crossed over they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore.

When the disciples left their intention was to sail to Bethsaida, the fishing village near Capernaum. But the storm blew them off course to Gennesaret, farther south and west.

When they left, Jesus was not with them, but now, after walking to them on the water, he is with them. And now that he is with them, the change in destination is immaterial.

Principle: Where you are going is not nearly as important as who you are with as you go.

All of us have plans, dreams, and aspirations, but the winds of change often alter our course.

But if Jesus Christ is with us, leading us, where we are going doesn't really matter.

Mark 6:54-56

When they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, And ran about that whole country and began to carry here and there on their pallets those who were sick, to the place they heard He was.

Wherever He entered villages, or cities, or countryside, they were laying the sick in the market places, and imploring Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were being cured.

We see that as soon as he arrived at the shores of Gennesaret, that the many people came to him. The news of his presence was spread throughout the entire area, and many who were sick, or had loved ones who were infirmed, came to Him and they were healed.

Those who came reached out to just touch the fringe of his robe.

This fringe was a tassel that was required on men's robes.

Numbers 15:38, Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue.

This tassel consisted of eight white threads wound around or braided seven times and then double knotted eight times, then 11 times, and then 13 times.

The numbers represented Hebrew letters that spelled the phrase YHWH is ONE.

Its purpose was to remind Israel of all the commandments of God.

Numbers 15:39-40 And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, in order that you may remember to do all My commandments, and be holy to your God.

So these people, as did the woman with the issue of blood in Mark 5, reached for that which represented the Word of God. And was being worn by the living Word, Jesus Christ.

Between the events here and the feeding of the 5000 we are seeing the height of the Jesus' ministry in Galilee. But the tide of popular opinion is turning.

Now Mark is going to show the increasing antagonism expressed by the religious leaders of Israel against Jesus.

When we study the Gospel of John we will see the change in the people. How they were seeking a political messiah and rejected Christ because he came to conquer the greater unseen enemies of sin and Satan rather than lead a revolt against Rome.

So Mark places emphasis on the religious leaders.

Chapter 7

Mark 7:1

And the Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered together around Him when they had come from Jerusalem.

The scene is set in Capernaum, a place of extensive ministry by the Lord.

The religious leaders of Jerusalem have been hearing more and more about this man, this Rabbi, Jesus. Now an official delegation comes to investigate Him.

Mark 7:2

and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed.

The word for unwashed does not refer to hygiene, but to hands that are ceremonially washed as a religious ritual.

The next verses explain this tradition followed by the Jews of Jesus' day.

Mark 7:3,4

For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.

Again, this is not washing hands to remove dirt or even washing hands for the sake of hygiene, but as part of a religious ritual established by the elders.

The tradition [Greek: PARADOSIS] refer to oral law given from one to another.

The elders [PRESBUTEROS] refers to the high Jewish council, the Sanhedrin which attempted to regulate Jewish law, life, and culture.

So what we have here is some extra-biblical rules that were given as part of a legalism by the elders to the people.

And this ritual without meaning or reality had become so important to them that they now use it as a basis of attack against the Lord.

Mark 7:5

And the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?

The statement is far more accusatory than it appears in the English:

1. We have a present tense: They keep on asking this question.
2. To walk according to something means to order your life by that principle.
3. Here the Pharisees and scribes wanted Jesus' disciples to order their entire lives by the traditions of the elders.
4. But to do that would require abandoning the principle of grace and power by which the believer is to walk or order his life:
5. As Christians our walking orders are outline in the Word:

Romans 6:4 Walk in newness of life

2 Cor 5:7 Walk by faith

Gal 5:25 Walk in the Spirit

Col 4:5 Walk in Wisdom

1 John 1:7 Walk in the light [which is the Word]

2 John 6 Walk after God's mandates

II John 4 Walk in Truth

Topic: Christian Walk

6. To fulfill the manner of life the walk we are to have daily with Christ means concentrating on the assets God provides for us, not the legalisms of men.

Mark 7:6-9

And He said to them, Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men. Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men. He was also saying to them, You nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

Jesus quotes from Isaiah 29:12 through 14:

In that passage the prophet contrast learning the Word and living by it with those who take the cheap shot and live by the traditions of men.

Isaiah 29:14 And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the discernment of their discerning men shall be concealed.

The simple contrast: The word of God will last forever, the wisdom of men will perish.

Jesus levels five accusations back at these religious leaders who he calls hypocrites:

"Hypocrite" is a Greek drama term for laughing behind the sad mask or vice versa.

These religious leaders are living a lie behind the mask of self righteousness:

1. They honor God with their lips, but not their heart. The word heart is KARDIA which refers to the thinking part of the soul. They have God talk without any thinking.
2. Their worship is in vain: VAIN is MATEW which means to be void of results. Their worship has no result of drawing the believer closer to God. It is without purpose. Mere ritual without any reality

3. They take the precepts of men and teach them as doctrine. These are man's commandments given as the doctrines of God. By this they put man's words into God's mouth which is blasphemous. We are the creature, He is the creator, we listen to Him.

4. Leave the mandates of God and hold the traditions of men. They would rather listen to what men say or what they say than listen, learn, think, and apply the mandates from God.

COMMANDMENTS or MANDATES is ENTOLEI which refers to a valid standing order given by God to man with the means and the authority to fulfill it. That is what they leave to go with some man's better idea.

To leave God's mandates may be done out of ignorance, but next they set them aside which is stupidity.

5. You set aside the commandments of God in order to fulfill the traditions of men.

The preposition HINA tells us that in order to fulfill man's traditions, you must volitionally set aside the mandates of God with all their power and their authority. And these hypocrites have done just that.

But they are not alone! Believers today, often out of sincerity, sometimes out of ignorance, and even outright antagonism, abandon what God has to say, what God has to provide, and they go with the weak counsel and traditions of men.

And what happened in this situation, they got more involved in the washing of hands than they did in the listening to the truth.

Question: How often do we get hung up on something that we think Christianity should be all about and in doing so, ignore the grace that God has for us.

We so often fail to see what is truly important in life. We get hung up on a hook of our own making.

Topic: Legalism

Every believer is called to freedom in Christ:

God wants us to be free, free to love Him, and free to obey Him:

Galatians 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep

standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

That heavy yoke of slavery Paul was referring to was the legalism that would make a believer set aside the blessings of God and live by the empty traditions of men.

Christian, the Good News for you is that Christ has set you free - you are now free to order you life by all that God has provided.

The Apostle John, recording the words of Christ, stated in

Revelation 22:18-19 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

The fundamental problem of legalism is that is not only violates grace, violates the all sufficient work of Christ, but that it adds to what God has said about his relationship with us.

Legalism adds to the Word of God and we cannot get around that in any way -

The religious legalists criticize the disciples of Jesus for eating without washing their hands in a ceremonial manner as prescribed not by the Word, but by the elders.

This non-biblical ritual became a basis for criticizing the Lord and His disciples.

What the religious leaders did is exactly what Satan does to believers today, he accuses them before the throne of God. And when he does, it is Jesus Christ who represents us, our Lord is the advocate, the defense attorney of all believers.

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Principle: Whenever we begin to judge, malign, and criticize, others we take on the role of these religious legalists, and the role of Satan.

Now Jesus is going to defend his disciples. He quotes from Isaiah 29 as we studied last week and

now he quotes from Moses in Exodus 20:12 and 21:17.

Two things to see prior to the verse:

1. It is Jesus who defends us. He is in control and he is the one who sets a guard over us, who represents us, and defends us before our critics and enemies.
2. And secondly, he defends his followers with the Word. And that sets a precedent for us - any defense of our position will be by the Word of Christ. And to use His words we must first learn his words.

Christ, in His humanity, learned the Word and now uses the Word.

Mark 7:10

For Moses said, Honor your father and your mother; and, He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.

The statement calling for a child to honor father and mother is taken from the 10 commandments.

The idea of cursing or speaking evil of father and mother is present tense, a continual dishonoring that is expressed in cursing.

Old Testament Law required that a child who disobeyed their parents on three occasions should be stoned to death by the elders (Deuteronomy 21:18-21).

The idea of honoring parents also meant that children had the privilege to take care of parents and provide for them.

But the Jews of Jesus' day had figured out a way around that privilege and responsibility.

They extended the principle of CORBAN to go beyond its Old Testament intention.

Mark 7:11,12

But you say, If a man says to his father or his mother, anything of mine you might have been helped by is Corban, that is to say, given to God, you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother.

In these two verses we have an analysis of how legalism works to get around the mandates of the Word of God.

Summary:

1. We have two biblical statements in view:

Honor your parents, a part of the Decalogue, the ten commandments, repeated in various Old Testament books, and an accepted part of adult responsibility.

The principle of CORBAN, which is a Hebrew word referring to a gift dedicated to God's service. Found in Lev. 1:2, 22:27, 23:14, Numbers 7:25, Ezekiel 20:28.

2. When a believing Jew made something CORBAN, it was dedicated to God's use and therefore set aside for spiritual activity and advance.

We might do this today in our giving, or even with our time as we set time aside for Bible class, reading the Word, prayer, and other functions of the Christian way of life

3. The Mishnah and Babylonian Talmud held that one's duty to parents and other laws of relationship were more important than the law of Corban.

And that demonstrates proper balance and flexibility. You may dedicate time to come to Bible class. But if you are needed in a critical manner at work, with family, or parents, you take the time to fulfill those responsibilities.

4. Another Jewish influence, however, took a different view. The Hillel school of Rabbis stated, If anyone expressly lays such a CORBAN on his relatives, they are bound by it and cannot receive anything from him that is covered by the CORBAN.

5. It is this harsher position that was adopted by the Jews of Jesus' day and by this they reneged on other responsibilities. Mark 7:11 But you say -

6. By this analysis of legalism regarding parents and the CORBAN we can see that legalism majors in the minors and opts for the less important to avoid the more important.

7. The most important part of being a Christian was expressed by Christ in Mark 12:30-31

The foremost command is that you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.

And when that standard is achieved, it become more important that loving God with your total being and then loving other with a Christ like love.

Principle: Following some moral standards is far easier in the flesh [human power] than growing in Christ and your love for God.

And attempting to impress these standards on others by judging them, criticizing them, and accusing them is a lot easier in the flesh than having an impersonal love for them that is from virtue in your soul.

Mark 7:13

Thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.

The word INVALIDATE is AKUROW _which is from KURIOS, the word for Lord.

The positive of the word means supreme in authority and respectable. With the alpha prefix it is negative, so it means to not consider the Word as an authority and to not even respect it.

And it is their traditions that are handed down by men the work to invalidate, annul, and make the Word ineffective.

Furthermore, that was just one example. The Lord states there are many things that these religious types do that invalidate the Word of God.

From what we saw in this passage last week, and what we see today, we can draw a number of conclusions regarding legalism.

1. First a definition: Legalism is any merit system which operates by man's works. In legalism, man tries to please God by human works and standards. It is man's attempt to assist God, an attempt to glorify God apart from divine motive, influence, and power.

2. Legalism functions in the area of doubtful things, those things not specified in the Bible as being sin. Or in the area of minor things, set as being more important than the majors things of God.

Example: Prayer is mandated for believers, but if you go to work, sit at your desk, and pray all day long, thinking you are fulfilling God's will, you are not. You are only getting out of work.

3. Legalism demands that you abandon the mandates of God.

Mark 7:9 He was also saying to them, You nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

The word IN ORDER THAT is INA and that little preposition means that you cannot keep God's commandments and man's traditions both. If you go for man's legalisms, you must leave the mandates of God.

4. Legalism removes the effect, authority, and power of the Word of God in your life.

Mark 7:13 invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down.

5. The Bible teaches that believers are to think and act a certain way because God has already blessed and continues to bless. The believer is to live the plan of God out of an attitude of gratitude and knowledge that God's plan is right, and with the understanding that he is a product of God's grace.

6. Legalism becomes a heavy yoke or load to live under (Mt 11.28). Legalism starts off simple and become heavy. A legalistic person has separated himself from the easy yoke and light load of freedom in Christ (Mt 11.30; Gal 5.1-4).

Galatians 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

7. Legalism is easy in the power of the flesh but voids the power of the spirit. When so many believers are trying to live the Christian life out of the flesh, legalism is an attractive alternative - but it is not God's alternative. And the end result is a yoke of bondage.

8. Legalism may appeal to the Word but does not consider the full counsel of God's Word. Thus, it improperly uses the Word.

9. When you live apart from the Word, the mandates of God, and live in legalism, you will end up judging, maligning, criticizing, and accusing others for actions that are unimportant to the plan of God.

Remember how this section in mark started, the disciples did not wash their hands according to the tradition of the elders. And for that, they were attacked by the legalists.

Don't let legalism rob you of living by the power, the influence, the motive that God and only God can provide:

We live by faith, we live as the recipients of grace:

Motivated by Grace - influenced by the Word of God - in the power of the spirit

In Mark 7:14-23 Jesus now turn from the religious leaders to the positive people to teach them and then also teaches his disciples

John Wesley said: We do not injure the case of God's holiness in us when we admit our sins, only when we deny them.

The problem our Lord encounters in the mid point of his ministry is that people, religious leaders, the crowds, even his own disciples, were denying the fact that saints will sin.

The brief parable and its explanation that is found in verses 14 through 23 comes on the heels of the critical remarks by the religious leaders from Jerusalem that Jesus' disciples had defiled themselves by eating without ceremonially washing their hands.

Our Lord has already dealt with these religious legalists and exposed their hypocrisy - and now he turn to the people who have been witnessing this confrontation and shows the fallacy of this legalism.

Mark 7:14,15

And after He called the multitude to Him again, He began saying to them, Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.

The word for calling the multitude to Him is a compound:

PROS + KALEOMAI, meaning to call to others to come and face you in a teaching situation.

In Matthew and Mark it is always used for calling those who want to learn and understand.

It is a middle voice which looks at benefit to the one who is doing the calling. A communicator of the Word is benefited when believers want to come together and learn.

For the teaching he did the word LEGW is used:

There are two Greek words that are very closely associated each one translated to say something.

One is LALEW which looks at the process of communication.

The other, and one used here, is LEGW which looks at the content of what is being said.

Hence, the content is emphasized over the process or even over the one who is saying it.

An indication of the biblical stress placed on the content of truth is seen in how many times these words are used:

LALEW is used 296 times which may seem like a lot, but LEGW is used 1330 times. Emphasis on the content.

The content of what the Lord says is where the emphasis must be because he is going to explain what it takes to defile a man.

He tells the crowd: "Hear me and understand!"

Both of these are aorist active imperatives. The Lord commands them to, at a point in time, make an active decision to hear and to understand.

These mandates really look at the first two responsibilities that we have regarding doctrine:

Learn it - Think it - [then Apply it]

Principle: We are under the same mandate, called by the Lord to learn the Word and order our thinking by the Word - and apply it.

The Pharisees in v 2 had accused the disciples of having defiled hands, now the Lord explains to the crowd what it takes to defile a man:

There is nothing from without a man entering into him which can defile him.

This would have been a shock to the religious Jews who has lists upon lists of things that resulted in a man being defiled.

Some of these were even according to the Old Testament Law but now we begin to see a glimpse of the new life we have in Christ who has fulfilled the Law.

But, the things coming forth out of a man are the things defiling a man.

The word DEFILE refers to that which is common as opposed to that which is set aside for God's use.

The Lord is referring to food and drink entering a man which cannot make a man common or defiled.

But what does defile a man is what comes out of the mouth:

The false teaching of the Pharisees did more to defile them than eating with unwashed hands could ever do.

Since their traditions were set against the Word of God, they would defile the ones who taught them, used them, and attempted to enforce them.

We could call this parable the inside outside parable.

The parable teaches that we are defiled by that which comes from the inside not by that which effects us from the outside.

And by the same principle that which makes you spiritual does not come from the outside but from the inside.

Verse 16 is not found in the better manuscripts, and discussion of it is omitted here.

Mark 7:17

And when leaving the multitude, He had entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable.

In Capernaum, the Lord resided at Peter's home so we can assume that this is Peter's home.

In Matthew 15:15 we see that Peter, the most outspoken of the twelve, is the one leading in the asking of the questions.

We see here something that we have seen with the parables before. The disciples asked questions about their interpretation. This shows a desire for understanding which they lacked.

Mark 7:18

And He said to them, Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him,

The Lord, in his humanity, is a bit surprised that they did not get the point of the parable:

In the introduction of the parable in verse 14 he mandated listening and understanding.

But here the disciples did not understand:

Principle: The pre conceived religious thinking of the disciples prevented them from appropriating a new principle.

For so long the disciples had heard that this can defile or that can defile that now that they were hearing truth, their prior viewpoint created a blind spot.

1. A blind spot can prevent us from being teachable.
2. Blind spots are developed in subjectivity.
3. Pre-conceived ideas can become stronger in our subjectivity than truth.

2 Timothy 3:7 Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

4. Everyone of us have blind spots and we must overcome them by being objective, and being teachable.
5. The disciples had blind spots even after following the Lord for many months, but they were teachable

Mark 7:19

because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated? (Thus He declared all foods clean.)

The word for heart is KARDIA and food does not go into the heart, which is the thinking part of the soul.

Now the heart is that part of the soul that contains the:

1. Frame of Reference
2. Memory Center
3. Vocabulary
4. Viewpoint
5. Norms and Standards
6. And it is the heart that initiates to the emotions

Food and drink cannot defile these. But false thinking that is expressed as it was with the Pharisees, that does defile man.

Mark 7:20

And He was saying, That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.

In applying this to us, we are defiled when we deny the motive, the influence, the power that God has made available to us.

In simple terms, we are defiled when we are out of fellowship.

And how do you get out of fellowship? By sin - NO, you get out of fellowship when you volitionally decide that sin is better than what God has in store for you.

Hebrews 11:24-26 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

You see, you get out of fellowship when you decide to get out of fellowship and the results, that which comes out is sin.

So the Lord describes twelve sins that are not from the outside, but from the inside.

Mark 7:21,22

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.

These are all categorized as evil thoughts which shows us that the first problem is on the inside and then it becomes a problem on the outside:

Fornications. This is prostitution, often cultic.

Thefts: Forbidden by the Ten Commandments as a protection for society.

Murders: It is not Thou shall not kill, but a prohibition against murder.

Adulteries: This is extra martial sex

Greediness: A greedy desire to have more which is a sign of a mal-content. Striving towards a goal is great but are you content where you are with what you have?

Iniquities (PONEIRIAS): Evil that opposes good. The evil that is KAKOS is personal, this PONEIRIAS evil stands against God and His good, His plan, His purpose.

Deceit: Deceptive in either speech or actions.

Lewdness: An unrestrained sexual instinct. This is a lack of self control.

An evil eye: A eye that looks to evil rather than good

Blasphemy (or slander): To lie about God or others

Arrogance: This is translated pride in some vss. and means to set oneself above others.

Foolishness: Lack of common sense

But these twelve sins are a result and Jesus drives this point home in the next verse.

Mark 7:23

All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.

Not from what is touched or handled.

Colossians 2:20-23 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch! (which all refer to things destined to perish with the using)-- in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

These sins can only be cut off on the inside, that is where defilement begins.

Robert Lewis Stevenson touched upon a principle of biblical truth when he said: "You cannot run away from weakness or fear, you must at sometime take courage, and if that be so, why not now, take your stand."

In today's portion of the Gospel of our Lord, we are going to see a person who has courage, who takes their stand, we are going to see a person of boldness.

Mark 7:24

And from there He arose and went away to the region of Tyre. And when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to

know of it; yet He could not escape notice.

The preposition is EIS, well into the region of Tyre.

At the height of his ministry in Galilee, Jesus and his disciples took some time off and went North to the coastal region of Tyre.

This is the only time during his public ministry that the Lord left the traditional boundaries of the Holy Land.

The purpose of his retreat was three fold:

1. There was a need for the disciples to rest and be refreshed. The opposition was mounting against Jesus and his followers and the burden on the disciples was becoming heavy.

2. Secondly, the Lord knew that increased rejection was coming and He had to prepare His disciples for the many confrontations that were soon to come.

3. Thirdly, the attitude of the people of Galilee was shifting towards negative volition. As the miracles decreased and the teaching increased, more and more people were going negative to the Lord - his removal was an expression of not casting pearls of truth before the swine of unbelief.

Principle: Jesus never forced truth upon those refusing to hear just as today He never forces His truth upon those who reject Him.

Tyre is a coastal region inhabited by Phoenicians who were ancient Canaanites who took to the seas and had by the time of Jesus adopted Greek or Hellenistic culture.

Mark 7:25,26

Now prior to going to Tyre, Jesus has nailed the Jews for their legalism and unbelief.

Even the disciples had a blind spot in being able to understand that man is defiled not from that which is on the outside, but that which is on the inside.

The negative volition of the religious leaders, the doubts on the part of the people, and the blind spots of the disciples are now contrasted with the faith of one single woman - a gentile.

But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, immediately came and fell at His feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of

the Syrophoenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

Matthew 15:21-28 identifies her as a woman of Canaan, looking to her heritage.

Here she is called a Syrophoenician, which would relate her to the Syrians and the Phoenicians. Every description make here very much a Gentile.

A number of things can be told of this woman:

1. She is woman with a need, not for herself but for someone she loves, her daughter. Indwelt by a demonic spirit.
2. She has heard of Christ: His fame is so wide spread that even in this Gentile land, she has heard about Christ.
3. She fell at his feet, and in Matthew 15:25 she is said to worship Him: She worshiped him as God. While the Jews debated who this man from Nazareth was, there was not doubt in her mind that this was God.

Matthew 15:22 records that she called Christ, the Lord and Son of David.

She began to cry out, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David.

Title refers to deity and humanity of Christ.

4. She asks for mercy according to the Matthew account and in Mark 26 we are told that she kept on asking the Lord to expel the demon out of her daughter.

MERCY and the aorist subjunctive verb EXPELL both indicate that she knew the Lord had the power to do this and that she was requesting an action of Grace.

MERCY is grace in action. She did not demand, she did not beg, she requested that Jesus extend grace to her.

Hebrew 4:16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

5. In the Matthew account we see that she first went to the disciples and then to the Lord. This shows manners and an understanding of order and chain of command.

Only after the disciples sent her away did she appeal to the higher authority of Jesus himself.

6. She is persistent, in both Matthew and Mark we have verbs that indicate she kept on going boldly before Christ and requesting grace in the time of her need.

7. And we see that she passed a test, a test of her faith.

Mark 7:27

And He was saying to her, Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.

Prior to this the Lord had made the statement that He had come to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But many of the lost sheep of Israel were rejecting Him and some were even antagonistic to him.

And now, as a test of her faith, he tells her that he can do nothing for her.

Furthermore: In his analogy of children and dogs he comes very close to insulting her, he identifies her with a dog.

Now the Jews had for centuries referred to all Gentiles as dogs, and while that was an insult, here the Lord uses that as a test.

DOG is the Greek KUNO , but here

KUNARION , a diminutive which would be translated: little dogs, or puppy dogs.

A few principles:

1. Faith is the spiritual muscle we build as we grow in Christ.
2. Everytime we take doctrine in or breath doctrine out in application, we are building the muscle of faith.
3. Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
4. But the only way to know the strength of our faith is under testing. So the Lord we give us tests of faith which are divine opportunities for us to see the strength of faith that we have acquired.
5. Now with this woman she could have failed the test: She could have take the test as an insult even though the diminutive was used. She could have heard only what she wanted to hear, He called me a dog.

She could have had eyes on self or eyes only on her problem and sulked or become bitter. She could have even become angry - but she did not

Mark 7:28

Here is where this gentile woman displays more spiritual intestinal fortitude than any of the Jews who have been following Jews or flocking around Him.

She doesn't get hurt, upset, or angry - she thinks:

But she answered and said to Him, Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs.

When I think of the face of Jesus Christ I often think of it at this moment. He was very serious and giving the analogy of the children and the little dogs, and this was followed by a serious stare. And then she comes up with her own analogy.

I imagine the face of our Lord broke into a tremendous grin, an ear to ear grin as we often say.

And rightfully so for here is woman of faith, a woman of persistence, a woman of endurance, a woman of bold confidence.

She was not about to take NO for an answer, her need was too great, her love for her daughter too great, and her faith was too strong.

She understood that the offer of the Messiah must be first to Israel, but she also understood that this did not exclude the Gentiles from receiving the crumbs of GRACE.

1. She begins by agreeing with Him: Yes [NAI] Lord. I cannot help but think of the times Peter heard something he did not understand from the Lord and responded not with a YES but with a NAY, or NOT SO LORD as in Acts 10:14.

She was not about to argue with the one she had just worshipped. She knew this was the Lord, the Son of David, the God-Man.

Application: How often do we disagree with the Lord whom we know as Lord. Not face to face and maybe not even directly - but as we doubt, as we lack trust is what he is doing in our lives.

Here is a woman of strong faith because she knows that whatever the Lord says it is right - Yes Lord.

2. She does not take insult at being compared to a little dog. She accepts here status and even the position given her by the Jews.

This shows us that there was no delusion of self. The Lord wants to call her a dog, that's fine because she knows she is a sinner, under total depravity, in need of a savior.

We all should recognize that we are nothing apart from the Lord and the privilege, position, and grace that he affords us. And that is the only thing that will last forever.

3. She also realizes that the crumbs of grace from the Lord are better than anything from anyone else.

Her attitude is one of being able to thank God for all things, even the crumbs, if they are from God they are great crumbs!

She also knew that even a crumb of grace was great enough to bring healing help to her daughter.

4. The most important thing that we see is her boldness and her confidence.

She truly fills Hebrews 4:6 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

Mark 7:29

The reward of persistence and faith: Here is where we can look into this woman's life and know for ourselves that it will all be worth it - in time and in eternity:

She had a need, a daughter who needed the help only the Lord could give. And we all have needs that only the Lord can fill. And we need to be persistent and we need to have faith in Him and His Word:

And He said to her, Because of this answer go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.

The literal translation is, "Because of this, Go!"

Her answer was not merely a good answer, a quick response, a cute anecdote. Her answer was the Word, it was the doctrine of Grace she was giving back as a reply to her Lord.

And here is a principle that becomes a promise: If you want all the great and wonderful things the

Lord has in store for you, rely upon the principle of Grace:

Which is the divine fact that you cannot earn nor deserve what God wants to give to you through His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

All you need to do is be persistent, and have faith in Him and His Word.

Mark 7:30

And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having departed.

And her persistence and faith was vindicated, her daughter was free of the demon.

Now in summary I want to go back and examine one thing this woman had going for her. Her bold confidence:

1. In Proverbs 28:1 we read that: **The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, But the righteous are bold as a lion.**

2. Boldness or confidence is equated with righteousness. It the believer who is righteous who can have an phenomenal confidence in Jesus Christ.

3. Righteousness comes by both by our position in Christ and persistence in faith and we have already noted that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the applied word (Romans 10:17) of God.

4. Therefore this woman, whose name is unknown to us but who is one of true heroes of faith exhibited five things that we should have:

A need and she knew that only Christ could satisfy and fill that need.

A confidence in who the Lord was, the God-Man, the unique person of the universe.

An attitude of worship applied in adoration to the Lord

Persistence that allowed her to pass the tests of faith without distraction

And she took faith and combined it with proper thinking and received the grace of our Lord.

We all have needs but do we share with this woman the bold confidence of:

Who the Lord is, our worship of him, our persistence, and faith and proper thinking of His Word?

Frank A. Clark said: To feel sorry for those who have a need is not the mark of a Christian, the mark of a Christian is to help them.

Compassion is not something we come into life with, it is built in and we can build this compassion into us as we observe the life and ministry of Christ and as we learn from Him.

The move from Galilee to Tyre that we saw last week and the return of Christ thru Decapolis that we will observe today represents a departure that is not only geographic but also a departure in ministry.

The people of Galilee had enjoyed the ministry of Christ for over a year. They have had opportunity to witness the Savior's Words and Works.

Yet they still doubted, questioned, and even rejected Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

While they were fascinated by what he did, they were distracted from the true message of Christ. That he had come into the World to save sinners.

The contrast here is so strong as we see these Gentiles, such as the woman from Syrophenicia, put their faith in Christ.

We can well see the fulfillment of the statement made by John in his Gospel:

John 1:11-12 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.

And when the religious Jews of his days rejected Him, we see others, Gentiles, receiving him as their Savior and to them was given the right to be the children of God.

There are two things we must remember as we observe Jesus' removal from Galilee:

1. Jesus went to those who received His Word, He sought out those who were receptive, positive. And today he seeks those who will receive His Word. He went to Tyre and today He goes to Tulsa.

2. Secondly, the Lord never forced His truth upon anyone and today the same truth applies, His

truth is there and for us to receive, but he never forces it upon us.

Mark 7:31

And again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis.

This would have been the largely Gentile region along the west coast of the sea of Galilee.

As he turns his face towards Judah and his eventual sacrifice in Jerusalem we see that Lord even return to the Sea of Galilee through a Gentile area.

The next mention of Galilee in Mark 9 will be at the departure of Jesus from the region.

While there were some saved in Galilee, many rejected and the Lord removes the light of truth from those who would be further hardened against Him.

The Lord's compassion was even extended to those who were hardened against him. The more truth that was given the more the people said NO, the more they said NO the harder they became. So the Lord removed the message of truth, which they rejected, from them.

Mark 7:32

In this Gentile region of Decapolis we have those who sought out Jesus:

And they brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they entreated Him to lay His hand upon him.

The reference to a crowd (or multitude in verse 33) of people is non-descriptive. These are inhabitants of Decapolis who would have been largely Gentiles.

We are told they brought to Christ a man who was deaf and had an impediment of speech.

Now we have three groups: The Lord and His disciples, the crowd of people, and the man who is deaf with an impediment of speech:

First, a few things about the crowd:

1. In bringing the man to Christ, we see that they wanted something from Christ but not for themselves.

2. Their compassion moved them, as it did the four men who lowered their friend through the roof, to bring this man to Christ.

3. They request that Jesus lay hands upon him. The verb used is PARAKALEW.

This was a request with urging. They wanted the Lord to lay hands on the man and urged the Lord to do so but did not insist or demand.

4. This is in contrast to the earlier situation in which we saw the mobs clamoring after Christ to heal them and demanding that he do this or that.

5. The request itself, to lay hands on the poor man, was not a specific request for healing.

In Mark 5:23, 16:18, and Acts 28:8 the mention of the laying on of hands is always accompanied by a request to heal or restore.

The laying on of hands simply conveys a blessing given, an encouragement, an act of empathy.

6. By requesting only that the Lord bless their friend, the crowd did not presume upon Christ, they did not put him into a box and expect him to heal or even respond in a certain way.

Principle: Today Christians are making demands upon Christ rather than putting themselves in His hands. The whole name it and claim crowd goes around thinking they can determine what the Lord should give in grace.

We need to realize anything given in grace is great. This crowd who brought their friend to Christ realized that principle.

Second: The man himself:

1. Because of his condition, we can determine that he had gone deaf. This was not a condition since birth.

2. He could speak, but he was unclear in his speech. He had known how to speak at one time but through his deafness and an additional problem with his tongue. So he has two separate physical problems.

3. This man is going to be healed by Christ and his healing will demonstrate two things:

(1) The fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy that stated that the Messiah would cause the deaf to hear and the unspeaking to speak

Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

(2) Secondly, any miracle of physical healing illustrates man need for the touch of Christ. The physical condition that effected the recipients of these miracles parallels our spiritual condition. We are deaf and we are unable to speak in a spiritual sense until we come into contact with the Savior.

And thirdly we have Christ himself:

Whether moved by the concern of the crowd for their friend, or moved with compassion upon the man himself, the Lord takes action - He doesn't merely have pity on the man, he does something that is far better than pity, he ministers to the man personally.

Mark 7:33,34

The Lord takes him aside, away from the crowd:

And He took him aside from the multitude by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva; and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, Be opened!

In taking the man away from the crowd, the verb is middle voice, this is to be beneficial to the man who is limited in speech and hearing.

The words for BY HIMSELF or PRIVATELY are KATA IDIOS, according to himself.

The Lord takes the man with a need away from the crowd to minister to him according to what he needs

This is proto-typical of the Lord's relationship to us in the Church Age.

We may be part of a crowd, the Church universal, and a local crowd, the local church, but when it comes to our needs the Lord ministers to us privately, taking us away, and deals with us as individuals.

The Lord's personal relationship with us is all important. We are not just a collective group but individuals with whom our Lord has a personal relationship.

The Lord, in healing the man, did several things:

1. Put his fingers into his ears

2. Spit upon his fingers and touched the man's tongue

3. Then he looked to heaven and sighed or groaned

4. This was followed by a statement, EPH-PHA-THA, which is an Aramaic command, be open.

5. He touched his ears, which were deaf, and then he spit upon his finger and touched his tongue.

In this the Lord took from his mouth and touched the tongue of the man.

The symbol here is that that which comes from the mouth of God, God's Word, is placed in our mouths.

We have the privilege of not only having the Word of God in us, but the Word of God on our lips.

Matthew 4:4 Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Hebrews 13:15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

6. The sigh or groan is the word STENAZW which is used here to express the deep inward emotion of compassion.

In His HUMANITY our Lord has deep emotion for us, but that is not all. In His desire for us to have the highest and best, he has the ability to provide that for us - if we will accept it.

7. The command in the Aramaic is Eph-ph-tha, which is translated: Be open.

This is a vocative of liberation, the address is not merely to the man's ears and mouth, but to the whole man.

He is to be liberated, set free, just as Christ sets us free upon believing in Him as our Savior.

Mark 7:35

Records the results of the miracle:

And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly.

So immediate is the results of the miracle that the man's ears were open and he began to speak plainly.

The principle we see here is that when Christ solves a problem, it is immediately solved. The solution is totally in his hands and by his grace.

Mark 7:36

Now Jesus again turns to the crowd:

And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it.

The reason the Lord told them to tell no man about this miracle has already been noted.

He was withdrawing himself and the truth from those people of Galilee who had heard so much and received so little.

His desire was to keep them from further hardness of heart.

We can also see in this an attitude that while Jesus gave them a mandate, they thought that they had a better idea and that was to widely proclaim what Jesus had done.

By way of application we need to follow the Lord's mandates - and

By way of application we need to have enough sensitivity to know when to stop and when to proceed with the giving of Truth.

Mark 7:37

Relates this miracle as a vindication of prophecy. That the Messiah, and Jesus was the Messiah, would perform many magnificent miracles:

And they were utterly astonished, saying, He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

This final verse makes note of 3 things:

1. They were astonished but not obedient. They had a tremendous excitement about what had occurred but their excitement did not lead them to be obedient to what the Lord commanded.
2. They saw prophecy fulfilled, they knew the Old Testament scriptures regarding the Messiah, but their knowledge did not lead them to obedience.
3. And in this we can conclude, that the Christ Centered Life is more than excitement, more even than knowledge, it is obedience to mandates of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 8

The global food problem illustrates the need for this kind of grass roots participation in the work of the Lord. According to some experts, future menus of the world rest largely in the hands of smalltime farmers. There are about 100 million of them, and they control 80 percent of the world's potential crop output. But these growers lack incentives to produce. By taking advantage of technical assistance, they could double or triple their yields each year. Actually, they are capable of making the most significant long-term contribution to the international food crisis. Whether or not these small farmers can be motivated is the big question. Many are afraid of change and don't understand the importance of their individual efforts.

In our text the Lord is going to provide food for the four thousand but more important, he is going to provide himself.

Jesus is still in the largely Gentile area of Decapolis. The people who will be the recipients of this miracle were both Jews and Gentiles. Earlier, in Mark chapter six, where we saw the feeding of the 5,000 the crowd was exclusively Jewish.

Here again we see Jesus' shifting from those who would not receive him to those who would. We see are Lord seeking out those who are positive to His truth - Just as he does today.

Augustine, commenting on the feeding of the 4,000 noted that the first feeding of the 5,000 gave nourishment to Israel and this feeding gave nourishment to the Gentiles.

The number present, 4,000, has often been compared to the Gentiles from the four corners of the world who will in the Church Age come to know Christ as their savior.

Mark 8:1,2

In those days again, when there was a great multitude and they had nothing to eat, He called His disciples and said to them, I feel compassion for the multitude because they have remained with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat.

We really do not begin at the beginning. We begin at three days into this time of intensive teaching.

After hearing that Jesus was in the area, the people of Decapolis turned out to seek Him. And Jesus gave them what they needed - His Word.

When they came they had brought provisions but now, three days into this Bible conference in the wilderness, they had eaten their food and were facing a problem, hunger.

In the early miracle of feeding the 5,000, the disciples were the ones who were identifying the problem and trying to come up with the solution.

They had by this time learned a lesson, let the Lord decide what the real problems are and let the Lord determine the real solution.

Notice: It is the Lord who says I feel compassion for the multitude because they have remained with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat.

A few things to note about this statement:

1. Again we see the Lord's compassion. Not only an emotional feeling of pity, but the desire to do something about the problem.
2. His compassion came about (passive voice) as a result of the people remaining with him for three days and learning the Word of God. But because they valued the Word above even food they now have a practical problem.

This is an illustration of:

Matthew 4:4 Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

3. Because they put the Word first, the primary priority of their lives, they ended up with a practical problem.

Most Christians get this backwards, they take care of the practical problems themselves, never living the Christ Dependant Life, and then they end up with a spiritual problem.

Remember that Jesus' compassion and his willingness and ability to help in a time of practical need came as a result of their endurance in His Word.

4. These people did not recognize their lack of food as a problem. Not one came to him and complained or suggested they send out for pizza - but he knew of their problem, their practical problem, before they even recognized the problem.

Principle: Go through life putting the Word first and the Lord will see you problems before they come take care of the practical problems of life.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

Mark 8:3

Jesus proposes a human solution and shows the disciples the inadequacy of it:

And if I send them away hungry to their home, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from distance.

Now Jesus is talking about physical food, but the application is to spiritual food:

If Jesus were to send us away, we would faint.

If we were to go away we would faint.

FAINT is the fut, pass, ind of EKLUMAI " Used only three times other than this reference.

Future tense means in Greek grammar that this is a definite outcome of the situation, the future in the Greek looks at the present events in light of absolute outcome. Time futures are expressed in other ways (aorist, subjunctives).

1. Galatians 6:9 we are to not be weary in following the plan of God because we might faint.
2. In Hebrews 12:5 we are not to faint at discipline or rebuke from God.
3. To faint is the opposite of endurance. And endurance is only to be found in our relationship to Christ:

Hebrews 12:3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

From our passage in Mark we can see that the Lord never sends us away. When we faint, when we grow weary, it is because we have left Him, we have not endured.

And our endurance can only come from considering, knowing, the one who has endured so much for our sakes, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Also the statement that many of them have come from afar.

We have come a long way in our relationship with Jesus Christ, don't allow yourself to go away now, don't become weary and faint.

We are constantly at the cross roads of looking at Christ and His Word and then looking at the practical problems that invade our lives.

What we need to do is examine how far the Lord has brought us. How he has provided and how he has conformed us to his image.

Mark 8:4

The disciples, in the feeding of the 5,000, tried to come up with a human solution; they now realize that the solution is in Christ:

And His disciples answered Him, Where will anyone be able to find enough to satisfy these men with bread here in desolate place?

This is a great conclusion, these guys are starting to think.

When we are in a helpless situation we are poised at the brink of great spiritual advance. We might come to helplessness in many ways. God may directly put us in a helpless state. When heroes that it involves circumstance and never sin. But God will also allow us to get ourselves into a helpless situation even allowing us to sin.

And there we are helpless - but not hopeless.

Hebrew 4:16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

There is the HOPE which is a great confidence, in drawing near to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

But that is one avenue we can take. We can also allow the helpless situations in life to draw us away from Christ and into despair and depression.

Choice: The dependence on Christ or the Depression of Despair.

So even as the disciples recognized that they nor the people could solve the problem that would have been of no value whatsoever unless they realized that Christ alone can solve the problem. He is the only one who has the lasting solution.

Mark 8:5

And He was asking them, How many loaves do you have? And they said, Seven.

The best man could come up with was seven loaves of bread and, as we see later, a few small dried fish.

And folks, that is not going to feed 4000 people. That is inadequate and by way of application, whatever man comes up with to solve the problems you face will be inadequate.

A few will eat of what man provides, but many will starve.

Mark 8:6

But Jesus is going to take that which is inadequate and make it more than adequate to meet the need:

And He directed the multitude to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the multitude.

Principle: Jesus takes the inadequate, he takes the insignificant, and makes it count for something.

The bread of life takes the bread of man and makes it matter.

In John 6:35 we are given the meaning of this provision:

Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

The analytical mind might ask where did the bread come from? It came from the person of Christ himself - he is the bread of life and made the insignificant seven loaves into a feast more than sufficient for the 4000.

Principles:

1. All of us are inadequate and insufficient. And the things that we might have are inadequate and insufficient.

We realize this as a result of understanding our depravity but also when we just look at ourselves even apart from a perfect God - we aren't much and if we think we are we stand in arrogance rather than humility.

2. But when we receive Him, the bread of life, and His Word which is a spiritual manna or bread, that divine power in His person and Word makes us and what we have and even what we do more than adequate.

An analogy by way of application:

I want to draw out an application, but you have to imagine that you are a loaf. But for now, think of yourself as a loaf, inadequate, unable to provide, insignificant and insufficient. What does Jesus do with the loaves:

He took the seven loaves: If we were to see this personified, we would see that we have to be taken by Christ. We have free-will and we need to use our free will to give ourselves to Christ.

This is not something that is done once as is Salvation. Salvation secures our place in eternity while this giving of self to Christ advances us in the Christ Centered Life.

It is a daily giving of ourselves, as loaves, to Christ. Sensing our inadequacies and our insufficiencies.

Once the Lord has the loaves, he prays. As he also prays for us. He is our mediator. He stands before the Father and prays on our behalf.

Those intercessory prayers of Christ on our behalf are always perfect, always for exactly what we need even when we do not see or know what we need.

Then he broke the bread: KLAU " used for the breaking of bread here and at the Lord's Supper.

Means to break with the hands not using a knife.

The analogy here is to our brokenness. We are broken away from self and to the Lord. In doing so he uses his hands never a knife.

Brokenness is not merely a mental agreement with the doctrine of depravity. We see ourselves as depraved when ever we look to God who is perfect. But do we see ourselves as depraved when we look at others?

That is the difference, the believer who is broken before Christ will have no illusions about himself even when he looks at others.

For each of us it takes something different, different situation in which a different problem to lay us broken before the Lord:

PAUL: A thorn in the flesh

PETER: Denying Christ three times

DAVID: The rebellion of his son Absalom and Absalom's death

It will be different but it must be there, just like a unbroken wild horse, we are no good until we are under the Master's control.

Then he gave the loaves to his disciples in order that they might serve and they did serve the crowd.

Why do we give ourselves to Christ? Why does he break us to the point of total dependency on Him?

So that we might serve -

But an interesting note: In order that they "might serve. The subjunctive verb sees this as only a potential apart from your decision to serve Jesus Christ.

Just as you have to be willing to give yourself daily to Christ, you have to be willing to serve, willing to let Christ make you His servant for His people.

I have a friend, in doctrine, for over twenty years and recently he told me that every day upon rising he prays, Lord use me today, let me be a servant. And God is doing just that -

Mark 8:7

They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well.

The bread would have been sufficient, but here is a provision beyond expectation. Fish, protein, to prepare the people for their return home.

Mark 8:8

Christ always provides more than enough, his grace, his blessings are never reduced for lack.

And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces.

Mark 8:9

And about four thousand were there; and He sent them away.

Now they were ready to go home, they were full, there was no need there was no lack.

Will we give ourselves to Christ, let him break us, let him supply our need and our lack, and then serve him?

Cicero said: It is the peculiar quality of a fool to perceive faults in others and to forget his own.

In our study of the Lord's earthly ministry, we have seen the companions and we have seen the critics. And the critics refuse to see their faults and attribute great fault to the Lord of Glory, the Servant of God.

Jesus Christ and his disciples have crossed over the Sea of Galilee, leaving behind the now well feed four thousand Gentile and Jewish followers who had been taught by the Lord for three days, and come again to the Jews of Galilee.

In marked contrast to the positive volition shown by the 4000 who listened to the truth Jesus taught, we have the religious leaders who are ready to criticize the Lord at every opportunity.

Mark 8:10,11

And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

And the Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him.

The Religious leaders of Israel had taken every opportunity to be critical of Jesus Christ:

1. They criticized him for associating with the down and crowd, tax collectors and prostitutes (Mark 2:16)
2. They accused him of breaking the Old Testament Law (Mark 2:24)
3. They demanded he observe their religious traditions (Mark 2:18 and Mark 7:1-5)
4. And they even accused him of being in league with Satan (Mark 3:22)

They tried to trap him into healing on the Sabbath, which he did, and now they try to test him.

Mark brings us to the bottom line of this confrontation, they Pharisees have been arguing with Jesus and in the midst of the argument they demand that he give them a sign.

The word ARGUE is SUZEITEW which is used in the Gospels and Acts to show doubt or rejection that leads to confrontation and argument.

It shows that it is a result of something else and that that something else is their rejection:

These religious leaders already had rejected the truth Jesus taught and now were debating, arguing with Him.

A few observations on this type of argumentation:

1. They had already rejected the person, work, and words of Jesus Christ.
2. They could have just walked away, ignoring Jesus, but they did not.
3. In order to vindicate their own position, they continued to argue, attack, and criticize.
4. When you are confident about something there is no need to argue the point. You are secure in your position.
5. The insecurity of the Pharisees, however, would not let it go. They followed Jesus and attacked him in order to build themselves up.

Principle: When you put others down you do so to put yourself up. And when you are looking down at people, you can not look up into the face of God.

But now they go from argument to demands. "Give us a sign from heaven."

And we are even told that this is not a sincere request but a test, demanded to test Jesus Christ.

A few things to note about the demand for a sign:

1. In the Jewish tradition, a sign would guarantee the truthfulness of a statement. Prophetic statements that were to be fulfilled at a much future time were accompanied by a sign to verify the prophecy.
2. The sign was primarily an evidence of trustworthiness rather than of power. The miracles of Christ were an abundant evidence of Power from God but the Pharisees wanted a sign to verify what Jesus was saying. Mark never refers to the Miracles as signs, but as manifestations of the authority and power of God in Jesus Christ.
3. They want to know that God is with Jesus Christ, but they have already rejected his teaching.
4. Once you have rejected the Word of the Lord, any sign, even one hitting you right in the face, will also be rejected.
5. On the other hand, once you are received the Word, you will see the signs from God in everything.

Romans 1:20 refers to the evidence of God that we see all around us:

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power

and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made -

The sunsets, the ebb and flow of the oceans, the cycle of life, the courses of the stars, all are sign in which we who believe see the work of a sovereign and omnipotent God.

But reject the truth, and you are blinded to the greatness and the vastness of God your creator.

6. But it is not only the unbeliever who seeks a sign to verify the truth rather than letting the truth verify the sign.

Read John 20:24-29 Thomas was not with the disciples at the time of Jesus' first resurrection appearance.

He doubted, he wanted proof, and the Lord in his compassion was willing to give it.

John 20:28 Thomas never took him up on the proof. Instead he obeyed the Word of Christ. At the command be no unbelieving but believing Thomas believed.

John 20:29 What is the greater blessing: To not see a sign and yet believe.

In Mark 8:11, the Pharisees had already rejected, but now they wanted a rational for their rejection, give us a sign.

So in this we see that rejection will try to vindicate itself by establishing a standard for their belief; "I will believe if I see a sign, if the situation conforms to my way of thinking, if God acts this way or that way."

Mark 8:12

Jesus response to that type of rejection is very straight forward:

And sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.

The word for sighing deeply is similar to the emotional response we saw on the part of the Lord in Mark 7:34 but here and only here we have the prefix ANA which suggests a very deep sigh.

You see, instead of a sign they got a sigh. And that was a sigh of emotional disturbance in the humanity of Christ because of the evil, hardness of these Pharisees.

The refusal to give them a sign is a paraphrase of Psalms 95:10-11 in which rest is refused to the ones who reject the truth.

Just as Moses had to deal with the perverseness and unbelief of his generation, Jesus now deals with the same rejection in His generation.

The refusal of a sign has both historical and theological implications:

1. Historically, the demand for a sign expressed a desire to judge Jesus according to scribal tradition rather than the absolute standard of God's word.
2. Theologically, the demand for a sign was a demand for absolute proof that God was working in Jesus' ministry which eliminates the faith factor. Theologically, a sign would preclude a personal decision in response to the revealed Word of God

But isn't that exactly what rejection of truth is all about, if you reject truth, God's truth, you never have to come to a point of personal decision.

But rejection of truth can take a turn other than trying to establish a false standard for belief, and as we shift from the Pharisees to the Disciples, we see another way truth is rejected.

Mark 8:13,14

Jesus leaves the western shore of the sea of Galilee and in crossing over to the eastern shore he is alone with his disciples.

And leaving them, He again embarked and went away to the other side. And they had forgotten to take bread; and did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them.

Here we are presented with a small problem. Really small. In the abrupt departure away from the Pharisees, the disciples did not bring sufficient provisions for the journey across the lake. They had only one loaf of bread with them.

Mark 8:15

Now Jesus is going to use what has just happened with the Pharisees to teach his disciples a principle.

And He was giving orders to them, saying, Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

The metaphor of leaven turns on the ability of a small amount of yeast to mix with its own fermentation allowing bread to rise.

In both the Jewish and Greek cultures, leaven was a metaphor for corruption.

In the NEW TESTAMENT it refers to corruption in the areas of exploitation, human viewpoint, Religion, legalism, and licentiousness. It at all times refers to evil.

The leaven of the Pharisees was just demonstrated by their religious ritual approach to truth that demanded a sign.

The leaven of Herod looks back to Herod's involvement with the murder of John the Baptist and sees the problem of the exploitation of the innocent.

But what we need to see is that the Lord was giving them a warning.

BLEPW be on the lookout for evil:

And what do they do, they fall right into evil.

Mark 8:16

All they heard was LEAVEN, and they thought of bread:

And they began to exchange words with one another the fact that they had no bread.

Four Failures on the part of the Disciples:

1. They failed to understand the figure of speech
2. They failed to listen to all of what was said, hearing only the word leaven
3. They mis-applied what was said. In subjectivity they thought they were being braced for the lack of bread
4. Then they argued among themselves as to who was at fault for forgetting the bread

This is a type of rejection of the word of Christ:

While not rejecting Christ, they rejected His word by being distracted to an issue that was unimportant.

Mark 8:17,18

Now notice the Lord's response:

And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or

understand? Do you have a hardened heart?

Then to describe their condition of a hardened heart he quotes from Ezekiel 12:2.

Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?

But there is a difference as he quotes from Ezekiel. In Ezekiel the one who did not see not hear were called rebellious.

The disciples are not rebellious, only distracted.

Mark 8:19,20

The Lord then teaches them using his previous miracles as a basis for reveling truth:

Do you not remember when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up? They said to Him, Twelve. And when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up? And they said to Him, Seven.

Some commentators get very involved with the numbers game, trying to find allegories for the twelve small baskets and the seven large baskets, but in doing so they miss two beautiful points:

1. If Jesus would take loaves of bread and multiply them for the crowds, would he not do the same and even more for the disciples who were close to him? They had one loaf, he could make it into an abundance of bread.

In the same way we need to look around, see what our Lord has provided for those who do not even know Him. The beauty of creation, the freedom of a nation, the love of family and friends - will he not do even more for YOU who are his friends?

2. The disciples, in getting involved with the lack of bread were distracted from their Lord and what he was saying.

What is bread, it is small stuff, and we are not to sweat the small stuff, and with God, everything is small stuff.

They put their eyes on the one measly loaf of bread and in doing so took their eyes off the one is the very bread of life.

If you have believed in Christ as your Savior, if you have decided to seek His best, if you have the attitude of a servant that he first embraced for us,

then you are just like the disciples, alone in a boat in the middle of the sea, maybe with only one loaf of bread to your name, but you have it all - you are with the Lord, the bread of life.

But there is one more contrast I want you to see:

Look back to verse 13: What did Jesus do at the rejection by the Pharisees?

And leaving them - He left them, he got in a boat and sailed away.

But now what does he do at the rejection of His truth by his disciples as they are distracted?

He teaches them more truth and focus their attention on to Him. He ministers to them.

Principle:

1. The Pharisees rejected the person of Christ. They refused to believe He was given the power and the authority of God. They rejected him as the Messiah and refused to believe he was the God-man.

2. In that rejection, there is nothing else to say. Jesus abruptly leaves them.

3. The disciples also rejected, but their rejection was a result of distraction, they did not listen, they did not understand, they got involved with the small stuff of life.

4. Jesus did not leave the disciples. You say he couldn't, he was in a boat in the middle of the lake. But my Lord can walk on water, he could have left.

But he stayed and ministered to them more truth so they would not be distracted away from Him.

5. In correcting their distraction, he first rebuked them, telling them they were hard of heart, that they did not understand, that they were not seeing, hearing, or even remembering.

The rebuke revealed the problem. They were ready to think the problem was lack of bread, a side issue, small stuff.

Oh, how we like to get involved with the small stuff and all of a sudden our Christian lives are focused on issues that are not issues at all.

We need the rebuke to get us to look at the real problem. And the problem was on the inside, on their unwillingness to begin to see, hear, think, understand the Words of truth.

6. Then he called them to remember, remember what was being taught when he multiplied the loaves among 5,000 and then 4,000 - Remember that Jesus Christ is the solution to every problem, and they were with Him.

Application: There will be times that we will not see and will not hear, and their will be truth that is taught that we will not understand, but remember who Jesus Christ is and remember that you are in the boat with Him.

Don't be distracted by unimportant issues and don't be as the Pharisees, who are a picture of the world, rejecting the very person of Christ.

Mark 8:21

Demonstrates the loving concern that Christ has for us in that his desire is that we do understand.

He keep on saying to them, Do you not yet understand?

And I believe that one by one as the Lord repeated this question, the disciples raised their heads and nodded, yes, I now understand.

Do we understand that we are with our Savior and nothing else really matters?

In the Gospel of John, the disciples asked Jesus about a man who was born blind. Why, they asked was this man born this way? Was a punishment for some sin on his part or on the part of his parents? Jesus' answer came very quickly, not because of sin was this man born blind, but That the works of God should be made manifest in him.

In our chapter, Mark is serving up for his readers a fantastic contrast. First, we examined the feeding of the 4000 who came and stayed with Jesus to be taught the Word. Then, we saw how the Pharisees opposed our Lord, doubting Him and testing Him at every turn and how even the disciples were so often so easily distracted from the truth.

Soon we will see the disciples, specifically Peter finally come to grips with who this Jesus of Nazareth is, that he is the Messiah, the anointed one, the promised Savior.

But just prior to that we have a miracle that establishes once and for all, for all who wish to see the truth, that Jesus is the one who was promised by God to take away the sins of the world.

It is as a result of this brief miracle that there can be no doubt that Jesus is the Messiah and any doubt on the part of the disciples will soon be turned to confidence.

Mark 8:22

And they came to Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to Him, and entreated Him to touch him.

REMEMBER WHAT Jesus had just said to his disciples as they crossed the Sea of Galilee.

Verse 18. They had taken Jesus' warning about the leaven of the Pharisees as a rebuke that they had forgotten to bring bread. To this Jesus replied:

Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?

Back in Mark 7:31-37 the disciples had already witnessed the Lord restoring hearing to a man who was deaf. Now they will see the Lord restore sight to a man who was blind.

Any of the healing miracles not only demonstrate Jesus' compassion but also manifest or reveal even a greater work of God.

Like the disciples we may have sight but we do not always see, and we may have hearing but we do not always hear.

But now, in Bethsaida, there is one who is physically blind and the Lord will restore his sight and the disciples and the readers of this Gospel, even today, will see that the touch of Jesus is what we need to spiritually see.

Read Isaiah 42

Blindness: Figurative and Spiritual:

Since the earliest written Scriptures, blindness has had figurative meaning. 1500 years before the time of Christ, Moses wrote of a blindness not of the eyes but of the soul when he said a bribe can blind the eyes of the wise (Deuteronomy 16:19)

Prophetically: The work of the Messiah has been related to bring sight to the blind. Both literal prophecies and spiritual prophecies.

Isa. 42:1: This is a prophecy of Jesus Christ

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.

In Isaiah 42:16-20 we have mention of those who are blind and an interplay between spiritual blindness and literal sight. In verse 16 we have the work of the Messiah, Jesus Christ:

And I will lead the blind by a way they do not know, In paths they do not know I will guide them. I will make darkness into light before them And rugged places into plains.

This is the Lord doing what we are unable to do for ourselves:

The blind are helpless, the Scriptures even indicate that they need a guide (Romans 2:19).

We have three works mentioned here:

1. The unknown way and the unknown path represent deliverance. The Lord delivers us by his way and by his path.

In John 14:6 Jesus declared: **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

2. The dark space (singular) is the present state of misery sinful man hold apart from Christ. Christ, as the light of the world, lights up this dark space.

John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

3. The crooked things made straight are the dangers that threaten the believer. Jesus Christ makes life straight for the believer by making life a matter of simple priorities:

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Now note the last part of Isa. 42:16:

These are the things I will do, And I will not leave them undone.

We are as the blind, unable to do for ourselves and must rely totally upon the work of Christ.

The great work of Christ brings deliverance to the ones trusting in him but it will also bring shame to the ones who have trusted in idols.

Isaiah 42:17, They shall be turned back and be utterly put to shame, Who trust in idols, Who say to molten images, You are our gods.

Remember: An idol may be something very legitimate that is put as a priority over Jesus Christ, his person and his work.

Now, a contradiction to human viewpoint:

Isa. 42:18, Hear, you deaf! And look, you blind, that you may see. How can the deaf hear and the blind see? They can't !!!That is the point - but with spiritual deafness and spiritual blindness Jesus Christ brings hearing and sight.

Now, the value of recognizing that you are blind and deaf to spiritual things apart from Christ:

Isa. 42:19, Who is blind but My servant, Or so deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is so blind as he that is at peace with Me, Or so blind as the servant of the Lord

Isa. 42:20 shifts over to literal seeing and hearing. This is a criticism of those who would read this and say, "I am neither deaf nor blind, I do not need a guide, and one to lead me."

You have seen many things, but you do not observe them; Your ears are open, but none hears.

This is the arrogant man who doesn't recognize his own deafness and blindness in spiritual things.

The disciples needed to know Isaiah, chapter 42.

Principles:

1. Physical blindness as well as deafness put a person dependant upon another.
2. Recognition of spiritual blindness and deafness put us dependant upon another - Jesus Christ.
3. Because we know the obstacles created by physical blindness and deafness we can see the handicaps of spiritual blindness and deafness.
4. Therefore: It is only when you realize that you too are blind and deaf that you can then see and hear.

In Mark 8:22, the friends of this man brought him to Jesus and asked and encouraged Jesus to touch him:

When they came, the verb indicates that they came with an expectation of benefit. As we can come with expectations of benefit when ever we come to Jesus Christ.

In asking or encouraging Jesus to touch their friend we have an indicative mood indicating a

request without demand. They wanted their friend healed, his sight to be restored, but were not going to order Jesus to do this.

Today, some Christians need to learn that God is not to be ordered around, He will work according to His perfect time and His perfect grace.

Mark 8:23-25

Tells us what Jesus did for this man and teaches us what he will do for us:

And taking the blind man by the hand, He brought him out of the village; and after spitting on his eyes, and laying His hands upon him, He asked him, Do you see anything? And he looked up and said, I see men, for I am seeing them like trees, walking about. Then again He laid His hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly.

There are several things that we see Jesus doing:

1. He took the blind man by the hand: This man could not see Jesus Christ, so to establish personal contact with he took his hand.

Remember that the towns people wanted Jesus to touch the man. As with many they thought that there was some magical power in the touch of Christ. But here, Jesus touches the man, and he is still blind. This dispelled any superstition on the part of the people.

Now just like this blind man we too cannot see our Savior, but he is ever present with us and in us. This presence is not a feeling but Jesus reveals himself to us in spite of our limitation. When we come to him, and depend upon him, we will know he is with us.

2. He led him out of the town: Not only did Jesus established personal contact with this man in spite of him limitation but he also take him away from the crowds, establishing a personal relationship with him.

Jesus also take us away, alone to deal with our limitations, our hurt, our pain. We have personal Savior who knows us better than we know ourselves.

One of the great failures of the church has been the presenting of a corporate Savior, a Savior who is near, but not really personal. But we have a Savior

who knows us and still loves us and seeks us to establish a personal relationship with us.

Principle: Our relationship with our Lord should be just as dynamic when we are away from the Church as it is when we are with the Church, learning about him.

3. He then spit on his eyes and put his hands on him: As we observed in Mark 7 with the man who was deaf, that which comes from the mouth of the Lord is parallel to the Word of God:

Matthew 4:4 Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Putting his hands on him is more than just a touch, the Lord holds him.

And in the same way our spiritual sight will be restored when we receive the Word from the mouth of God and then we know that he is holding on to us.

4. Then the Lord questioned him asking if he saw anything: This question is like a test, do you now see.

We who have a personal relationship with Jesus, and have received his Word and are held in his arms, are tested. Do we now see? Not just through the eyes of man but with spiritual sight, from the viewpoint of God?

Now here is where it gets interesting. The man had part of his sight restored, but not all.

In other healing miracles restoration was immediate, but here it is gradual, progressive.

Reason: Mark uses this miracle to remind us that the great works of God may come to us in stages. That God's great work in us is also progressive.

We could not handle everything God has for us right now, we do not have the capacity for all the blessings he would like to bestow upon us. So we are part of a process.

Our spiritual blindness is removed gradually as we gradually grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The man answers that he sees, but as he looks out and sees men they have no features, they are like trees walking.

Shows us that he was not born blind. Those born blind do not know what trees look like.

5. So Jesus put his hands on his eyes again: There was no limit to the compassion and care Jesus extended to this man.

Just as there is no limit to the care Jesus extends to us. Some of need the constant touch of Christ,

As we begin to look honestly at ourselves we may wonder if the Lord ever tires of having to minister to us over and over again. Here we are constantly facing doubts, constantly needing Him, but he never tires of us and our needs - He is man but he is also fully God and God never gets tired. That is Grace.

That is why Paul was able to say:

Philippians 4:19, My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Then, as Christ continued to minister to this man, he was able to see clearly all things.

And as we endure with patience in the plan set before us, we will have the blindness of our souls removed and we will be able to see all things clearly.

Mark 8:26

And He sent him to his home, saying, Do not even enter the village.

Jesus sent the man home rather than back to Bethsaida in order to further safeguard against the increasing distraction on the part of the people of Galilee who were more involved with miracles than truth.

Let me give you three lessons from this miracle:

1. Jesus may chose to do great things apart from the crowds, thing that we will keep only to ourselves.
2. There is no limit to the Lord's care over us.
3. Often the Lord will do great things in stages and we must wait upon his perfect timing.

Mark 8:27

Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, Who do people say that I am?

A great deal has been said about knowledge:

Mark Twain said: The trouble with the world is not that people know too little. It is that they know so much that is not true.

A Philosopher once said: Knowledge is not enough, we must apply it. Being willing is not enough, we must do it.

Keith Miller, the Christian writer said: The knowledge of God is very far from loving Him and being obedient to Him.

All these concepts of knowledge come together in the next portion of the life of Christ that we are going to examine.

Following the restoration of sight to the blind man of Bethsaida we see the beginning of spiritual sight on the part of the disciples. This spiritual sight, that we all must have, begins with Jesus asking a question:

A few things are very significant at this point in our study of the Gospel of Mark:

1. We are at a climactic point in the narrative. We have seen the ministry of Jesus in miracles and parables, as he has traveled through the region of Galilee.

From this point on we are going to see a shift to very specific teaching to the disciples as the Lord begins to train them for future work.

2. Up to this point we have seen what the antagonist have said about Jesus. They have labeled him as a mere miracle man, as a heretic, as one who breaks the Law of God and the traditions of men, as one who is empowered by Satanic forces.

Now we will see what the disciples have to say about Christ and what Christ has to say about himself.

3. It is also significant that this insight into the person of Christ occurs while Jesus and His disciples are traveling through region of Caesarea Philippi because this was a region of strong worship of Caesar as Lord. But we are going to see that there is no other Lord but Jesus Christ.

We read here that the Lord was asking his disciples questions. We have a form of the word ASK or QUESTION in the imperfect tense indicating that this Socratic questioning went on and on as they traveled.

Then he came to a series of questions that will lead to a confession of faith and recognition of who Jesus Christ is.

He questions: Who do people say that I am?

That question continues to be asked today. Who do people say that Jesus is?

I have always appreciated C.S. Lewis answer to that question as he taught his students at Cambridge University said: "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people so often say about Jesus: that is I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I do not accept his claim to be God. That is one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. Either Jesus was the Son of God or else a madman or something worse.

The choice is very clear, Lord, liar, or lunatic.

The same attempt to mold Jesus into just being a mere man that is present today, was present 2000 years ago when Jesus walked on earth.

Mark 8:28

The disciples tell him what the popular opinion of the day is regarding Him:

And they told Him, saying, John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets.

When man, by man's opinion and viewpoint, attempts to define Jesus Christ he concludes everything from the absurd to the trivial.

John the Baptist or Elijah returned from the dead, or maybe just a prophet in line with many true and false prophets.

Go out today and ask that question and you too will get answers based on human viewpoint. Especially in our New Age society, you will hear that Jesus was a good man, a wise teacher, the forerunner of us all and what we all can become. One major cult even teaches that Jesus was the brother of Satan.

Just like Mark Twain said, the problem is not that we know too little, it is that we know so much that is not true.

Jesus himself proclaimed the truth about himself. He did not claim to be anything that ancient or

modern man attempts to thrust upon Him. His claim was that he was God:

John 10:30,31 I and the Father are one.

And the Jews certainly understood what he meant: The Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

John 8:58, Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.

Mark 8:29

So now he has heard the opinions of the people. His next question is the one upon which salvation hangs in the balance:

And He continued by questioning them, But who do you say that I am?

The YOU is a plural pronoun. He asks this to the entire group of twelve disciples, Who do you say that I am?

In this the impersonal, objective declaration of what others say is set aside for the personal, specific understanding of who you say that Jesus is -

In these two questions we see the questions that the servant of God continues to ask a lost and dying world:

Who is Jesus, according to the World?

And then, Who do you say He is -

This second question brings the issue from the corporate to the personal. Not merely what is said, but what do you believe?

Peter, bold and often brash, is the one to speak up. As spokesman of the disciples he make a personal declaration:

Peter answered and said to Him, Thou art the Christ.

The title CHRIST is the Greek for the Old Testament title Messiah. This name means the one anointed by God.

1. It implies divine election and appointment
2. It set a mission and divine power for that mission
3. It includes divine protection in service. It looks at the three fold office of Christ. In the Old Testament prophets, priests, and kings were anointed to God's mission and Jesus is the prophet, the priest, and the king of kings.

Peter knew the Old Testament and by saying that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, he knew that he was the one who came from God and is God and will save His people.

I am sure that at this personal declaration the elect angels of the universe cheered. Here is Peter, a big, often hardheaded fisherman from the rugged area of Galilee personally believing that Jesus is the Christ.

But the adulation is short lived - as we noted as we began:

Knowledge is not enough, we must apply it.

Mark 8:30,31

And He warned them to tell no one about Him.

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Jesus Christ capitalizes upon the recognition of His person to go on to teach about His work.

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The aorist tense looks a definite beginning, as Peter declares Jesus to be the Messiah, his personal faith in the person of Christ moves Christ to provide information regarding the work he came to do.

The middle voice sees this as beneficial, to Christ and to all who would hear, believe, and apply what he teaches.

Christ tells the disciples that because he is the Messiah, because he is the Son of Man which is emphasis on his humanity, four things must happen:

1. He must suffer many things
2. He will be rejected by the religious leaders
3. He will be killed
4. He will rise again from the dead after three days

In each of these statements the Lord uses an infinitive to show that these are results of his mission.

This is like saying to the disciples, you have seen my mission, this is what is going to result.

Now Peter had just used his understanding of the Old Testament scriptures to declare that Jesus was the Christ. But now we see his lack of understanding creating a blind spot.

He does not apply what he has just declared.

Mark 8:32

And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

Peter was very good at that, as we all are. He at one moment declares that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one of God. That Jesus is in fact God - and then turns right around and rejects everything he says.

In Acts 10:11-14 Peter received a vision from God:

And he beheld the sky opened up, and a certain object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, and there were in it all kinds of four footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, Arise, Peter, kill and eat! But Peter said, By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.

So here the Lord says do this, and he says NO and yet calls Him Lord.

Now, in Mark Peter says Jesus is God, but is blind to his teaching.

But I want you to see an application:

Peter believed in the person of Christ, and at the same time rejected the work of Christ.

And that is not so different than what we have today.

Application:

1. Every Christian has, at salvation, believed that Jesus is the Christ, the God-Man, their personal Savior.
2. Yet most Christians, while believing in the person of Christ, reject the work of Christ as a power in their lives.
3. They believe the biblical information about salvation but then reject the biblical information about the life that salvation brings.

4. It is our Lord's intention to not only give life eternal but also a quality of life that is lived everyday.

In John 10:10 Jesus promises: I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

5. Too many believers today are doing exactly what Peter did. They are not believing the rest of the story. NOW WHY DID PETER reject this truth and then go so far as to rebuke the one he has just recognized as God?

Simple: He did not like what Jesus said. It did not line up with what he wanted. It did not conform to Peter's world view, nor to his Human viewpoint.

Peter and we also need to heed the words of Isaiah:

Isaiah 55:8,9, For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Here with Peter, and with the words of Isaiah, we need to realize that we will not always understand what God is doing, but that is not at issue - at issue is whether we put our faith in Him and trust Him for what He is doing?

Peter did not like the fact that Jesus said he was going to die and so often we do not like what the Lord is saying to us through his word and in the circumstances of life.

We come together on a Sunday morning and declare that Jesus is the Christ, that he is our Savior.

And then we turn right around and say, Not so, Lord.

Now get the point:

Peter at one moment puts full faith in Christ calling him the Christ, and in the next moment rebukes him, disagrees with him, and rejects the truth.

Does that sound like a pattern of most of our lives? How often do we go from the pinnacle of faith one moment to the depth of disbelief the next.

And how this reminds us of our sinful nature, a spirit of man that lacks the consistency of faith in the person, the work, the truth of Christ.

This is a problem but for every problem there is a biblical, divine solution.

Mark 8:33

The four fold solution to our rejection and lack of faith. This verse could also be called: One good rebuke deserves another:

But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, and said, Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.

1. Jesus turns and faces his disciples: That is part of the solution. Jesus did not reject Peter and the others. Just as he does not reject us when we lack faith. We are in His sight and under His care. And in that care that he has for us he will correct us.

2. He rebuked Peter: Whereas Peter's rebuke was a present tense infinitive, the Lord's rebuke of Peter was an aorist tense, indicative.

This change in form shows that the Lord gave a very specific and definite rebuke. This is the divine discipline the Lord gives us to wake us up, to shake us out of our unbelief.

Not only does the Lord not reject us, he will give us specific disciple and specific tests to get us over our lack of faith.

3. The content of the rebuke: Get behind Me. Satan: Here we see that lurking in the shadows of the situation is Satan himself.

While we might laugh at Peter and even ourselves in this and similar situations, Satan is laughing at us in derision and he is laughing at our Lord.

Satan was unable to get you to not believe in Christ for your salvation, but he is too often able to get us to not believe in the truth of Christ for our abundant life.

Satan wants to keep you in the dungeon of disbelief. He wants you to have a miserable life lacking faith, lacking abundance.

4. The way to overcome the evil one: Set your mind not on the interests of man but on the interest of God.

Replace Human viewpoint with Divine viewpoint. And that can only come about as we choose to be positive, as we choose to learn the Word, as we

choose to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and as we choose faith in Him.

And that is exactly what Peter did: I cannot help but wonder if many years later as Peter was moved by the Spirit to write to the saints that he did not recall he lack of faith upon first hearing that Christ must die when he wrote:

1 Peter 3:18, For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

Acceptance replace rejection, God's way was substituted for man's way, unbelief gave way to faith.

We may be as Peter is Caesarea Philippi, standing before the Lord unwilling to believe in his words and his work - or we may be Peter the mature believer who embraces the suffer and sacrifice of the Savior with all joy - or more likely we are someplace in between.

Press the advance, do not give place to the enemy, choose to your faith in Christ for abundant life.

Let your knowledge of God move you towards loving Him and being obedient to Him.

Speaking of Loyalty, Theodore Roosevelt said: It is far better to be faithful than famous.

We have seen Peter's confession of faith. He made a statement based upon his knowledge of Old Testament scripture and his observation of Jesus Christ - "You are the Christ."

But then the Lord began to teach him about his impending suffering and death, and Peter could not handle that. He rebuked the Lord and the Lord turned and rebuked Him.

By way of application we saw in that dialogue two things that occurred:

1. Peter's confession of faith. Now he had believed that for some time but now clearly identifies Jesus as the Christ.

That parallels our salvation decision. To believe in Jesus as the Christ, our Savior.

2. And then, secondly, Jesus in His power takes care of the enemy Satan. When we begin our Spiritual lives we come under the attacks of Satan. He is a strong enemy but our Lord is stronger and

it is our Lord who puts Satan and his influence behind us.

That section of Mark's Gospel is a turning point in the ministry of Christ. In the first eight chapters we have seen the Lord present himself to his followers as the Christ, the promised Messiah. Now he turns to training the twelve for service.

Mark 8:34-38 describes the choice the believer must make if he is to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and have the highest and best that God in His grace offers.

Mark 8:34

And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

This verse sets the scene and then presents the first of six statements the Lord gives regarding the abundant life that we can have in Jesus Christ.

The scene:

1. The verb that is used for summoned or called is an aorist, middle, participle of a compound Greek word.

The prefix is PROS which means to face the multitude and the disciples.

The aorist tense looks at a specific point in time, a specific time for doctrinal instruction.

The middle voice sees the benefit derived from any situation in which teaching occurs.

The participle precedes the main verb HE SAID and shows us that a coming together must precede the imparting of truth.

This would later be stated doctrinally in Hebrews 10:25 Do not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some.

2. Two groups were called: The multitude and the disciples. The distinction is important because the information Jesus is about to give is not only true for the twelve, but for all those who seek truth, including us today.

The goal or the objective is stated first:

If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

We have to see this a something that is after salvation. Peter and the others have already believed in Christ and now the instruction are not regarding salvation but the Christian way of life.

The condition clause is a 1st cc. If and some will wish to follow Jesus.

WISH is a present tense, active voice. Keeps on making a choice or wishing to come after Jesus. QELW _desire.

The verb TO COME AFTER ME goes back to an aorist, here and aorist infinitive.

This looks at specific decisions that are made as a result (infinitive) of your desire.

Principles:

1. Once you are saved, two factors combine in coming to Jesus and living the Christ Centered Life.
2. The first of these is your DESIRE. You make a choice to keep on wanting what God has for you in His perfect plan. When that desires is not there, you will have no reason to desire to make the right choices.
3. That desire is a moment by moment choice you make. Now even when you get out of fellowship, even when you begin to think your plan is better, your overall desire in life should be to have what God wants for you.
4. The expression of that desire is made in the decisions we make to come and keep on coming back to Jesus Christ. Those decisions are made in specific points of time under pressure, in the midst of problem, and at the point of testing and temptation.
5. But in application you might say that you have a desire to have God's highest and best and when you have cause to pause and think about it there is no question, but just like Peter (remember last week), the right choices are not always there.

So the Lord describes in these six statements how to make the right choices. And in His grace it is not a matter of just do this or do that, if that was the case the New Testament would be very short - one statement: Follow Jesus.

The first statement:

If your desire is to come to Jesus Christ making the right choices or decisions then -

Let him deny himself and take up his cross and let him follow me.

The word DENY means to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and of one's interests.

It again is an aorist tense but here an imperative mood of command, middle voice of benefit.

The aorist tense looks at the choices we make either for self or for what God has for us.

As a command Jesus makes this a condition of the abundant life he has to offer. If we want what he has for us, we cannot be preoccupied or focused upon self.

We are also told that in addition to setting aside self we are to take up our cross.

The verb here is aorist, act, imperative and looks at specific situation where we have a choice between the saving of self and the Christ Centered Life.

The Cross was an instrument of death and the analogy is to death of self.

The people hearing this did not think of the Cross as we do knowing historically it was the place of our Savior's sacrifice. They saw it as a morbid reference to a horrible death.

This Taking up of one's Cross to them meant a denial of self and a servant attitude towards Christ.

Then the third command, Let him follow Me.

But here a present tense, the right decisions having been made the outcome is following Jesus Christ.

The word for FOLLOW is not merely to follow someone is a physical sense. But to follow them as to travel the same road they traveled. The idea is one of accompanying another, fellowshiping with them as you travel the same road.

Principles:

1. After salvation the conflict is between self and our Savior
2. We must make choices, decisions, at aorist tense points in time whenever the conflict occurs. The first choice is to deny self interests and chose the interests of Christ for us.
3. The second choice is our life or the life that Christ has for us. That life he has for us may mean hardship, suffering, even death. But it will all be worth it in time and eternity.

4. Most of us can look at the decisions we have made in the past that have centered on self interest and that alone should influence us to want to chose for Christ over self.

5. The choices form the foundation of our present tense continual action of fellowship with Jesus Christ.

6. We accompany Him, and he takes us no place that he himself has not gone.

We have seen that Jesus called the crowds to him along with the disciples and began to teach them:

His message was very simple: Their will be Christians who will desire the very highest and best that He has to offer through grace.

If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

That wish or desire is present tense, a consistent attitude of knowing that God's way is the best way and a continual attitude of wanting that highest and best.

But while that must be the consistent attitude, it is not always the continual attitude. We let ourselves get in the way. Our egos, our emotions, our manner of life which includes sin, disobedience, human good, works, and legalism.

So that present tense consistent attitude must be followed up with specific decisions, choice that we make from our free will.

So two aorist tense mandates:

1. Let him deny himself: This is a denial of self interest, self-centeredness, egotism, the old sticking up for self and self alone.

2. Take up his cross: The cross was an object of shame and a means of death.

What does it take to face hardship, sacrifice, even death? Courage - and that courage that we must have before men is gained only from Christ.

William Lame, one of the world's noted scholars on the Gospel of Mark, says of this passage that in it:

Jesus stipulates that those who wish to follow him must be prepared to shift the center of gravity in their lives from a concern for self to a reckless abandon to the will of God. A sustaining willingness to say NO to self in order to say YES to God.

And what follows in the next four verses gives us the reason, the motive, the means, the influence, and the opportunity to do just that. Say NO to self and YES to God.

But this is only for those who have made that decision and continue in the attitude of wanting to follow Jesus Christ.

Those who know they fail, know they sin, know that what they want costs far more than they can ever pay. And comes only through their increasing dependence upon Jesus Christ.

Psalm 25:4-5 Make me know Thy ways, O Lord; Teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, For Thou art the God of my salvation; For Thee I wait all the day.

To Paul who declared:

Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

So all that follows in the Lord's teaching is designed to answer the question HOW? How do we deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him?

Mark 8:35

For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it.

We begin with a coordinating explanatory conj, GAR, For you see - explains the challenge of verse 34:

Then the principle of paradox:

Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it.

The word WISHES is a repeat of the word WISH in v 34 but here it is subjunctive mood which indicates that some Christians will desire to save their way of life over submission to Christ.

And when this is the attitude, the idea of saving self, you will lose it.

The result of that is our manner of life, way of life, the life style of self.

SAVE IT is an aorist act infinitive which views a result. Which looks at a result of an attitude and the choices that are made from that attitude.

LOSE IT is a future tense which looks at the normal results of a life lived for self protection, self interest, and self promotion. The result of the choices made when attempting to save your life.

Principle: The sum total of a life lived for self is not gain but loss.

This becomes more than a paradox, it becomes a tragedy.

Just think of the people who have set out to live life their own way, constantly sticking up for number one, and what do they have in the end: LOSS

Just think of the times you have tried to plot your own existence, to save your inner self not giving way to all God has for you. What is the result? LOSS -

But there is now for you as a Christian an alternative:

But whoever will lose his life for the sake of Me and the gospel will save it.

Whereas saving our way of life was an aorist infinitive, here, losing that way of life is a future tense.

The future tense looks at the end result of an ongoing process. Unlike the meager attempt to save our way of life which is based upon decisions for self, this is a process of growing in the Lord by learning, thinking, and applying his word.

John the Baptist said it best in John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

And that is more than a paradox, it is a process. If you want to save your life it is to saved in Jesus Christ.

Jesus in these passages is dealing with the factors that influence the decisions we make:

EGO ---- EMOTION ---- EVIL all influence the decisions that bring destruction.

EVIL was dealt with when Jesus said, Get the behind me Satan. EGO and EMOTIONS are dealt with as we deny self, as we take up the process of accompanying Jesus Christ, as we lose ourselves in Him.

The Lord also gives us a motivation for doing this: "for My sake and the gospel's [sake]."

The word SAKE is ENEKA and in about 20 of its 26 occurrences in the NEW TESTAMENT. it focus upon the person of Christ and what he has done for us as a motive for enduring life and possible hardships even to the point of death.

It means: Because of, for the sake of, for this reason.

So we lose our life or life style for this reason, Christ lost his life for us. He gave up His eternal position in heaven as the Son of God and became the Son of man to suffer and die for us.

And look at the result, he is now seated in the heavenlies in full honor and glory at the right hand of the Father. He is honored beyond measure.

But His sacrifice was for us and that grace becomes the motive for us to stick with it, to endure when endurance is required, to lose ourselves when we begin to permit ego and emotions to rule us, to deny self, take up even sacrifice and death, and follow in fellowship our Lord who has done so much for us.

And what did Jesus Christ do for us?

Jesus Christ paid the price of sin, we could not do that for ourselves, only the sinless Savior could do that on our behalf:

I Corinthians 6:20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

I Corinthians 7:23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

Our obligation, which David in the Psalms so clearly understood as a vow or debt, is to first glorify God and then not become the slaves of men. But instead, become the slaves of Christ.

Psalm 50:14, Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, And pay your vows to the Most High.

Now we could never, nor does god expect us to repay Jesus Christ for what he has done for us, for the price he paid.

But as we consider the cost of the Christ Centered Life we are motivated by the fact that we are under debt to God.

The Price: Deny self interest, lose your ego and emotional motivation in life, and put your life in the hands of Jesus Christ.

The Result and Reward: Whoever will lose his life for the sake of me and the Gospel will save it.

This motivation focuses on both the person of Christ and the Gospel, the Word of Christ:

The Gospel here is far more than just salvation. It is the good news that Christ not only has life for you but also that that life is ABUNDANT.

Our self-life is set aside, abandoned for something far greater - the person of Christ and the Word of God.

The next Statement is again said in the context of belief. This is not salvation, although it would be applicable. But it is for us who have been saved:

Mark 8:36

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?

Now the word SOUL in v 36 and 37 is the same word used for life in v 35, meaning the inner life of man.

Here the Lord steps back from the high motive of Grace in what He has done for us to a more basic motive in life - profit.

Is there anything profitable in material possessions if the inner life is at conflict with the one who has saved us?

And then to remind us that we do not have the price to pay to purchase that abundance of life, we have verse 37:

Mark 8:37

For what shall a man give in exchange for his inner life.

And Jesus Christ desires us to have that inner life in abundance.

Illustration: If you go into a store in Tulsa and try to buy something with Mexican pesos, you are not going to get what you want. Pesos are not the coin of the realm. You may pick something out, something you really like, but you can't have you.

You see, you want something that cost far more than you can pay. And only a great God does for his children what they cannot do for themselves.

Spiritually we may want a healthy and sound soul and an abundant inner life, but we do not have the coin of the realm. Only Jesus Christ can pay the price and he did, now our lives must be lost in him.

Mark 8:38

The sixth and final statement is a warning:

For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

The adulterous and sinful generation looks back over the preceding chapters of Mark's Gospel. At the ones who have criticized, maligned, even attributed Jesus' ministry to Satan.

Indeed that was an adulterous and sinful generation but so is ours today.

This adultery and sin is not physical but a spiritual adultery and sin of unfaithfulness and disobedience to the one who has done for you what you could not do for yourself.

When Christ died on the Cross for you he had you personally in mind, he gave up his life to save your life.

And just as then there are now those who are ashamed of Jesus who stooped so low to bring you so high.

The key to the warning is understanding the word ASHAMED:

It is the passive of AISCUNEI _which means to be put to shame but in the sense of dishonor.

When we do that we succumb to the human ridicule that faces Christ. Like Peter on the eve of the crucifixion, we do want to be numbered with Christ.

Every one of us has the potential of dishonoring Christ in every area of application:

1. We fail to acknowledge that he did for us and keeps on doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. We deny Christ to self.
2. We deny Christ before others anytime we think that taking a stand for Christ will bring rejection and ridicule from the world. We become closet Christians.

3. And we even dishonor Christ before God our heavenly Father every time we try to live the Christian life apart from the Grace that was gained by Christ. We want to do it on our own, not denying self, not losing our life in Him.

But for Christ, he is never ashamed of us in that sense.

Hebrews 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

2 Timothy 2:11-13 It is a trustworthy statement: #For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.

The issue is reward and honor for the winner and no honor for the loser. At His coming in the glory of the Father with the holy angels he will be ashamed in the sense on not giving honor to those believers who lived apart from what he has promised and stated in these verses.

Now this is referring to the second advent which is appropriate for Israel's resurrection. But I think we can see this more easily if we look at the Rapture and events at occur in heaven after the Church is taken out of the World.

1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

When we arrive at the BEMA and the crowns and rewards for eternity are passed out, there will be shame for the ones who are passed over. There will be no honor. The Lord may even say: What more could I have done?

Chapter 9

Commenting on the grace of God, Charles Spurgeon said, *How great a stoop from the height of His throne to a dunghill! How wonderful that power which occupies itself in rescuing beggars, all befouled with the filthiness in which they lay. For He lifts them out of the dunghill, not disdaining to search them out from amidst the base things of earth that He may by this means bring to naught the great ones, and pour contempt upon all human glorying.*

In our passage we are going to see glory, but not the glory of man, the glory of our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the previous chapter we saw Peter confess his faith in Christ. We also saw Peter rebuke the Lord when he spoke of his suffering and his death. Then we saw the challenge given to those who wish or desire to follow Jesus Christ - a challenge even for us today. Now the last verse of chapter eight and the first verse of chapter nine really go together.

In Mark 8:38 the Lord spoke of his coming in the glory of the Father. After the rejection, the suffering, and the death, there would be resurrection and glory.

Suffering precedes exaltation. Of course all Peter heard back in Mark 8:31 was that his friend, Jesus, was going to suffer and die. Now is told again that he will rise from the dead.

Peter, like many of us, had selective hearing and heard only so much and then, what is always worse, acted upon the partial information he heard.

Mark 9:1 is a promise that reinforces the statement that the Lord will be glorified, that he will rise from the dead, and that any suffering, even to the point of death, is just a prelude to exaltation.

Mark 9:1

And He was saying to them, Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.

Those who take this verse out of context really get confused. Some even go so far as to say there are those who were present when that was said who are wandering the earth today, not having died but having celebrated a couple of thousand birthdays.

But they forget an important principle: The King in glory is the kingdom. The king is not separate from the kingdom. Jesus, king of kings and lord of lords, is the kingdom.

The verb HE SAID is imperfect indicating he said this repeatedly in the message to the multitude and the disciples.

The pronoun limits this promise to just some of those standing there.

And the promise stated: Who by no means may taste death until they see the kingdom of God having come in power.

Jesus Christ had declared upon coming to Galilee that the presence of the King meant the presence of the kingdom:

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

Why is the Kingdom of God at hand? Because Jesus Christ the King is present.

And when His Resurrected Glory is seen by a few who are present, they will get a glimpse at the glory of the divine, the God-man, Jesus Christ as he will be forever.

Mark 9:2

And six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them.

The mention of six days relates what is about to occur to the prediction of verse 1.

Verse 1 states that some will not see death until they get a glimpse of the King in His kingdom, now six days later this is going to occur.

Three disciples were selected for this special privilege:

Peter, James, and John (James and John being brothers):

Prior to this it was Peter, James, and John who went with Jesus and witness the raising of Jairus's daughter from the dead in Mark 5:37.

Later in Mark 14:33 Peter, James, and John would again be privately with the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane on the eve of the crucifixion.

Now why just these three?

One reason is that as seen with Peter, they knew enough of what the Lord was saying to have some real questions about why he had to suffer and die.

If you do not know anything about a given topic you do not even know enough to know what you don't know. But these three had some doctrine,

but not enough, so the Lord was going to let them see that suffering and death are a mere prelude to eternal glory.

The high mountain is probably a portion of Mt. Herman which rises to an attitude of over 9,000 feet.

In Luke 9:32 the parallel account tells us that Peter, James, and John took a nap after arriving to the mountain. We are also told that while they were sleeping, Jesus was praying.

And it was while he was praying that he was transfigured:

The phrase BEFORE THEM uses an adverb that looks at physical relationship rather than time. When they awoke he was transfigured.

The word TRANSFIGURED is METAMORFOW where we get the word metamorphosis.

It means to change into another form, more than just an outward change.

For a brief time the Lord's earthly body was changed into what it would eternally be in resurrection.

In Philippians 3:10 Paul looks back at the resurrection of Christ and states:

Philippians 3:10 That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

The resurrection of Christ and our resurrection is a display of the tremendous power of God.

Mark 9:3

And His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

The glory of Christ's resurrection body at the transfiguration was a preview of the uniform of glory of the winner, the mature believer in eternity.

All believers are destined to have a resurrection body like the resurrection body of Christ:

I Corinthians 15:49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

But the winner, the overcomer, the believer who presses the advance to maturity in Christ will have a uniform of glory:

Revelation 3:5 He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments -

And just like with these three disciples, our Lord will always give us a glimpse, often through the Word, of what is in store for us not only in time but in eternity.

All the confusion, all the misunderstanding, all the worry and concern should have been laid to rest when Peter, James, and John saw the glorified Christ knew that this is what their friend Jesus would be forever.

Mark 9:4

And Elijah appeared to them along with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus.

Both Matthew and Mark write that Jesus, Elijah and Moses were talking but only Luke gives us the content of the conversation:

Luke 9:30-31 And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

1. Moses was Israel's deliverer and lawgiver
2. Elijah was the defender of God and the prophet of future restoration.
3. The combined ministries of these two significant Old Testament men would have revealed the suffering, death, and future glorification of Christ.
4. Moses knew what it was to be a deliverer under pressure. Elijah knew what it meant to be rejected and to suffer. Both knew of the future kingdom of the King of kings.
5. The disciples on the other hand had been confused and rejected even the thought that Jesus must suffer and die.
6. Luke, stating that they talked with Christ about His death that was about to be accomplished makes this a very exclusive conversation. No one else understood what Christ would have to face and what was ahead through death for Him.
7. They then ministered encouragement to Christ that could come from no other source.

We must recognize that the God-man, Jesus Christ, was in need of encouragement just like we are.

And we also must see that that encouragement was provided just like it is provided to us.

God wants us to endure towards the goal of our destiny and in that endurance he provides encouragement.

Encouragement comes from three sources:

1. From the Word of God as it is being taught: God the Holy Spirit knows your needs at every given moment and God the Holy Spirit leads gifted communicators to provide encouraging teaching.
2. From the Word that is resident in your Soul: As you have learned the Word and it is yours, you being it into memory center and encouraged by it.

This is a promised ministry of God the Spirit:

John 14:26 But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

3. From others who encourage you with God's Word, promises, doctrines, and principles:

I Samuel 23:16 And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David - and encouraged him in God.

Principle: God our Father provides sources of encouragement to us. This need that we have is in no way a weakness, it is a strength we have as we press the advance towards God highest and best for us.

Mark 9:5,6

And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. For he did not know what to answer; for they became terrified.

We really need to look at these two verses in reverse order:

The reason Peter spoke up was because he had nothing to say. Sounds like a few politicians I know. The less they know the more they say -

The phase: For they (Peter, James, and John) became exceedingly afraid, is explanatory, beginning with the conjunction GAR , for you see.

AFRAID is a Greek word only used here and in Hebrews 12:21, where we read of Moses' fear in the presence of God at Mt. Sinai.

It is a very strong word for fear that results, in Peter's case of saying a rather ridiculous thing:

We are even told at the beginning of verse 6 that he did not know what he was saying.

At the beginning of verse 5 we read that Peter answered, but no question was asked.

Then he calls Jesus RABBI or TEACHER, but what he has just seen should have told him that Jesus was much more than a teacher or rabbi.

His next statement is that: It is good for us to be here.

The verb in the sentence is present tense, indicating that Peter wanted to stay. It was so good, but only in a comparative way KALOS, that he did not want to leave.

So his suggestion is to build three tents, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, and they would never leave the mountain top.

Let's analyze what Peter had to say:

1. Peter was exceedingly afraid, which is understandable. But his fear should have lead him to silence, not answering when not asked a question.

This was like nervous banter that was not required, needed, or right.

2. Peter was right in that it was good to be there but the good should have been the encouragement he received.

As Moses and Elijah encouraged Jesus, this scene should have encouraged the three disciples.

3. When Peter wanted to stay there he was rejecting reality. A reality he had been taught, that Jesus must be rejected, suffer, and die before he is raised in glory.

4. Peter was having a mountain top experience, and he did not want to go back to the lowlands of reality.

But the whole purpose of this exercise was to show Peter and the others that reality must be faced but eternal glory is the sure result.

5. In Peter's desire to stay on the mountain top he parallels many believers today who go for the spectacular and do not face reality.

They want the glory without the problems of life. They want to hid away on a mountain top and never are willing to bring their relationship with Christ into the arena of reality.

6. Peter, also in his nervous banter, rejected the supremacy of Christ by suggesting that they make three tents, one for Christ, one for Moses, one for Elijah.

But Jesus Christ is above Elijah and before Moses and we must never put others on His unique level.

7. When we are told that Peter said these things to Christ a present tense verb is used to indicate that he just kept on talking and talking - so the next verse tells us how he stopped talking.

Mark 9:7

Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!

The cloud was formed to shield Peter, James, and John from the divine glory of God which no mere man can look upon.

The voice that came out of the cloud was the voice of God the Father:

This is my Son, the beloved, you hear him.

The verb is imperative, a strong command to shut up and listen to Jesus Christ.

Now the next verses tell us what Jesus had to say - but before we look at that, let's look at what was pre-figured by this experience with Christ:

NOTICE WHO WAS PRESENT:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ was present in glory
2. Two Old Testament saints were there, Moses having died a normal death and the other, Elijah having been translated or raptured into glory
3. And the three disciples, Peter, James, and John

This composition illustrates the Millennial Kingdom of Christ:

Remember what Christ said back in verse 1:

There are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.

And in that Millennial Kingdom of Christ that will last for a literal 1000 years Christ will be there in glory, the believers who have died in ages past

will be there, along with the CHURCH AGE believers who are Raptured at the coming of Christ for His church, and there will be men and women who by faith endured through the tribulation and will behold the glory of the Son of God as did these disciples.

Jesus Christ was transformed on that mountain top and he was encouraged as he faced his death. That exercise on Mt. Hermon told him it will all be worth it -

And we can have that same encouragement and confidence and we too can say, it will all be worth it.

Alexander de Seversky said that man must: Welcome change as a friend, try to see new possibilities and blessings it is bound to bring. If you stay interested in everything around you, in new ways of life, new people, new plans, you will grow. Never stop learning and never stop growing, and that is the key to a fascinating life - in the midst of change.

In the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ we see a change in bodily form but more important, a change in what will be the mission of the disciples and their anticipation of the kingdom of Christ -

The change important for us. While God's plan remains set from eternity past, the timing of that plan as revealed to man may take appropriate turns, even delays, as divine progress goes forth.

We have noted that Peter just had to say something and having nothing to say said something that was wrong.

We also saw that a cloud formed overhead to shield these disciples from the glory of the Father and that God the Father told Peter:

This is my beloved Son, hear him -

I want to take some time to look at this very important event Theologically. What was the importance and the significance of the Transfiguration.

First we have to note something about the entire book of Mark:

To this point we have seen Jesus the Christ present himself it Israel as the King and the one who offers to them the kingdom.

From this point on we see Jesus preparing for the Cross and preparing his disciples for what will follow, the Age of the Church.

Mark 9:8,9

As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead. They seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.

Let's look at what happened immediately after God the Father told Peter to keep quiet and listen to His Son, Jesus Christ.

Moses and Elijah had vanished, returned to Sheol, Abraham's Bosom. There was again just the four, Peter, James, and John and their Lord Jesus Christ.

It was time to come down from the mountain. The glory that they saw was for a future time and not for the present.

That mountain top was a time out of reality and not reality itself. It was grand and it was glorious but now was time to return to the lowlands of life.

We have seen a parallel in that to the Christian way of life. We may occasionally be on the mountain tops with our Savior but that is not reality. Reality is lived in the lowlands where we take the doctrine he has given us and apply it to life.

As they were coming down from Mt. Herman, the Lord gave them some curious orders:

And He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man should rise from the dead.

Here is something different. We have read that on other occasions the Lord told the recipients and witnesses of miracles not to say anything to others.

That was because of the hardness of heart of the people, the ones who were already negative and rejecting the king and his kingdom.

But here the disciples, the three who were the closest to the Lord are told to not say anything to anyone about seeing the Lord in glory for an appointed time, until after the Jesus would be raised from the dead.

So the prohibition is for only a period of time:

The word ORDERED is DIASTELLW, and was a military term for placing under orders.

The authority in the chain of command is Jesus Christ and he gives an order at a point in time and the middle voice sees it as benefiting the subject.

Now if this order benefits Christ it will also benefit those who belong to Christ.

They were ordered not to RELATE what they had seen. The word is much stronger than merely telling someone something. It refers to a narrative that goes through to the end of the story.

Now in that we can begin to see why there is a prohibition with a time limit - the story was not yet completed. And would not be completed until Jesus, the God-man was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father.

Mark 9:10

This verse gives us the response by the three disciples to this command:

And they seized upon that statement, discussing with one another what rising from the dead might mean.

"Seized" is KRATEW, which refers to a very intense holding on to, the disciples seized upon the statement, they kept it, they held it.

And they, only among themselves DISCUSSED it, which is a word used for dialogue, debate, and is present tense indicating a continued discussion.

This response shows us that they were perplexed over what was said yet they obeyed the command not to tell others of what they had seen.

Principle: Obedience even in the midst of lack of understanding.

Illustration: A man was visiting an African Mission center and the missionary was showing him around the compound. Missionaries son was playing under a tree when the missionary turned and shouted, down on the ground, then he ordered crawl towards me, it was only after the boy was safely away from the tree that the visitor saw the poisonous snake hanging from the limbs over where the boy was playing.

The boy was obedient, even though he did not know what was going on.

How obedient would we be in a similar situation?

Peter, James, and John did not understand. But they were obedient.

Now we today have an advantage over Peter, James, and John. We can understand, we can see the story to its completion because we have the advantage of the complete canon of Scripture.

There is an event in Matthew's Gospel that precedes the Transfiguration that helps us to understand both the Theological significance of the event as well as the reason Jesus ordered them to not tell anyone of it until after his resurrection:

Read Matthew 16:13-20

This account parallels the confession of Christ by Peter we examined in Mark 8:27-30

But we have an important insert. Matthew's Gospel was received by the Jews who had believed in Christ so Matthew is very concerned with showing Jesus as the Messiah, the Old Testament prophetic king who will establish his kingdom.

But there will be a delay in the kingdom, a delay that will see the establishment of the CHURCH AGE

Matt. 16:16, And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

The name JESUS looks at the Lord as Savior

The title LORD looks to his deity

The name CHRIST in the NEW TESTAMENT. is the equivalent of the Old Testament MESSIAH

Now the Jews had prophecy that told them that the Messiah would come and establish his kingdom. Daniel 7:13-14 closely associates the King and His kingdom.

But look at Matthew 16:17-19

And Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

While we will study these verse in depth at another time, what I want you to see now is that at the recognition of Jesus as the Christ, the Old Testament Messiah, he begins to give prophecy regarding the Church which will begin on the day of Pentecost.

He does not talk about the Kingdom, but the Church.

Then at verse 20 he says:

Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

He prohibited them from telling the Jews that he was the Messiah. Because in the Jewish mind, filled with Old Testament prophecies, the Messiah would establish his kingdom.

But that was not the plan, between the King and his Kingdom we have the entire course of the Church Age.

Now look at Matt. 16:21:

From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

And there is a change. No longer the ministry of the Messiah and the kingdom of God being at hand, but now a personal and intense preparation of the disciples who, on the day of Pentecost will be the heralds of the church, who will be filled with the Holy Spirit, and who will take forth the message of a risen Christ and proclaim the rest of the story turning the world up side down.

Now the change in ministry creates a problem that takes us back to Mark 9:9

Jesus has been recognized and confessed as the Christ, the Old Testament Messiah who will establish his kingdom. But he doesn't talk about the kingdom. He talks about the church, he tells his disciples not to tell others he is the Messiah, he begins to personally train his disciples for the coming church age.

The conclusion in the minds of these disciples would be that there would be no kingdom. They would become amillennialists overnight. No proclaiming of Christ the Messiah, no kingdom to come, now this new age, the church.

But that would be the wrong conclusion. The essence of what the Transfiguration is all about was mentioned regarding other prophecies by the prophet Habakkuk:

Habakkuk 2:3 For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay.

Principle: Jesus reveals his kingdom in glory to Peter, James, and John and in doing so tells them, it is not cancelled, it is still to come, it is part of God's plan.

Let's look at this under a few points:

1. The synoptic Gospels are largely concerned with the kingdom. John's Gospel is sets forth truth belonging to the church. And John's is the only Gospel that doesn't record the Transfiguration.
2. In each Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke) the Transfiguration is preceded by a declaration by Christ concerning his kingdom:

Mark 9:1 And He was saying to them, Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.

3. Each Gospel shows that the Transfiguration was significant turning point in the ministry of Christ.

He tells his disciples to tell no one he is the Christ, the Messiah. and he begins training the disciples for future service in the Church Age.

4. Those changes resulted from the rejection of the King and his kingdom. We have seen the active rejection by the religious leaders and even the passive rejection of those who followed Christ only briefly or only to see miracles worked by the man from Nazareth.

Remember what Jesus called that generation in Mark 8:38 An adulterous and sinful generation -

A generation who was rejecting the King, the Messiah, because he did not fit their mold.

5. With the changes, the prophecy to Peter regarding the Church, it would have been very easy to assume that the kingdom was abrogated. Just like many do today.

6. So Jesus took three disciples, who had enough doctrine to know that they did not understand, and gave them a glimpse of future glory, the kingdom of the King.

7. Lewis Sperry Chafer states: The Transfiguration was essential to verify the promise of the kingdom and thus give full assurance of its final realization.

8. After the resurrection, the disciples would speak of what they saw and be a witness to the fact that the kingdom is to come, at God's perfect and appointed time.

Now the question remains, did the disciples catch on, did they understand that while the church age would stand between the king and his kingdom that this would in no way eliminate the kingdom?

Read Acts 15:13-18

And after they (Paul and Barnabas) had stopped speaking, James (half brother of Jesus) answered, saying, Brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written (quotes from Amos and Jeremiah), After these things I will return, And I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, And I will rebuild its ruins, And I will restore it, In order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.

James certainly did not reject the promise of a literal kingdom of Christ yet to come.

Nor did Peter:

2 Peter 1:16-18, For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased -- and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

Remember what Peter was doing in Mark 9:10? Discussing, debating what was meant by what the Lord says -

There is no debate in 2 Peter 1, questions have been replaced with confidence. A confidence in the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ will return and establish His kingdom.

We may think that Peter's confidence was built upon his presence on that Mt. of Transfiguration, because he was there, he saw and he heard. But the next verse in 2 Peter 1 shows us where Peter found his confidence:

2 Peter 1:19, And yet we have, right now, the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts -

Peter is saying that the Word of God, that we have before us this morning is more sure than that experience on the mountain top, that the Word is even a greater reality than was seen and heard.

We may marvel at what it would have been like to see the Glory of the Lord, to hear the voice of the Father - and yet every time we open the Bible that is exactly what we are privileged to see and privileged to hear.

These same three, Peter, James, and John had been present at the raising from the dead of Jairus' daughter and the disciples had been with Jesus in Nain where he raised the widow's son from the dead.

Their questioning and debating did not merely deal with what was meant by Jesus' statement of rising from the dead. It dealt more with the prophetic significance of it. What did it mean in relationship to the future kingdom and the suffering their friend Jesus was beginning to talk about.

These three disciples had enough doctrine to think that something was not right, according to their understanding, but not enough doctrine to figure it out.

Mark 9:11

So at verse 11 they did a very noble thing, they asked a question. They were discussing the problem of prophecy, the kingdom, the Lord's

suffering, and they finally figured out they did not have the answer so they asked a question.

Principle: They did not assume to know the answer, so they were bold enough to ask a question.

One problem we all have is that we don't ask questions. We fear that others will think us ignorant where in reality, all of us have questions that beg for answers.

Application: Are we bold enough to ask the questions?

And they asked Him, saying, Why is it that the scribes say that Elijah must come first?

Four pieces of information went into asking this question:

1. What they had just seen: On the mount of Transfiguration they saw Elijah with the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Their understanding of Old Testament prophecy: They knew the Scriptures of Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6

Mal. 3:1, Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

Mal. 4:5-6, Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.

3. They also knew that Jesus had told them that He would be rejected by the people, that he would suffer, and even die, and then be raised from the dead.

That fact that their friend Jesus was saying he had to suffer greatly disturbed them. Why would the king, the promised Messiah have to suffer and even die.

You see, while they knew the knew some of the Old Testament prophecy, they did not know it all and the portions of the prophets that predicted the

Lord's suffering and death was unknown or ignored.

4. They also knew what the scribes taught about Elijah. So they had some current theological understanding.

Tradition taught that Elijah would come with the two flasks of oil to anoint the Messiah making known to the Messiah his purpose.

And since they saw Elijah with Jesus, they would think, according to current teaching of the scribes, that the king and his kingdom was ready to be established.

But then Jesus said: **Tell no man of this until I am raised from the dead.**

So putting all these facts together did not lead to enlightenment but to confusion - just like we as Christians are occasionally confused as we learn the Word. But out of confusion can come understanding.

"If Elijah comes first, identifies you as Messiah, as we have, then should not the kingdom be established now and forget this suffering and death stuff?"

Mark 9:12

And He said to them, Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He should suffer many things and be treated with contempt?

Now Jesus brings in the prophecy that they were neglecting, he tells the rest of the story so to speak. And He gives us a chronology of how these things will occur:

Elijah will come to restore all things: we have an aorist participle and a main verb in the present, active, indicative.

The aorist participle precedes the main verb and so this is yet for a future time.

Then the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, experiences the fulfillment of the passion prophecies of the Old Testament

He will suffer many things and be set at naught.

The word SET AT NAUGHT is an aorist, passive, subjunctive and looks to a future event. The Cross and the suffering of the Savior.

The word means to be treated with contempt, to be despised, to suffer. And that will be the treatment that Jesus will experience as he sets his face towards Jerusalem and the Cross.

At verse 12 Jesus is looking ahead to the Tribulation and the events that precede His second coming:

The one who comes will restore all things prior to the Lord establishing his kingdom.

This is recorded in Revelation 11:3-12

The two witnesses will have tremendous power and authority.

They will be killed by ABADDON, prince of the demons of the abyss (Compare Rev 9:11 and 11:7).

But after three and one-half days they will be raised from the dead. And the second woe and seventh trumpet judgment will follow.

It is believed that these two witnesses are Moses and Elijah the same two who were with Jesus on the mount of Transfiguration.

So verse 12 looks at the future events, the coming of Elijah and the coming suffering and death of Jesus Christ.

Mark 9:13

Now remember the reason for this dialogue. The disciples were having a hard time accepting the fact that Jesus had to suffer and die.

They knew Jesus was the Messiah, the promised King of the Old Testament prophecies. They wanted him to usher in His kingdom now and forget about any suffering and death.

But Jesus is telling them that suffering is necessary if exaltation is to result.

But I say to you, that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him.

Here, and in Matthew 11:14 more specifically, John the Baptist is identified with Elijah.

Luke 1:17, Of John the Baptizer it is stated that He who will go as a forerunner before Him (The Lord) in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

And the Lord now is telling his disciples that even John who could have fulfilled the prophecies of Malachi and prepared the way for the King and the Kingdom, was ill-treated, suffered and killed:

They did to him what they wished -

Now let's get down a few points about John and Elijah:

1. Elijah was predicted to precede the Messiah and John was the forerunner of Jesus Christ.
2. John's message was one of repentance to Israel because the kingdom of God was at hand.
3. Jesus also told Israel that the kingdom of God was present because he was the king.
4. But Israel rejected John and the Roman ruler Herod Antipas had him killed.
5. Jesus said of John's ministry: Matthew 11:14 And if you care to accept it, he himself is Elijah, who was to come.

Accepting IT would have been accepting the legitimate offer of the kingdom. And if Israel would have accepted the kingdom message then they would have accepted the king and John would have fulfilled the predicted ministry of Elijah.

But they did not -

6. John had come in the spirit and the power of Elijah to announce the Messiah, Jesus Christ, but he was rejected and Jesus Christ was rejected.
7. So at this point in the narrative of Mark we are seeing the shift from the offer of the kingdom to the establishment of the church which will come on the day of Pentecost.

Now in verse 13 Jesus brings in the story of John who came in the spirit and power of Elijah to demonstrate that if Israel rejected the forerunner of the Messiah they would also reject the Messiah.

If the forerunner suffered and died at the hands of man so to would the Messiah.

This entire dialogue and the mention of Elijah occurred as a result of the disciples inability to understand why the King, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, had to suffer.

No one likes seeing someone they love hurt, and these three disciples who were the closest to Jesus did not want to see him suffer and refused to believe he had to die.

Even with the promise of resurrection the idea of Jesus having to die was a thought they rejected.

But suffering must precede the exaltation and it is God who take the cursing and turn it into blessing:

The suffering and death of Christ is the greatest gift God could ever give to man and that suffering and death was because of us and on our behalf:

Our spiritual separation from God and God's very character establishes a barrier between God and man.

Man cannot bridge the gap and God cannot ignore his own essence and excuse man.

And that is the reason we need a Savior. A Savior who was willing to suffer and die on our behalf:

There were six things accomplished on the Cross that could have been accomplished in no other way apart from this perfect plan of God:

1. Redemption and unlimited atonement
2. The penalty of sin is removed by expiation

Definition: Expiation is Christ making the satisfaction for the offense of sin and thus canceling out the necessity for guilt and punishment.

3. Physical birth is taken care of by regeneration: We are born again spiritually.

4. God righteousness was satisfied by Christ's work on the cross: propitiation

5. Man's lack of righteousness was taken care of by the imputation of:

6. Our position in Adam is replaced by a new position in Christ: positional truth

Our Savior had to suffer and had to die for us to saved. But he also suffered the rejection and abuse of man so that we could have a Savior who sits at the right hand of the Father and understands every pain we might have, every rejection we might face and every hurt that only He can heal.

Hebrews 12:1-4 Let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider

Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.

Peter, who in Mark 9 so protests the revelation that his friend Jesus must suffer would later on learn that suffering precedes exaltation -

I Peter 4:12-14 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

Only a great God can do for His children what they cannot do for themselves.

The glory of the transfiguration is over, that glimpse of things to come is complete. Now it is time to leave the mountain top and return to the lowlands of reality.

At the Transfiguration Jesus gave his three closest disciples something very special, an opportunity to see what he would be in glory. A glimpse of the king and his kingdom that they and even believers today will be a part.

But you as a Christian, does not live on mountain tops. You must not live as though ignoring the opportunities you have as you apply God's truth to reality.

Mark 9:14-16

And when they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. And immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed, and began running up to greet Him. And He asked them, What are you discussing with them?

Peter, James, and John had been with Jesus on the mountain so that left nine disciples waiting.

Rather than wait patiently for the Lord and the others to return, they decided to do two things:

1. They tried to cast a demon out of a young boy but failed (See verse 18).

2. They tried to tell the lawyers and the people about the truth they had been learning from the Lord but failed there also, ended up in an argument.

The prepositional phrases show us what Jesus and the three disciples saw as they came off the mountain:

The other disciples were surrounded [PERI] by the crowd and the lawyers.

There was a continual, present tense, argument going on and the disciples were trying to stand their ground against the crowd and the lawyers.

Preposition PROS face to face.

As soon as the people saw Jesus they did three things:

1. They were greatly astonished: Passive voice, caused to be astonished by his presence.

2. They ran to him: Active voice

3. They greeted him: A middle imperfect indicating they greeted him for their benefit.

The idea is that they welcomed him because they wanted him to take their side in the debate, the argument that was going on.

This is a lot like proof texting, try to find a verse in the Bible, which is the mind of Christ that agrees with you pre-conceived position.

Mark 9:16

Jesus, however, asks them a question before they have a chance to draw him into the argument.

What are you (crowd) debating with them (disciples)?

Mark 9:17,18

We find the source of the problem, or issue under debate

And one of the crowd answered Him, Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth, and stiffens out. And I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it.

We see here a father in great distress, hurting for his son who is possessed by a demon.

During the incarnation of Jesus Christ and his earthly ministry, Satan launched an all out attack on the Son of God which is why we read in the Gospels of so much demonic activity even among the children who Jesus loved so much.

In his distress the father brought his Son to Jesus but Jesus was not there, he was on the mountain. So he asked the disciples to help his son - they tried but failed.

The word used for their inability can be translated WORTHLESS, they were worthless when it came to helping this boy and his father.

Now notice Jesus' response at verse 19.

Mark 9:19

And He answered them and said, O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you?

To whom did the lord say this ? His disciples - He answered them. Not the man but the disciples.

The word DISCIPLES in verse 18 is a mas, pl, dative noun and the word THEM in verse 19 is a mas, pl, dative pronoun.

So this indictment is not against the man or the crowds or the lawyers, but his own disciples:

1. Oh unbelieving generation
2. How long shall I be with you
3. How long shall I put up with you

The Lord knew he would only be with them for yet a short time and as he looked at them and heard of what they tried to do, apart from him, he wondered how long he could put up with them.

I really think this was said with a tremendous groan and even a shaking of the head of our Savior.

Principles:

1. When Jesus called his disciples unbelieving this was not unbelief regarding salvation, they were saved. But it was unbelief for function in Christ Centered Life.
2. In Mark 6:7 Jesus sent the twelve out to minister in his name and gave them power over the unclean spirits. But that was a commission for

that specific tour of Galilee. He sent them out to do what he had been doing and sent them with His mandate.

3. But now they are trying to do this a part from Christ, while he is away. They are presuming that they can help this poor man and his son.
 4. They were motivated to do this our all the noble virtues, love, pity, compassion, sympathy. They really wanted to help the man and the boy. But they lacked faith dependence upon Christ.
 5. They had compassion but no power; they had love but not the Lord; they had opportunity but not the omnipotence of God, they had sympathy but not the Savior,
- They were doing what they did, a right thing out of noble virtue, but doing it without faith dependence upon Christ.
6. They wanted to help but just like us they forgot that the only true help, the only help that is going to last and really make a difference must centered upon Christ.
 7. There may be someone you really love and want to help and maybe they have a need God wants you to fill, but a part from you first being dependant upon Him there is nothing you can do that will last.

Can you give a thirsty man a drink of cold water, that is a small thing. But Jesus said that even that must be done in dependence upon Him.

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

That time of need may be a time in which you so much want to help another. How are you going to do it. With your own human power putting nothing more than a temporary band-aid on a problem. Or can you depend upon Christ to use you to really help the ones you love.

Take a look at the end of the story, Mark 9:28,29.

And when He had come into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, Why could we not cast it out? And He said to them, This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.

What had the disciples not done, their had not drawn near with confidence to the throne of grace to receive mercy (grace in action) in a time of need.

Christian, you can be so wonderfully used in the lives of people around you who are helpless and hurting but what kind of help can you give if you exclude the Lord as did these disciples.

Mark 9:20-22

They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth.

And He asked his father, How long has this been happening to him? And he said, From childhood.

It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!

Upon confronting Christ the demon seizes the boy and violently throws him to the ground causing an extreme convulsion.

But our Lord demonstrates his love and concern for the boy and the father by asking how long this possession has occurred.

We see the poor state of this boy who is so abused by the demons. This really shows us what Satan can do for us - not much. Ever since childhood the boy had suffered. And in the same way Satan wants the innocent, even the children, to suffer. He wants to put scars not only on their bodies but on their souls.

But notice what the father says to the Lord:

But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!

Here is a canceled accusation against the worthlessness of the disciples.

Mark 9:23

Jesus seizes the moment to teach a principle of truth:

EXPANDED: As regarding your remark as to my ability to help your son, I tell you everything depends upon your ability to believe on me, not on my ability to acts.

In telling the man this he tells us that his power and compassion are not withheld by him but withstood by man.

Mark 9:24

The father of the boy understood what the disciples had missed:

Immediately the boy's father cried out and began saying, I do believe; help my unbelief.

This man had believed in Christ as His Savior, and now requests help, help for his faith dependence upon Jesus Christ.

If we would just have that same attitude that stands behind these words. All of us lack faith, living faith. And all of us can go to God and ask, help me with my unbelief.

Lord help me trust you, show me that there is none other upon whom I can depend. I believe in you Lord, help now my life of faith and dependence upon you.

At this point in the story there are four parties present and represented:

1. The boy: A picture of what Satan wants to do to mankind. He hates that which God created and in his vile hatred wants man to suffer and feel the horrible pain he inflicts.

2. The Disciples: Standing there helpless, wanting to do something, having even tried. But worthless when it comes to helping this boy.

The disciples picture the world with its solutions, a cold cup of water, but not Christ. A temporary solution but not the Savior, as in the world today with its words of encouragement that are hollow of anything eternal.

Even like many Christians today, wanting to help the ones they love but trying to do so apart from Christ.

3. The Father: A man in a desperate situation, having sought help and finding none. Realizing his lack of faith and yet asking for help with his faith.

This is the one we should seek to imitate. A man who has a need but not a mere need for himself but for another. Not a man of great faith and doctrine but a man willing to say, I believe, help me to believe even more.

A man desperate for help and crying out to Christ: The true glory of God is born in the parched soil of our destitution rather than the fertile ground of ability.

It is when we are unable that God is able. When we say no way, he says my way. The glory of God and his majesty shines forth from our weakness and then His strength in us.

And then there are believers who are bold enough, who have the guts to go to the Lord and say that they are not much, but that they depend upon him for help, the Lord will always be there.

4. The fourth party present is Jesus Christ himself. He is the solution, he is the one who can give help in a time of need.

Mark 9:25-27

Jesus dispels the demon and restores the boy:

And when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.

The crowd was ready to interrupt. To perhaps pursue the theological debate. So very quickly Jesus commanded the demon to come out of the boy.

And after crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, He is dead!

When the crowd arrived they see the boy and he looks like a corpse, like he is dead.

But Jesus Christ doesn't restore to death, but to life.

But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up.

We do not know how the people reacted to this but we do know what they should have been thinking -

Whenever Satan is dethroned, whenever God's people depend upon Christ rather than being distracted and captured by the World, the Flesh, or the Devil there is the passing from death unto life.

While we see this so vividly at salvation it is also true for you and I as Christians:

Remember Paul's word in Ephesians 5:14

Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.

You will recall that the eighth and ninth chapter of the Gospel of Mark reveals a shift in the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prior to the recognition of Christ as the Messiah by his disciples, and prior to the Transfiguration, the message was to Israel to repent for the kingdom of God is at hand and present in the King, Jesus Christ. But the people rejected the king or were just interested in the miracles or were merely temporarily caught up in the crowd following Jesus.

In the parallel account of Matthew 16 we saw that Jesus began talking about his impending death for sins and the church age that was to come.

So as he shifted away from the message of the kingdom, he began to prepare and train his disciples.

Mark 9:30

The first thing that the Lord does is leave Galilee and begin to concentrate on the Judea.

And from there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He was unwilling for anyone to know about it.

This the last reference to Galilee in the Gospel of Mark prior to the Crucifixion.

Whereas before any journey though Galilee was accompanied my teaching and miracles, this trip was covert. No longer was he dealing with the masses who rejected but now with the few who accepted.

The verb "began to go through," and the preposition DIA, taking the genitive, gives the sense of a travel with a destination as its purpose rather than a journey in which the trip is part of the purpose.

The Lord's intention was to get to Capernaum, perhaps collect some personal items, bid farewell to some, and set his face towards Judea.

Mark 9:31

While v 30 gives us the sense of a geographical change, this verse gives us the message that marked a ministry change.

For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has

been killed, He will rise three days later. Up to this point the Lord had used the situation he and the disciples found themselves in, the circumstances, his parables and miracles given and done for others as a basis for teaching truth to the disciples.

But now he begins to directly teach his disciples about what is to come and they draw near to Jerusalem.

From Mark 8 through Mark 14:53 at the arrest of Jesus the night before the crucifixion, Jesus teaches and trains his disciples for what is to come.

Teaching is the imperfect tense of DIDASKW, which is the strongest and most formal word for verbal instruction. This word always views prepared material that's given to enlighten and to result in thinking and application. We derive the word Doctrine from this word.

When it says he TOLD them we have another imperfect tense that indicates that this message was repeated over and over.

A summary of the content of the instruction is given as follows:

The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.

This makes the fifth time in Mark 8 and 9 that Jesus refers to his suffering and death:

1. Mark 8:31 Peter rebuked Jesus for saying he would die
2. Mark 8:34 Implies suffering as Jesus told his followers that they also must pick up their crosses
3. Mark 9:9 When returning from the Mt. of Trans-figuration Jesus mentioned his suffering
4. Mark 9:12 Jesus mentions again that he must suffering
5. And now in Mark 9:31

Now when something is said once in the Scriptures it stands as the Word of God. But when something is repeated again and again it is because it is essential to the plan of God because it is not understood by man.

In his shift from his message offer of the kingdom to Israel to his message of the offer of himself on the cross we see that the rejection of the kingdom became the reason for the intensity of his suffering at the hands of his own people.

Jesus Christ was going to be betrayed, suffering, be killed, and then be raised from the dead. The suffering that precedes the exaltation of the resurrection would pay the price for sins, even the sin of rejection of the king and his kingdom.

A FEW OBSERVATIONS:

1. Through Mark 8 there was a legitimate offer of the kingdom of the King, the Messiah, to Israel.
2. The crowds, the multitude, rejected the King wanting only to be entertained by miracles or following Jesus only as a novelty.
3. This rejection was sin and now Jesus sets aside the kingdom for a time to take care of that sin and its penalty.
4. The very thing that resulted in his teaching about the cross, the rejection by the people, would be paid for on the cross.
5. It may appear that Jesus was turning his back on Galilee but actually he was going to Jerusalem where he would take care of the problem of the sin of rejection he experienced in Galilee.
6. **Principle:** Only Jesus Christ can show such grace, and love, and sacrifice, to die even for those who reject him.

What would we do, we would wash our hands of the Galileans who so quickly turned from applause to rejection - but not our Lord.

Christian, Jesus Christ is sticking with you and doing for you that which you cannot do for yourself, even when you do not stick with him.

Mark 9:32

Now how did the disciples react to the news that Jesus would be betrayed, that he would die, that he would be raised from the dead?

But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.

The verb "not understand" is the imperfect of AGNOEW, which can be to be ignorant or fail to understand.

Ignorance or failing to understand can either be the fault of the one teaching or the one learning.

Here the Lord is teaching so the problem rests with the ones who are learning, or attempting to.

Whenever ignorance and lack of understanding prevail, the best thing to do is ask questions.

The word STATEMENT is REMA which is used for teaching that is applicable. The disciples understood betrayal, death, and even those who were raised from the dead. But the understanding they lacked was in relationship to their Lord and why he would have to undergo such treatment.

With the use of the word REMA we could say they understood the doctrine but not its application.

And the disciples were afraid to ask Him.

The Lord had now talked about his suffering, death, and resurrection on five occasions and they were beginning to see that it was important, but they did not understand it.

This fear they had was a fear that traps people in ignorance of the truth and the glory of God.

Application: Many believers today stay trapped in the dungeon of ignorance because they will not go to God in prayer and ask him for understanding.

How many of you as parents would refuse to explain and instruct and train your child who came to you and asked why - there is at times no greater joy than being able to explain things to a child or young person.

Do we think that our perfect, eternal, heavenly Father would not have the same desire to teach his children?

James 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Mark 9:33

These disciples were satisfied to remain in the dungeon of ignorance but their Lord was not. If they would not ask him he would ask them:

And they came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, What were you discussing on the way?

What a perfect opportunity for them to bring up their questions regarding his suffering, death, and resurrection - but instead they kept silent.

Mark 9:34

But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest.

Jesus could have brought up the issue of his death and resurrection and in every chapter from now to Mark 14 he does. But here is a more important problem, they were debating which one of the them was the greatest.

Now notice this: On the road to Capernaum the disciples faced two problems of ignorance:

1. An ignorance regarding the Lord's suffering, death, and resurrection which resulted in an inability to properly apply doctrine.
2. An ignorance regarding their position in Christ and in heaven which resulted in sin. The sin of boasting, of pride, of arrogance.

The Lord will deal with their ignorance that lead to sin first before even beginning to deal with their ignorance that lead to the inability to apply.

We might look at these two problems and conclude that their ignorance regarding the Lord's death and resurrection is the far greater problem. And when taken in the whole scheme of things it is. But the problem of pride and arrogance leading to sin must be dealt with first before any understanding of the grace of God can begin.

Principles:

1. Every believer continues to possess a sin nature after salvation.
2. Sins result when we make a choice. A volitional decisions to go with the temptation. Here the simple temptation of wanting to be greater than others.
3. Sins put the believer out of fellowship and in a position of antagonism towards grace.
4. The sin problem must be addressed prior to the understanding and application of grace.
5. For too many believers, like these disciples, the distraction of sin is keeping them in the dungeon of ignorance.
6. Also note: The Lord doesn't just tell them their boasting and pride is sin and to get back in fellowship though confession. He teaches them - What is interesting in this is that about two weeks prior to this the disciples were present when the Lord gave them the message regarding the cost of discipleship, the price that is paid when we follow the Lord:

Mark 8:34 And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to

them, If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

And that brings up an interesting point. Just because you learn something. Just because you were in class and taking notes, doesn't mean that you will make the proper application. You have to LEARN - THINK - AND APPLY

And the disciples were not applying what they had learned.

Mark 9:35

And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all.

We might call this the formula for being first:

Jesus sat down, he called the twelve, and he began to teach them.

Their problem or ignorance resulting in sin needed a contents correction. Not a process correction.

The same with us. We often need a simple bit of information that will correct our thinking, our information on a certain matter, that will correct a problem of ignorance allowing for sin.

The information they needed is stated as follows:

You want to be first, be last and be servant of all.

Want to be is an infinitive, a result of knowing Christ and His Word you want the best in life now and forever.

The Lord's formula for being first is the application of our spiritual identity.

1. The believers identity in Christ begins with an understanding of total depravity. We are nothing, Christ is everything
2. Once understanding that, we move on to understand our worth. Christ paid the ultimate price for us when he went to the Cross. Value is set by the price that was paid and God paid the ultimate price for our salvation.
3. Thoes two principles result in humility. Humility involves knowing your place in God's plan.
4. Because of what Christ has done for us we can have a boldness and confidence in our relationship with him.

5. And because of what Christ has done for us we can have a humility before man, even becoming a servant, coming in last - because with Christ we are first.

Servant is DIAKNOS, a servant who ministers to others, a deacon.

Philippians 2:5-8 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

What is it that we should be last, that we should have the attitude of a servant when we consider that our Lord was the ruler who came to serve and secondly, that in eternity, we are even higher than the angels and exalted forever.

1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.

Mark 9:36,37

The Lord uses a visual aid to teach the principle:

And taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, Whoever receives one childlike this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.

It is important to note that what is done is done in the name of Christ. This care and compassion is not some humanitarian act apart from the motive of Christ but is because of Christ.

The word for child is PAIDION a child that need to be trained and is dependant upon others.

To receive a child requires several things:

Awareness: To receive a child you need to be aware the child exists. Too often we are so concerned with ourselves that we fail to see others around us. Jesus, in our passage, was very aware of the disciples.

Sensitivity: We need to be sensitive to the needs of the child. If a child needs to be changed you don't feed it. Maybe all a child needs is a hug.

You need to be sensitive to the needs of those around you.

Selflessness: To often we fail in our awareness and our sensitivity because we live life looking at self.

Willingness: You have to be willing which means that you make a choice and follow through of the choice to be a servant, to minister to one who has need of you.

Unconditional Love

The Wheaton College Bulletin once included the statement: The undisciplined is a headache to himself and a heartache to others and is unprepared to face the stern realities of life.

As we conclude the ninth chapter of the book of Mark we see Jesus training his disciples for what is to come. Little do they know at this time that within a few years a they would be used of God to turn the world upside down.

This paragraph begins with strife and ends with peace and in between we have the teaching of our Savior.

Mark 9:38

John said to Him, Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to hinder him because he was not following us.

John was the youngest of the twelve disciples and here he is the one who speaks up. What he says is almost like a boast given to impress Jesus.

Two issues of involved in this statement:

1. Someone other than the twelve disciples were casting out demons but doing it in the name of Christ. Remember that earlier the nine disciples who waited in the lowlands during the transfiguration tried to cast out a demon and could not. They had not depended first upon the Lord thorough prayer and apparently, this other man had.

2. Seeing this, the disciples hindered him because he was not one of the twelve who followed Jesus. The word HINDER in the Greek means to forbid, or to restrain.

So here the disciples have taken it upon themselves to tell someone else what kind of a ministry they may or may not have.

The basis for this arrogance is that they were the ones who were following Christ and this other was not.

The sad part of this is that it was their very closeness to the Lord, the favored position they held that became a cause for arrogance rather than humility.

They were the ones who closely followed Jesus Christ and who were called by Christ to be his closets disciples. Yet this privilege was perverted to be a position of pride rather than humility.

They were the ones who were right, they were doing what God wanted them to do in following Christ, they were in the perfect will of God but instead of having appreciation they had arrogance.

The parallel to today is the believer who is fulfilling the will of God, who is learning doctrine and yet rather than have an appreciation of what God is giving to him and what God is accomplishing in his life, he becomes arrogant in his favored spiritual position.

And this is an occupational hazard of our type of Bible church where the Word is taught and people are coming together to learn, think, and apply the Word of God.

We may know that God has given us a favored spiritual position but why? Because of what Christ has done and because of our faith in Him and His Word.

Yet we so often use our Grace privilege to hinder others who are not doing exactly what we are doing.

God gives us His grace and we become arrogant and then express that mental attitude sin by attempting to tell others how they should do what they do in the name of Christ.

Rather than arrogance we need appreciation and then to manifest that with:

Patience: Realizing every believer is not at the same stage of spiritual growth.

Flexibility: Realizing that while some things are real important other are not, some are non-essentials.

Tolerance: Even when others are clearly wrong we must remember that we are not the right hand of God's justice, we are not the agents of discipline.

Kindness:

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Mark 8:39

The Lord very quickly corrects this arrogance:

But Jesus said, Do not hinder him, for there is no one who shall perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me.

The word MIRACLE is the word DUNAMIS which goes beyond a mere miraculous act to the supernatural power of God in the Life given and dependant upon Christ.

Upon experiencing the power of God which comes in our Age through the power of the Word a believer can not quickly speak evil of Christ.

Now speaking evil of Christ is when we assign the power and grace that he provides to that which is commonplace or by way of happenstance.

Illustration: To have God provide comfort and peace in a time of pain and then later say that the peace obtained would have been there even a part from your reliance upon the Lord.

Jesus is saying that this may happen but it will not quickly occur.

Mark 9:40

For he who is not against us is for us.

The disciples and believers today are told that anyone who stands against Satan is for Christ.

Remember the issue: casting out a demon. And even today when secular movements and governments and individuals stand against evil they are on the side of Christ.

Illustration: Law that protect the innocent, children, from molestation. There are some who want the age of consent lowered to seven. Anyone who fights against that fights on the side of Christ.

This type of stand benefits society and also benefits the believer.

Illustration: Those who work to preserve freedom preserve our religious freedom and therefore benefit us

Mark 9:41

Christ takes the triviality, a cup of water, and illustrates the point:

For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.

Casting out a demon in the name of Christ is far greater than offering a fellow believer a cup of water. Jesus wants John to see that when you do even the small things in the name of Christ that is beneficial in either time, or eternity, or both.

Mark 9:42

The context is not broken: Whoever gives a cup of water is related to whoever causes a believer to stumble.

And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea.

The stumble is SCANDALIZW _from which we get the word scandalize.

Jesus calls the disciples and any who follow him little ones with the idea of being dependant upon him.

What John and the other disciples were doing in verse 38 was putting a hindrance, a stumbling block, in the path of this other believer.

Jesus says that type of exclusivity or for that matter any thing that causes another believer to stumble is a dangerous thing to do. Even to the point where it would be better for them to be at the bottom of the sea (And you know what is at the bottom of the sea).

The Jewish tradition saw sin as resulting in the external. So the Lord uses the hand, the foot, and the eye to warn believers of the results of sin.

Now sin begins as a mental attitude and get you out of fellowship at that point. But when it goes external it not only builds more scar tissue but also begins to hurt and be a stumbling block to others.

By way of hyperbole, taking it to the extreme, Jesus says it would be better to cut off the hand and the foot and pluck out the eye.

He is stressing the severity of sin. Its severity to self and to others.

Mark 9:43,48

If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life crippled, than, having your two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]

If your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into hell,

where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]

If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.

The reference to life and to the kingdom of God, refer to the believer in time not eternity.

And the Lord says it would be better to live life as a cripple than to end up in the fire of Gehenna:

Gehenna was a ravine northwest of Jerusalem and had been the site of pagan fire worship beginning at the time of King Ahaz. In Jesus' day it was the city garbage dump where a continual fire burned the trash.

It soon began synonymous with the Lake of Fire.

Unquenchable fire is the word ASBESTON where we get the word asbestos.

These verses are a description of hell and quotes Isaiah 66:24

Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

The worm is the physical pain that for the believer is all relieved at death. The fire is the further torment of eternal damnation.

You see, if anything keeps someone from believing in Christ, whether external or internal, it would be better to suffer the pain of dismemberment than to allow that offense, that distraction to continue.

To see the transition to verse 49 let's look at some points:

1. The disciples were offending, scandalizing, another believer because he did not do what they thought he should be doing.

2. Jesus tells them that this is a very dangerous thing to do because it expresses pride by way of arrogance which then fuels more pride.

3. Jesus warns them and us against causing another believer to stumble.

4. That would be an offence or distraction that comes from the outside but he also warns that an offence can come to us from us and better to cut off, separate the cause of the sin.

5. In the hyperbole of the hand, the foot, and the eye, Jesus looks at the unbeliever who would allow these distractions of sin to keep him from every believing in Christ.

But the believer can also be distracted and can face hell on earth under divine discipline. That D/D can include internal pain, the worm, and external pain, the fire.

6. But that is not what Jesus wants for His little ones, for us. He wants us to come to that point in our Christian lives when we will allow no offense, external or internal, from others or from ourselves to take away the highest and best he has to offer.

7. But if we fail to examine ourselves, to see the stumbling block we place in our path, he will reveal them to us. By fire, discipline in time.

Mark 9:49,50

Verses 49 and 50 explain that we as believers must have, in us, that which will preserve us:

**For everyone will be salted with fire.
Salt is good; but if the salt becomes
unsalty, with what will you make it salty
again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at
peace with one another.**

The Old Testament burnt offering was laced with salt. And salt was the main preservative of the ancient world.

Now the ideal situation is for the believer to have that which will preserve him in him.

And that is the Word of God. Doctrine resident in the soul. Doctrine that is applied by faith to the realities of life.

But what happens when the ideal is not the real?

The Lord describes two alternative and then a result:

1. The believer may have to be salted with fire. The fire of Divine Discipline. If you will not

preserve yourself by even the painful act of cutting off that which is an offence to others and self, then the Lord will do it for you.

Can you imagine how it would feel to have salt rubbed into an open wound.

That same type of pain to the soul is what it may take for some of us to set aside the sin that can so easily cause us to stumble.

Remember last week as Jody Brown talked about driving the rebellion out of child through discipline.

We must never think that our heavenly Father would not do that and even more for us to preserve us and drive the offense of sin from us.

He will discipline us so that we can see the those things in our own lives that keeps us from being conformed to him.

Just like a parent properly disciplining a child the parent knows what is best in the long run and God, our heavenly parent, knows what is best for time and eternity.

Illustration: It hurts so good to know that I am under my Father's hand.

2. But there is a second option. The salt of discipline becomes unsalty. And when that happens with what shall it be made salty again?

Perhaps we can better relate to the illustration if we reversed it. What would happen if you rubbed salt on a callous or rubbed salt onto scar tissue? Nothing, you may feel some slight irritation but there would be no pain.

For many believers the salt of discipline has become unsalty. The salt is no longer rubbed into an open wound but onto scar tissue. And there is no sensitivity.

And with believers who continue to resist the loving hand of the Father's discipline, they can end up with iron souls and not feel the pain.

What a tragedy it is to see a Christian under the loving hand of God's justice turn insensitive.

You see while we need to have disciplined lives, the salt that is in us, so often we fail. But God is there to add His discipline. And how sad it is when even that fails -

With what shall the salt be made salty again?

Nothing, discipline is no longer effective and a life is lived in misery and pain.

3. The result of proper discipline, either the disciplined life that we live from within ourselves or the external discipline of God, is peace.

This is a peace that comes from:

1. Knowing that our heavenly Father will correct us even when we fail to correct ourselves.
2. A peace that comes from knowing that God will discipline others, that everyone must be salted with fire, and we can be at peace about others.

Chapter 10

Marriage is one of the most talked about, written about, spoken about subjects around. And yet with this massive infusion of information, marriage is at best a fragile union in our society.

One writer said that a successful marriage is always a triangle, a man, a woman, and God.

Socrates said: By all means marry. If you get a good wife you will be very happy. If you get a bad wife you will become a philosopher - and that is good for any man.

Alan Bernstein noted that: Marriage is a school of experience where husband and wife are classmates.

And yet with all that is said, we see over half the marriages in our society failing.

But even in Jesus' day, marriage was at best a fragile union which so often ended in hurt and separation.

Mark 10:1

And rising up, He went from there to the region of Judea, and beyond the Jordan; and crowds gathered around Him again, and, according to His custom, He once more began to teach them.

From chapter nine onward we see the ministry of Jesus shifting both in geography and in method.

He leaves behind the negative volition and rejection of Galilee and -

He also leaves behind the offer of the Kingdom to Israel and begins to look ahead to the Cross and the Church and what we see from here on is the training of his disciples for task they will undertake as they turn the world upside down.

When we read HE WENT FROM THERE we have a middle voice verb indicating this was of benefit to him.

Even the sacrifice of the cross he would face would be beneficial to him as he would die for us and gather many who would believe in Him into his Church. We, even today, are part of that advantage to Christ.

He went to Judea and then to the East side of the Jordan in the region known as Perea.

Mark records these events that occurred in the six months prior to the crucifixion to show how the Lord was teaching and preparing the disciples.

Every thing that happens, even when it included others was designed to train the twelve.

We are told that his custom was to teach the people. And here we have the more formal word for teaching, a teaching that required preparation and would include application.

Mark 10:2

And Pharisees came up to Him, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife.

The question asked by the Pharisees was designed to test and trap the Lord Jesus Christ in to either contradicting the Old Testament Law or disagreeing with popular Rabbinic teaching.

They wanted him to give a self-incriminating answer and in light of the current thinking on divorce in Jesus' day that would be rather easy.

We really have four positions in view regarding divorce:

1. The Old Testament Law of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 which allowed for divorce by the husband of a wife found in some indecency. The passage goes on to say that she can marry another and that if she is dismissed by the second husband she cannot remarry the first.

The question was what is meant by indecency? Some believed that this was a way of keeping a wife from being found guilty of adultery which would have been punishable by death. So instead the husband wrote out a bill of divorcement.

2. In Jesus time the Rabbis who followed Schammai interpreted this Old Testament Law to

allow for a man to divorce his wife only in the case of continued immorality.

3. The Hillel school of the Rabbis took a broader view and said a man could divorce his wife for any almost any reason even simple uncleanness. Visiting the home of a loved one who died or even menstruation.

4. Also the Roman view of divorce must be considered because not only is Jesus living in a Roman occupied country where Herod Antipas had divorced his wife to marry niece, but Mark, remember, is writing to Roman Christians.

Under Roman law either spouse could write a bill of divorcement. For almost any reason and merely had to be stated in the presents of seven adult citizens of Rome.

So in answering the question Jesus could have very easily incriminated himself before the Old Testament Law, either of the two school of Rabbinical thought, or before Herod and Rome.

Mark 10:3

But Jesus answers their question with another question so as to make the issue clear:

**And He answered and said to them,
What did Moses command you?**

By asking this question, Jesus makes the foundation for the argument the Word of God. Not merely the ideas of men or even the interpretation of the Old Testament by man, but the Word itself.

The one who gave this truth to Moses now asks the Pharisees to recite this truth.

Mark 10:4

And they said, Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.

The word PERMITTED in the Greek text actually means the liberty or right to do something by way or license, liberty, or mandate.

They were seeing this as something that God commanded or gave man (husbands) the right to do. But Jesus is going to give them the broader context which is the hardness of sin on the heart on man.

Mark 10:5

But Jesus said to them, Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

Jesus does not speak in historical terms of the hardness of the heart of those who lived 1400 years ago. He speaks to the Pharisees about their hardness of heart.

The preposition BECAUSE is PROS which would be better translated in the face of your hardness of heart.

Here we see the difference between the ideal and the real and the fact that God knows us better than we know ourselves.

Divorce is never part of God's perfect plan even when it is permitted by the Scriptures. There is not one divorced person here who can say divorce is great, no problems at all. Even when you have gotten away from an abusive or adulterous spouse, there is still hurt and pain even when you know you did what was best.

But divorce is never the ideal, but it is part of the real and the mandate of Moses was given in light of the real.

And the real includes sin which builds scar tissue on the soul and results in real situation of hurt, pain, sin, which result in divorce.

In verses 6 to 9, Jesus makes a statement regarding the ideal

In 10 to 12, in the house with the disciples, He teaches His disciples about the real

Mark 10:6-9

Jesus quotes from Genesis 1 and 2:

But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.

The prohibition of verse 9 is given in light of what God said in Genesis 1 and 2.

What God has joined together as one flesh, no man (with the husband in view) is to disrupt.

In other words, the Lord says to the Pharisees, stop allowing men to disrupt their marriages by a lax interpretation of the Law.

It is clear that the Lord reaffirms God's ideal view of marriage. That it is not a mere contract of temporary convenience that can be readily broken. But rather, a covenant of mutual fidelity made before God.

The Rabbis and the Romans both made divorce easy, and a convenient way out of a self made problem.

Every time I see that ad I think of the Lord's prohibition - stop disrupting marriage.

Mark 10:10

So now he has given the Pharisees who wanted to trap him an answer, he gave them the Word of God, God's ideal standard for marriage - but the disciples have questions.

And in the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again.

Notice that when the Pharisees questioned the Lord it was to test and trap him. But now the disciples question him to learn more truth.

Mark 10:11

And He said to them, Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.

The issue here is not the divorce or separation. Jesus left the door open for divorce under the Law of Moses in verse 5.

The issue here is the right to re-marry after a divorce. Mark directs his readers, mostly Roman, to both possibilities. Either a husband or a wife divorcing and re-marrying.

Under Rabbinic law in Jesus' day, re-marriage was permitted. But here Jesus puts a restriction upon that supposed right.

The situation then is directly parallel to our situation today. The legal code of the day permits re-marriage after divorce while the higher law of God for his people permits divorce or separation, but not necessarily the right to re-marry.

These two verses must be considered in the larger context of everything that is said about divorce and the right to remarry by the Lord and by the other divinely inspired writers of the Scriptures.

Here, Jesus is telling his disciples that the legal code of the Rabbis is not the basis upon which a believer should operate. That there is a higher law, the law of God.

Principles:

1. In the parallel account in Matthew 19:9 the writer includes the Lord's phrase, except for immorality or fornication. That is an exception. When divorce occurs because of immorality, there is a right to re-marry.

2. Immorality in Matthew 19:9 is the word is PORNEIA where we get the prefix of the word pornography.

PORNEIA refers to unrepentant sexual immorality of any kind. Thus, in marriage, a situation is which a married person continues an affair with another with no intention of suspension.

In that situation, divorce with the right to remarry is granted by God.

3. The right to re-marry also occurs when the divorced spouse re-marries. According to Old Testament Law that we can use as a guideline to sound practice, reconciliation of a marriage is out when a spouse re-marries.

Deuteronomy 24:3-4 And if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife.

Since reconciliation is out, re-marriage is permitted

4. When the former spouse dies the remaining spouse is free to remarry, again, because reconciliation is no longer possible.

This principle is used by Paul as an illustration to being free from the control of the SIN NATURE, the former husband of Romans 7:2-3.

5. In 1 Corinthians 7:15 Paul gives a situation where a spouse who is an unbeliever divorces a believing mate. In that situation the believer is a

victim and is not longer under bondage and thus free to re-marry.

I Corinthians 7:15 Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases.

6. Desertion, under the principle given in I Cor 7:15 can lead to the right to re-marry after a period of time.

7. Many other situations including the threat to life of wife, children, abuse, molestation, are grounds for separation or in our legal framework, divorce, but not having the right to re-marry.

8. The time factor is always essential to consider in the right to re-marry. Time must be used to get over the hurt, to get the person out of the soul, to growing doctrine and grow closer to your best friend, the Lord Jesus Christ.

9. In any divorce it is always the innocent victim who has the right to re-marry. The guilty party, if they re-marry, are in an adulterous marriage.

In our passage the Lord is talking about the guilty party:

Mark 10:12

and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.

10. If you find that you were the guilty party and you are in an adulterous marriage, there is a biblical solution:

- 1) No guilt reaction. Recognize your culpability and face what you have done as sin.
- 2) Admit the sin and appropriate by faith the grace that God has for you.
- 3) Do not divorce, that is just adding sin to sin and hurting more people. Once re-married even when you did not have the right to do so there is no possibility of reconciliation to the former spouse.
- 4) Once you confess and have repented, your sin of divorce and remarriage is forgiven, and your adulterous marriage becomes a legitimate marriage.

What is Lord teaching the disciples, that marriage is honorable and given by God, and regarding anything that God has given, man stands in harms way when he begins to tamper with it - do not disturb the great grace of God that your heavenly

Father has given you. Follow his plan, not yours, to His highest and best.

The episode that is covered in verses 13 through 16 is both a postscript and a prelude to its context.

The subject is children, which is a natural postscript to the Lord's comments on the sanctity of marriage.

The attitude of the children, which is one of acceptance and dependence, is a natural prelude to the story of the rich young ruler.

As we have seen in this portion of Mark, all this is happening to train and prepare the disciples for their future mission as the pillars of the church.

Mark 10:13

And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them.

Jesus and his disciples were in a home in Perea east of the Jordan river across from Judea. As the Lord finished his comments about marriage, some of the local people began to approach the home with their children seeking the Lord to bless these little ones.

The pronoun THEY is part of the verb, THEY BROUGHT, but at the end of the verse when THEY are rebuked by the disciples, the masculine pronoun AUTOIS is used.

The significance of this is that while we so automatically presume a picture of mothers bringing their children to the Lord, it was the fathers who brought them.

Now they, the fathers, brought the children to Jesus, in order that he might touch them.

Now this was part of Jewish tradition in Jesus' day. To bring a child to a rabbi that he might bless them for their future life and well being.

The tradition date to Genesis 48:14-16 when Jacob blessed his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh by laying his hands upon their heads.

The word BROUGHT is PROS + FERW which is much stronger than the simple word to bring. This intense form was commonly used for bringing sacrifices and here suggests the idea of dedication.

This looks at the dedication of the ones who brings the child to training the child in the ways of God and his word.

When we put these elements together, the fathers bringing the child, to be blessed for future life, and the dedication on the part of the fathers, we see a very important challenge.

It was the fathers who were the leaders, the spiritual leaders, over their children. They, the fathers, were the ones who took responsibility to see to the spiritual well being and spiritual growth of the children.

So unlike today when we see this privilege and challenge given to the mothers while fathers think they can do their job by just bringing home a pay check.

The biblical ideal is always and always has been the father as the spiritual leader in the home.

The REAL may be that the mother has to take this responsibility neglected by the fathers of our present society -

But men, husbands, fathers it is your job and in that job there will be blessings untold as you bring your children to Jesus Christ.

The word for CHILD is significant, PAIDION and is used throughout these verses.

There are nine words in the Greek Text translated CHILD this one refers to anyone from an infant up to twelve years old.

What is in view with this word is a child who is dependant upon another for its care and well being.

So these children, infants to pre-teens, were brought to the house for Jesus to bless.

BUT THE DISCIPLES, hanging around outside the house, rebuked the fathers for bringing the children.

QUESTION: When are these men going to learn?

Remember back in Mark 9 the disciples found a man casting out demons in the name of the Lord and they rebuked and hindered him.

Now these fathers bring their children for a blessing and instead they get rebuked .

The word itself means to unjustly scold or blame another and to do it ineffectively.

So not only was their rebuke unwarranted but it was without results.

This verse brings into the mind's eye a frightening picture: These fathers, who are the ones taking the responsibility of spiritually guiding their children, these sincere and devout fathers, coming to the Lord for encouragement and blessing but instead getting chewed out by the disciples, the servants of Jesus - They reach out to Jesus for help and are hindered by his disciples.

But is that so removed from what we see today. When God puts us in a place to help, and one comes reaching out to the Lord, and we give him rebuke instead of blessing, we scold instead of encourage, and instead of help we hinder.

I want you to see four problems these disciples have:

1. A misuse and abuse of their authority. They were using their authority to protect Jesus from being disturbed, without regard to the ones who needed the help that only He could give.
2. They presumed what the Lord wanted: They did not ask him what they should do. They just started to scold and rebuke. They could have turned to the master and sought guidance and direction - just like we can.

But just like us today, we would rather ride our own presumptions than turn to the mind of Christ for the true answers.

3. They forgot a prior lesson:

Mark 9:37 Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me.

When we studied that passage we saw that to receive a child you had to be aware, sensitive, selfless, and willing. And the disciples were none of these and forgot the doctrine they had been taught.

4. They failed to understand GRACE:

That what God has to offer is freely given to all and that in giving grace God gives to the helpless, to the insignificant, to the dependant ones who just come to him. Instead of helping, they hurt -

Too often today the church stands as a club, restricted to only those who qualify according to the same standard the disciples were using, some

human merit. But this church stands as a refuge for the hurt, the helpless, and we offer hope.

In the months and years to come I have no way of knowing who or what may walk through those door, but we do not pre-qualify. If you want Jesus Christ, you are welcome here.

Mark 10:14

The serious nature of the actions of the apostles and similar actions today by Christians can be seen in the Lord's response:

But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Get the picture that Jesus may have walked to a window out into the courtyard and overheard and saw what was going on.

INDIGNANT is AGANAKTEW and is used only seven times in the scriptures, in most cases where the religious leaders were angry with Christ. But here with Christ angry at the disciples.

It means to be greatly grieved resulting in an expression of irritation. And the Lord was irritated, irritated at the disciples for their lack of grace and lack of application of truth.

Jesus give two quick commands with no connective that have a staccato like effect. Short, terse, to the point, one positive and one negative:

Allow the children to come to me - do not prevent them.

The disciples were attempting to turn the children away because they saw them as being unimportant. They were thinking in the human viewpoint terms that Jesus had earlier challenged when they were hindering a man who was casting out a demon.

Jesus used the same words here that he used in Mark 9:39, do not forbid or prevent -

How many times must they hear this before they get the point. Probably about as many times as we must hear the Word and its truth taught before we get the point.

Principle: Repetition is essential to locking truth into the soul. And it is only once truth is locked in that it can be applied.

Then Jesus tells the disciples why:

For you see (GAR) the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Lewis Sperry Chafer defines the Kingdom of God as all intelligences in heaven and on earth who are willingly submitted to God.

And with that submission there is tremendous benefit and value, what we might call blessings.

So Jesus is saying that the blessings that God has for you in life belong to those who are like children.

Mark 10:15

Now he teaches a principle and in the following verse he will illustrate the principle:

Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

The comparative adverb stands in the middle of this verse to show that there is an approximate comparison of the attitude of a child and the attitude we must have as we receive all that God has for us.

The word RECEIVE is middle voice and means to openly welcome. The Lord indicates in middle voice of the word that there is benefit, value, blessing to receiving the kingdom of God.

But the qualification is to receive it as a child:

There are SEVEN things that can be said of the attitude of a child:

1. A realization of helplessness: Have you ever seen the frustration that can come when your child tries to do something and they just are not big or strong enough.

They may try and try but to no avail. Man tries and tries to receive the blessings of God but only when we stop trying are the gates of grace opened wide.

True spiritual success is born in the parched soil of helplessness rather than the fertile ground of achievement.

We must abandon the false piety of achievement that stands in the way of receiving all the highest and best God has to offer.

2. A realization of dependence: The very word that is used for a child looks at one who is dependant on another.

From helplessness comes the need to depend upon one who is able.

This is interdependence not co-dependence

3. A realization that what God has is for those who have no claim on it: What rights belong to a child, what property or claims to possessions can they make, none.

And it is only with that attitude that we also, like a child, can have it all. When we realize that we have no claim on grace, that is when we will awaken to grace.

When we awaken to grace, that is when we will awaken to the abundant life he was for us.

4. A child also takes openly and confidently that which is given: As a child were you ever fooled by an adult. You were open and trusting but perhaps your trust was misplaced.

5. And a child doesn't try to earn or deserve what is given: They freely receive the gifts that are offered. And we as adults must realize that we cannot earn or deserve the free gifts of God.

6. A child freely receives unconditional love:

One writer has said of this passage that: The child's littleness and immaturity, and need of assistance, though commonly disparaged, keep the way open for the fatherly love of God, whereas we as grown-ups so often block it.

And when it is blocked, when the attitude of child is not there, there is no receiving of the Kingdom and its blessings.

The word used for not ENTERING IN can also be translated to state that they have no share, or part in what God has to give.

And why should they, they are more involved with their ability and achievement than their helplessness and need.

No child ever would think of presenting a resume to the Lord to qualify for God's highest and best but we as adults to often think our achievement will win the favor of our Father, but his favor is given in grace.

Mark 10:16

Then Jesus did an amazing thing. He did not just let the principle of truth stand, he illustrated its application.

And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands upon them.

The phrase TAKING IN HIS ARMS is one word in the Greek text and it means to fold them in his arms. More than just sitting on the Lord's lap, but to be folded, held tight, secure, in his arms.

We occasionally sing of Leaning on the everlasting arms of the Lord, but how about being folded in his arms.

Can you remember back when you were a child, what it was like to be held tightly by mom or dad, to be folded in their arms? You were safe, you were secure, you knew you were loved.

Do you dare to think that we do not need that even as adults, as even maturing Christians from our Lord - to be folded into his arms. If you have never needed that from your heavenly Lord I do not envy you, I pity you, you do not know how to be a child.

As people hurt for others and because of others, we must remember that no one hurts for us more than did the Lord Jesus Christ. His love and compassion goes far beyond what we could ever imagine. And with that love he laid down his life for us. Someone who would do so much, all that we could not do for ourselves, will also hurt when we turn our back to Him.

Story of the Rich Young Ruler is a story of arrogance and yet also a story which reveals to us the tremendous love that Jesus has even for those who reject Him.

Mark 10:17

And as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and began asking Him, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Remember that all that is happening in this portion of Mark is designed to teach the disciples and prepare them for their future mission in the church age.

Jesus has just taught on the attitude of a child, that we must have that child like innocents and willingness in receiving the kingdom.

Now the disciples are going to see one who wants to earn the kingdom.

The young man ran up to Jesus, he knelt before Him, and addresses Jesus as a good Teacher:

Which all suggest that he had a great respect for this Teacher and saw Jesus as a distinguished Rabbi.

But then the question he asks brings the focus back to himself:

What must I do to inherit eternal life.

Both verbs WHAT MUST I DO and INHERIT are aorist, active, subjunctive in form:

Two things are apparent from this form:

1. That form puts this into the future indicating that the young man was looking ahead to heaven not to the blessings of a life lived in Jesus Christ.
2. Secondly, the double active voice shows us that this young man wanted to do something so he could be in a position of his doing to inherit eternal life.

But just prior to this the disciples hear the Lord say that man must RECEIVE the kingdom of God and its blessings, not earn it, deserve it, or work for it.

Mark 10:18

And Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

By the very title with which this young man addresses the Lord and by the very form of his question the Lord clearly knew that this man was hung up on being GOOD.

So Jesus divert his attention away from human good, even the divine good that could be found in the humanity of Christ, and focuses attention on God.

The man was seeing Jesus as a good man, a wise teacher who had some answers. He was not seeing that all that is truly good is found in God. He was not seeing Jesus as the Christ, as God in the flesh.

Mark 10:19,20

You know the commandments, DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.

And he said to Him, Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.

Is a test of this man's goodness and his pride and arrogance?

Like many people today this young man was hung up on morality and while morality is part of Christianity, it is only part. We are called to a much greater way of life, a way of life that is found in a person and not in a list of ethic. Many are good but many are not believers in a person, Jesus Christ.

And believe me, if Satan can't get you into sin he will get you into legalism, living a list of do's and don'ts rather than living every day with your best friend, Jesus Christ.

So here is the test, how far will this young man go in his arrogant thinking regarding what he can do

The Lord lists six commandments:

1. Murder, the taking of human life which is the prerogative of God.
2. Taking another's wife, and the hurt cause by such actions
3. Stealing, a result of greed and covetousness
4. Bearing false witness: Judging others with false accusations and lies
5. Fraud: Which means to present yourself to others as something you are not
6. The basic rule of life that sets up a pattern: Honor father and mother.

Lets be serious about ourselves. Murder, adultery, maybe not. But never having stolen anything, never telling a lie, never trying to be what you are not, and never giving your father or mother (this is Mother's Day, be honest now) any reason for grief?

No man or woman or child on earth could attest to following these commandments - but listen to the response of the rich young ruler.

Now the preposition used does not indicate that he is saying that he has done this since he has gotten past his youth, but that even while a youth he did all these things.

Zane Hodges in his book Absolutely Free, states that: *This is easily the most self-righteous boast to be found anywhere in the New Testament.*

This is arrogance personified in this young man. He is telling the Lord that he is about as close to perfect as you can get.

But even in his boast he slips up: The verb OBSERVED is a middle voice, so the reason he was doing these things was not because he wanted to please God or even his parents, he was doing them to benefit himself.

He had learned early how to play the game, how to do the right things, please the right people, what to do and not to do to benefit himself.

And he was good at it, he was a smooth operator who had managed to get rich by winning friends and influencing people with his goodness. While all the time putting up a front and giving the suckers what they wanted.

He is cocky, he is arrogant, he is a manipulator, he is a user of people, he is self-righteous - but he is also one other thing:

He is loved by Jesus Christ!

Mark 10:21

And looking at him, Jesus loved him -

The aorist tense of looking would make this a specific look, one single long look of the Lord upon this young man.

And then we read of what was going on in the Lord's soul:

Not disgust at the arrogance, not anger at the self-righteousness, no loathing or hate - he loved him.

The Lord loved and the young man was loved:

And there was nothing in this man that deserved the love of Jesus Christ. He was arrogant, self-centered, selfish, and yet Jesus Christ loved Him.

In Hebrews 13:5 when Jesus said: I will never leave you nor forsake you - he meant it.

Even when we allow sin and arrogance to become the pattern of our life, Jesus continues to love us.

Because that love is based on His character and His virtue, not upon our worth or total lack of worth.

He loved him so much that He took him to a point that He would take everyone of us that he loves, and he loves us all. A point where we must decide, our way or God's way.

NOW EVERYONE OF US depend upon something that is standing in the way of either salvation, if you are an unbeliever, or truly knowing the happiness of the plan of God.

REMEMBER WHAT THE LORD said at the end of Mark 9 about the hand, the foot, or the eye being a source of offence? They had to be cut out or plucked away.

This young man's wealth was a source of offence. He was depending upon it for security, for safety, for his very life.

But Jesus had already said, if you want to follow him, lose you life, deny yourself, and all you depend upon in the flesh.

And said to him, One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.

Jesus zeroed in on the one thing that was for this man a distraction. His possessions and his wealth.

This was not a requirement for salvation but rather a statement designed to get this man off his arrogant high horse.

The man asked about eternal life, heaven, so the Lord told him about heaven. You want the riches of God for all eternity? Then stop depending on your riches on earth.

And for us, whatever we depend upon apart from the Lord, we become a stumblingblock of offence to us as we press on the maturity:

For him it was his wealth, what is for you, what is for me?

SOME Principles:

1. We all carry with us baggage from the past. What is the sin you hold within? What is the pain from the past? Things once forgotten are now in the way, of Jesus' love that will last -
2. This baggage from the past can range from sin to self-reliance. It can be almost anything, even success that we have achieved. But whatever it is, it is a stumbling block to advance in the Christ dependant life.
3. The things that we hold on to are often the things that we think shape our image of self.

For the rich young ruler it was his wealth. Perhaps some was inherited but then he made

even more money. He had the latest model chariot, the best designer robes, sandals purchased at Gucci of Jerusalem.

He saw himself as one who could not only make money, but then pay the price for whatever he wanted.

A new robe one day, a fine meal, and even eternal life - but what God gives is not for sale.

4. Because this baggage from the past shapes our self-image, we will not easily abandon it. We stand in fear of giving up that which we have relied upon for so long.

We think that this is the real me, this is what we are. This is who we are. This is what we do.

5. For some it can be a attitude of rebellion, control or manipulation of others, of being able to get others to like you. All something you have worked on and developed.

For others it might be some aspect of self-reliance. Your strength or your beauty. I know for one young woman it was here common sense, her street smarts. She relied on that as a fall back to always get her through.

For others maybe some secret sin that looms from the past, something you return to for comfort and security. Maybe a bottle, or drugs, or sex -

For some it is the very real horrors of the past, you were unwanted, you were abused, molested as a child. And you think that is what you really are so these pains from the past are not given to the Lord to heal. But you hold onto them and use them as an excuse for what you do and who you are.

6. But whatever it is that you think is shaping your self-image, it is that which is keeping you from being conformed to the image of Christ.

You will never fall back into the arms of Christ by faith if you have something you hold to so tightly that you think is the real you, and forms a source of security apart from Christ.

Solomon saw this in every form, as he entered a frantic search for happiness that was always just beyond his reach. He tried everything, he relied upon his wealth, fame, popularity, wives, education, and like the rich young ruler, his wealth.

David sought security in his children, his family, and those sons closest to him brought him

heartache belong compare. Ammon rapped his sister, Absalom killed Ammon, and then Absalom wrestled away the kingdom from his father.

Paul saw it on the road to Damascus. He was very self-reliant, could do anything, even kill and persecute the follows of this Jesus of Nazareth. But then he was blind, and a blind person is not self-reliant, he is dependant.

7. In all these examples and even more, and right here with the rich young ruler we see the patient love of Jesus Christ.

With Solomon the Lord let him run his own course and learn that nothing worked. With David the Lord took away everything, except himself. With Paul he took away his sight and then gave him three days to do nothing but think.

And with the rich young ruler, he challenged him to the very core of what he thought he was, he said.

And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.

How often has Jesus looked at us, loved us, and then worked in our lives and circumstances to give us the chance to set aside that very thing that we so depend upon, that very thing that is apart and distant from Him.

The Lord gives every one of us a choice: You can look at yourself in the hard and honest mirror of the Word and then go to Him, pray for wisdom that you do not rely upon anyone else but Him.

You can seek His Word to shape your image, to let Him conform you into the person you could be in Him.

Or you can hide away the baggage, ignore it, rationalize it, pretend it doesn't exists and when it comes just excuse it by saying, well, that is just what I really am.

And in the sin nature, your right, that is what you are, but only in the flesh. In Him, armed with the power Spirit and the Truth of the Word you are so much more.

Jesus even said this to the rich young man -

Give it up and you will have more, give up the wealth that you can't take with you, and I'll give you a wealth that no one can ever take away.

But when you hide away the things that you think are the real you, the things you depend upon, Jesus will open you up and make those things with all their horror stare you right in the face - he will put you in a position where you cannot ignore, rationalize, or joke about them. You will have to make a choice:

YOUR WAY - OR GOD'S WAY. Dependence upon the weakness of self or the eternal strength of a Lord who loves you so much, he gave His life for you.

Mark 10:22

This young man was put against the wall of decision:

But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property.

He came face to face with the God of the universe who only wanted to give him wealth beyond compare, and he walked away sad and grieved.

But his sadness was minor when we consider the sadness of one who loved so much that he would give his life for this young man.

The young man wanted something, But the Lord wanted him, the young man wanted to make a purchase, But the Lord wanted to give Him his very life. The young man held on to that which would tarnish with time, But the Lord wanted to give him that which was eternal -

There is no sadness that can compare with the sadness, the hurt, the pain of the Lord Jesus Christ when one who is offered everything, turns and walks away.

What is it that you hold to so tight that you will never know the wealth that Jesus has for you?

Our Lord was not lying when he said he wanted to give you life and life more abundantly -

You may have wealth, strength, beauty, common sense, intelligence, or you may have hurt and pain from the past.

Don't rely upon those things, they will let you down. Begin right now depending upon the only

one who can really hold you up. The one who has done for you what you could not do for yourself.

Many years ago during a war in India, a young soldier was given a very difficult assignment. A hilltop that seemed inaccessible was an ideal position for the placement of a gun, and the recruit was commanded to carry the weapon to that strategic location. He made several strenuous attempts, but failed each time. Finally he went to his commanding officer and declared,

This assignment is impossible! When his superior heard these words, he replied emphatically, Impossible! Impossible? Soldier, I've got an order for it right here in my pocket! The embarrassed young man determined to try again. He returned to the hill and with great effort succeeded in accomplishing his mission.

Last week we looked at the encounter between the rich young ruler and the Lord Jesus Christ. The outcome of that encounter was that the young man trusted in his wealth and that, for him, became the stumblingblock of offence that prevented faith in Christ.

We noted that we all carry with us old baggage that keeps even the Christian from knowing the abundant life that Christ has for him.

Principle: If we have any human merit, ability, resource, or even sin to fall back on we will never depend upon Jesus Christ our Lord for the abundance of life.

This whole concept of grace and receiving the gift and continual gifts that Jesus has for us is very appropriate for our society.

We live in an age in which man is being told He can do it, graduation speeches will be filled with the Human viewpoint statements that you can do anything and everything.

But you cannot, you are limited and you limit yourself. One of the most important truth that we will ever discover from the Word is that with man some things, and the spiritual things, are impossible.

But once you say no way, God says YES, My way -

The Lord is going to use the encounter with the rich young ruler to get a point across to his disciples, and to us. Remember that everything we are seeing in these chapters is designed to prepare the disciples for their future mission. In

the same way we are prepared for whatever lies ahead. And it is in that preparation that we secure the victory for the future.

Mark 10:23

And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!

After the young man left, the Lord's eyes swept over the twelve, and after a moment of silence he makes a statement:

How hard is it for the ones having riches to enter into the kingdom of God.

We have two verbs: First HAVING riches and then ENTER into the kingdom of God.

The form of these two verbs shows us the problem. The ones having riches is a present, active, participle.

They keep on having an activity towards their wealth, and that continual activity is one of trusting in it, depending upon it, holding to it for security, comfort, and the future,

The verb ENTER is a future, middle, indicative. The future tense in the Greek text looks at the result of something occurring in the present. But there is no present trust or faith in Christ to result in this future tense. The middle voice reminds the reader of the benefit of entering the kingdom, the plan, the purpose of God.

The Lord at this verse does not eliminate entirely the idea of a rich man entering the kingdom of God, only that it is difficult. There is always the volitional option to stop depending on your wealth and start depending on Christ.

The same option given to the rich young ruler.

Psalm 49:6-8 There are those who trust in their wealth, And boast in the abundance of their riches. No man can by any means redeem his brother, Or give to God a ransom for him For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever.

Mark 10:24

And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

The amazement and astonishment of the disciples came because what Jesus had just said was so contrary to the teaching of the Rabbis which has so influenced current theological thinking in Jesus' day.

The Rabbis taught that wealth and prosperity was a God's favor upon man. This is the prosperity gospel 2000 years ago. They no doubt had bumper stickers on their chariots that said, Prosperity, my Divine Right.

Notice also that he calls them children, here we have TEKNON which reminded them of the children whom Jesus took into his arms previously. The word for child here is different than that previous uses, TEKNON is a very endearing term for an obedient child. So Jesus is calling the disciples obedient, good, children, but that in itself should remind them that being good -

Is just a fable, they can't because they are not able, they have to leave it to the Lord?

He says: How hard it is to enter the kingdom of God.

This statement leaves out any mention of wealth and throws the whole idea of entering the kingdom wide open and into near impossibility.

He changes the word ENTER to an aorist, act, infinitive to show results of any present activity.

This wide open statement looks at all that man could be doing right now with the idea that it could result in getting him into God's heaven.

And of all those things only one counts, depend upon Christ, and not self. Believe, have faith in Him, the one who has done for you what you could never do for yourself.

Mark 10:25

v 25 The Lord illustrates the inability of man with an absurd illustration:

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

Our Lord loved hyperbole, and that is exactly what this is. Now there was a low gate in Jerusalem that was called the needle and the camels had to stoop down to go through it, but that is not what Jesus is talking about.

The Rabbis used this statement along with one about an elephant going through the eye of a needle to describe the impossible.

This is an idiom for the impossible and the disciples get the point.

Mark 10:26

And they were even more astonished and said to Him, Then who can be saved?

They were astonished before, now even more so. They begin talking among themselves and asking:

Who then can be saved. Aorist, passive, infinitive.

What is remarkable is that the disciples, after ten chapters, finally use the word *SWZW* for salvation in the spiritual sense. Up to this point the word was used for physical healing and now the disciples make the connection.

What Jesus had been doing in the physical He can also do in the spiritual, and we can be saved.

But the problem now is, they have just heard that it is impossible for a man to enter the kingdom of God.

So one step ahead, and two steps back, in their minds.

Mark 10:27

But what they do not know is that now they are at the point in their thinking that Jesus has wanted them to be at ever since he called them. They are listening to Him, looking at themselves, and saying - No Way, Impossible, infeasible, insurmountable, can't do it.

And that is where the Lord wants them. To come to the conclusion the rich young ruler never came to and to be where so few believers even today ever get.

I love to hear a young person say the Christian way of life is so hard, when they are defeated perhaps by their own decisions and sins. I love to hear a Christian say they are helpless, to say that they feel like something a dog left on the front lawn. They admit that there is no way they can do it.

And that is when the God of grace and mercy says, My Way:

Looking upon them, Jesus said, With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.

The little preposition WITH is PARA which means to stand along side.

Jesus is saying that if you stand along side man, his ways, his viewpoint, his abilities, and efforts, your right, no way, impossible.

But are you willing to step out of the crowd, to walk the plank of the cross, and stand along side God. For when standing alongside God, all things are possible.

You are never a fool when you let go of the things you cannot keep, to have the things you could never have.

Stand with man and his ways and the sum total of life will be impossible. Stand with God and your life results in the possible.

I want to give you nine things you can never have when you stand with man but can have when you stand with God:

1. Love: For God and for others, others who love you and even those who don't
2. Joy: Something on the inside that makes you happy in every circumstance and relationship
3. Peace: Something else on the inside that gives you peace even in the midst of problems.
4. Patience: The ability to wait for the best and never give in to second best which is not best at all.
5. Kindness: Being able to treat others as Christ treated you. In grace. This word comes from the same root as grace and is your graciousness to others.
6. Goodness: Victory over sins that tear you up, hurt you soul, and harm others.
7. Faithfulness: Loyalty to the Lord and to others, a virtue that is given because of who you are, just as the Lord is faithful to us.
8. Gentleness: Humility which includes authority orientation and knowing that you have a place in God's plan and what that place is.
9. Self-control: Self discipline, being able to get the job done, see the task and the relationship is life through to their completion.

If you were trying to write these down you really don't have to. They are listed for you in Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

We look at that list and we say, impossible, and we are right. What kind of God would ask us to be and do all those things. A God who with the list gives us His power, His ability, His provision, His own Spirit. And then says stand with me - and all things are possible.

Now up to this point with the encounter with the rich young man, and all the talk of the Kingdom, the emphasis had been on eternity. But the Lord is not just talking about the great bye and bye, he also is talking about the sometimes not so great right now. So under the inspiration of the Spirit, we have Peter's question.

Mark 10:28

Peter began to say to Him, Behold, we have left everything and followed You.

Peter goes way back to the decision he made that day on the shores of the sea of Galilee when he left a lucrative fishing business to follow Christ. He speaks for the other disciples who also left wealth and fame and family to follow Christ.

This is almost a boast, BEHOLD can be translated LOOK NOW.

WE LEFT is aorist tense which looks at a past decision, TO FOLLOW a perfect tense, from the past to the present

This is like saying, look what we lost, what we gave up, what we have done for you, look at our sacrifice, and yet now you are saying it is not enough.

AND PETER, THAT IS RIGHT. By leaving everything you just set aside that which you could depend upon, but that only takes you away from the viewpoint on man. One more step needs to be taken, stand with God and then see the impossible become possible. Not just in eternity, but right now.

Mark 10:29,30

Jesus said, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or

sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

Here we have the motive and the reward of leaving behind that which can never make the impossible possible -

The Lord does not state this leaving behind as a requirement but only as a possibility. We may have to leave behind a great deal, or just one thing or two.

But when ever we do it is so we can press the advance towards Jesus Christ, to follow Him and His Word.

Everything listed can be the old baggage that becomes a source of dependence. Everything listed can be a distraction to the abundant life God wants for you.

And the list the Lord gives is just the overt good things and good relationships. We could add the mental attitudes of self-reliance, rebellion, arrogance, and the sins that we cling to for some false hope of comfort.

But who you are is not wrapped up in any of these. You are a child of the King, an heir of eternity, a member of a royal family with all the rights and privileged afforded to you that are afforded to every spiritual aristocrat.

So a time may come when you have to end relationship, even with family, to move ahead and follow the Lord. A time may come when wealth or farms, or lands, or business must be left behind in order to move ahead with your Savior.

And a time will come when you will have to leave yourself behind, the old baggage of attitudes on which you have depended for strength and security, in order to have the very best with Jesus Christ.

The motive for this is for the sake of Christ. Now we have seen on prior occasions that little phase looks at our motive, that we do what we do because of who Christ is, what he has done for us, his grace. We respond to His grace and we are motivated by His grace.

But then there is further motive, Reward:

There is not one person who leaves anything behind who will not receive a hundred times as much in time -

This is a promise for RIGHT NOW, now just the million times as much in eternity, but right now, in time, a hundred fold.

Who would ever want to hold onto that which they could not even keep, when it prevents them from having that which they could never gain - the Lord said that we will receive, from His grace, so much more.

And so at verse 30 he lists everything again, but leaves out one relationship, father.

Because you have a heavenly Father who will never leave you nor forsake you.

You may have to wait for the Lord to provide some of these hundred fold blessings, but your Father is always there.

Time factor in blessings and rewards is there to keep us from thinking of God as a genie in a bottle. Also develops patience. Also reveals God's perfect timing. And also allows us time to develop capacity for blessing.

But with one thing left out there is also one thing added, persecutions. We will face persecution when we leave behind the relationships and the material things that are standing in the way of spiritual advance.

And almost as a side note the Lord adds: Eternal Life

The balance in these verses puts the emphasis on our lives right now. Eternal life is secure, but there is something the Lord wants for you right now and in your lifetime, an abundant life filled with his highest and best.

Verse 31 is a summary of how we can have the best.

Mark 10:31

But many who are first, will be last; and the last, first.

The verb used in this verse is middle voice, adding to the benefit the Lord has for us when we are willing to set self aside, to leave the old baggage, to dispel the things upon which we rely for dependence and serve Jesus Christ.

This sets up what the Lord will be saying to James and John about being servants.

A wise man once said: *Do not ever stoop to be a king if God has called you to be a servant.*

So now for a moment, in something or relationship, we may be last, but God's plan in time and eternity is for us to be first.

Nathan Schaeffer said: At the close of life the question will not be, how much have you got, but how much have you given? Not how much have you won, but how much have you done? Not how much have you saved, but how much have you sacrificed? It will be how much have you served, not how much have you been honored?

In this passage we are going to see our Lord talk about being the greatest, being first, by being a servant.

In this portion of the tenth chapter of Mark we have communication, contradiction, and then confrontation. The Lord Jesus Christ is continuing to prepare his disciple for their future mission. But as we will see, it is a struggle.

Mark 10:32

And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him.

The disciples and those who followed are the same, the English text appears to show two groups but the style employed by Mark would indicate only one, the disciples

They are following him and they are amazed and fearful.

Their amazement is at what he is teaching and their fear is out of respect as they begin to become aware of his mission.

We are told that the Lord begins to tell them what will happen to him in Jerusalem.

The verb HAPPEN is an infinitive and indicates that what will occur is a result of previous plans. The previous plan here is the plan of God for salvation, set from eternity past - it is now to be fulfilled.

Mark 10:33,34

This is the most specific prophecy of His suffering and death given thus far. Expands the prophecies of Mark 8 and 9.

Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and will deliver Him to the Gentiles. And they will mock Him and spit upon Him, and scourge Him, and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.

1. Betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes
2. They will condemn him to death
3. They will deliver him to the Gentiles for execution
4. They will mock him
5. They will spit at him
6. They will scourge him
7. They will kill him

But after three days he will rise again -

Now notice: The seven horrible things that are done by man are offset by one thing that is accomplished by God, He is risen.

Principle we can apply to life: The many things that man might do to you are offset by a single act of grace from God.

The harm we face and the hurt we endure cannot stand up to or overcome the grace of God - if we stand upon that grace.

Mark 10:35-37

The response to this communication is a contradiction. James and John listen, they hear the prophecy, and then ask a question.

And James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, came up to Him, saying to Him, Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You. And He said to them, What do you want Me to do for you? And they said to Him, Grant that we may sit in Your glory, one on Your right, and one on Your left.

In Mark 3:17 these two are called the sons of thunder. They were bold and had considerable energy in their following of the Lord and their boldness is demonstrated in their question.

They were close to Jesus Christ, having witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter and the Transfiguration. But what they are about to ask is not to be requested.

Furthermore, in response to the prophecy of Jesus suffering and death, this question is incongruent, out of the context, and demonstrates a self-centeredness.

1. They begin not by asking the question but by asking for a favor upon demand. This is similar to the way little kids come up to their parents and as Will you do me a favor - best answer is I don't know, what is the favor?

2. The WE MAY ASK and YOU MAY DO verbs are aorist subjunctives indicating that they are looking to a yet future time, after, as Jesus mentioned, his resurrection.

3. In answering the initial request Jesus changes the verb form to a future indicative, making the basis not something future but the content of the request right now.

4. In verse 37 when they get to the request they use an imperative verb of command, not a request but a command.

5. What they want is stated: That one of them may sit on the Lord's right hand and one on the left in glory, after the resurrection and their physical death.

6. In other words, in their arrogant self-centeredness, they what an eternal position of priority over all the other disciples and believers.

But what they fail to understand is that privilege and position and prosperity in time or eternity in God's perfect plan is preceded by suffering and persecution.

And the want the BENEFITS without the BRUISES, the GLORY without the GORE, the POSITION without the PERSECUTION, the FAME without the MISFORTUNE, the BLESSINGS without the BUMPS -

But don't we all! We want to be men and women of iron without ever being set against the anvil of life. We too want the blessings without the bumps.

But you cannot become strong without strain and God will put us to the anvil of life so we can be strong.

James and John wanted it the easy way and the glory God has in store for us does not come the easy way:

Mark 10:38

But Jesus said to them, You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?

Both the analogy of the cup and the word baptism were used figuratively in the ancient world for suffering.

Even Jesus prayed in the garden: Take this cup from me, if it be your will.

The word BAPTISM looks at identification and Jesus will be identified with our sins and with death.

These two figures describe the cross, the baptism of the cup, where our sins were poured out upon Christ.

Jesus even prefaces his question with the comment: You have no idea what you are asking -

Mark 10:39

But listen to their response:

And they said to Him, We are able.

Their boast is made with a present tense verb. We are able right now.

And Jesus said to them, The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.

In contradicting their present tense boast, Jesus uses future tense -

You will drink and you will be baptized with suffering.

The suffering and death that Jesus would endure was for them, as it is for us. We are all, as believers, identified with him and the Cross.

Also, the believer will suffer personally when he sets Jesus Christ and His word as the priority of his life.

Jesus has already talked about the sacrifice of family and friends, fields and farms. And he will tell of persecution that is to come upon the child of God.

But all this is make us strong. And we today are living in an age, in a society in which we may have to be, very soon, very strong.

The suffering that we are personally experiencing right now may escalate to a national scale as we see the erosion of morality, standards, ideas.

We may think we hurt now, but that is to allow us to go through even greater calamity that may be around the corner.

I look at our nation and I think that if God does not do something soon, he will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.

And when he does judge our nation, are we going to be encapsulated in the power of the Word that is in us, or are we going to fall apart along side those who do not know our Savior?

If you are IDENTIFIED with him and that identification has become a REALITY you will be able to stand firm in the faith

Mark 10:40

Jesus tells these two son of thunder who are thundering in their self-centeredness that what they request is not eve his to give:

But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.

The verb PREPARED is a perfect passive and indicates that from eternity past, as part of the divine decrees the Father has set the appointed order of heaven.

Jesus, in his humanity, is raised by the Father, ascends into heaven, and by the Father is invited to sit at the right hand of Almighty God.

What Jesus is saying is that even he, in his humanity, in his sinless and holy character, is limited and must depend upon the Father.

And Christian, if Jesus was limited and had to depend upon the perfect plan of God, so do we. And if from this he received eternal glory, so can we.

Mark 10:41

Now up to this point the other disciples had not be listening in on the conversation. But now they hear the denial of the request. Their reaction sets up a confrontation:

And hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John.

The word INDIGNANT is AGANAKTEW which means to be greatly grieved, violently irritated. It was also used for fermenting wine so the idea is one of an indignation that ferments, or builds.

So the other disciples are now angry at James and John:

And isn't this how divisiveness usually begins.

1. Selective Learning: James and John listened to only part of the message. They forgot about the suffering and death and thought only about the glory of Jesus in heaven.
2. Self-Centeredness: They wanted an inside track to positions of prominence.
3. Exclusivity: They wanted this only for themselves excluding the other disciples.
4. Arrogance: Thinking they could do the ministry that was assigned to and could only be accomplished by Christ.
5. Jealousy: They others were now angry in jealousy regarding their request.

And so it goes and now there is anger, grief, conflict, and the potential for bitterness all adding up to division.

Mark 10:42,43

And calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant;

Under the human viewpoint exercised by the unbeliever Gentiles, man takes authority and uses it to lord over others. To exercise authority apart from responsibility.

But this must not be the case among Christians.

Under Divine Viewpoint the servant is the greatest.

WISHES is a present, active, subjunctive: Now the subjunctive mood considers your volition, the choice you make to do that which the Lord instructs you to do. Even as believers, some will and some will not make that choice.

The ACTIVE VOICE strengthens the choice you make out of your own freewill.

The PRESENT TENSE is consistent with what the Lord said in Mark 8:34

If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

The wish to follow Jesus Christ is a present tense continual attitude of knowing that God's plan for you is right, that it is best, that it is the most important thing in life.

You may at aorist tense points in time make bad decisions, you will get out of fellowship, you will blow it, at times. But what is important is the present tense attitude, wanting to follow Jesus Christ.

The word GREAT is MEGAS which means great or the greatest, and also means surprising.

This is the life that is in Christ that may even surprise you. We do not know what the Lord has in store for us and when we see His plan unfolding we may be surprised.

Here again we see the divine formula for being a winner, being great - be a servant.

The word SERVANT in v 43 is DAIKONOS

The word SLAVE in v 44 is DOULOS

AND IN VERSE 45 the Lord establishes himself as the pattern, the precedent, and the example believers are to follow in being a servant.

Mark 10:43 through 45 teach us about the greatest attitude we can have in life, an attitude that will lead to greatness in time and eternity, the attitude of a servant.

We are going to examine that attitude and the actions of a servant as we continue this section next week.

It has been said that we must never stoop to become a king when God has called us to be a servant.

In our passage this morning we are going to see the Lord's formula for success in life, to be a servant.

OPEN YOUR BIBLES TO MARK, CHAPTER TEN, VERSE 43:

The Lord speaks out in the midst of strife among the disciples. James and John have attempted to get the Lord to grant them special privileges in

heaven. The Lord told them this was not his to give, but a prerogative of the Father.

The other disciples, upon hearing of the request of James and John, became angry at them and there is now discord among the twelve.

Jesus is going to use this conflict as an opportunity to give the disciples the divine formula for being a winner, for being first in life and in eternity.

v 43 At the end of this verse he states: Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant.

v 44 Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.

This concept that the Lord is teaching is a complete contradiction to Human viewpoint thinking. It is totally inconsistent with the thinking of man yet totally consistent with the Divine viewpoint and the thinking of a Holy God. Mankind involves himself in ambition, competition, and expectation of self and others that brings him to a point of seeking power and authority.

These attitudes and their attending actions often become unrealistic and drive a person on to a frantic search for power thinking that it will bring happiness. But it can only bring frustration.

Jesus makes two statements regarding the divine formula for greatness and success:

1. Whoever among you wishes to become great, shall be a servant or minister.
2. Whoever among you wishes to be first, shall be a slave.

In both statements the Lord uses a subjunctive mood for WISH which indicates that some will and some will not wish to be great or first:

Now this greatness and preeminence is not in the world or in man's Human viewpoint, but in God plan for you.

God wants you to be great, he wants you to be first, and He is willing to provide all that is needed for you to have that as a reality.

It is amazing to think that God offers the unsearchable riches of His grace and a perfect plan to us, and yet we reject it and settle for that which is far less.

When Christ died on the Cross for us, God did for us the greatest thing he could ever do. And that we are His, now that we are children of the king, He will do even more than the most for us.

All we have to do is desire that, to wish that abundant life that he has for us.

The word WISH is present tense indicating an attitude that we are to have. An attitude can be continual while our actions may not be.

The key is to have the right attitude, to come to the point that you wish for the very best that God has to give you - then let God work in you.

The word GREAT used in verse 43 is MEGAS where we get the word mega. It means large or great by way of importance:

The word had a very common use among the Rabbis who divided mankind in the small and the great. They saw great men as those who had power and authority. They taught that such greatness was the favor of God.

But now Jesus turns that Human viewpoint and very simplistic way of looking at man all around. He says that if you want real greatness, it comes by being a servant or one who ministers.

Servant in verse 43 is DIAKONOS where we get the word Deacon.

It originally meant to heap dust. Because a good servant moved so fast that dust flew around him. Then it was used for the boys who carried the towels in the bath houses.

In the religious sense, it took on the idea of one who ministered or rendered a service to another.

The emphasis then is on the one who is served by the servant.

The word BECOME is an aorist, middle, infinitive.

The aorist tense looks at specific points in time when you have the opportunity to serve others, the middle voice sees this as a benefit to you, and the infinitive looks at this as a result.

A result of the grace that God gives you.

So then, to be great make the choice to serve others.

Now in the second statement:

The word FIRST is PRWTOS which is a superlative and would have had special meaning to James and

John, remember, they wanted places of preeminence in heaven.

So to be first, first be a slave:

SLAVE is DOULOS and looks at the one who is a slave under a master.

So the word in verse 43 looks at the ones whom you serve as a servant.

Mark 10:44

The word in verse 44 looks at the master.

Principle: To have all the greatness and riches of grace and God's plan, serve and be a servant.

Mark 10:45

Now Jesus Christ never calls us to do anything that he himself has not done or is willing to do:

So the illustration of verses 43 and 44 is the very person of the humanity of Christ:

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

It is Jesus who is the ultimate example of being a servant, it is his life and death that is the ultimate example of serving:

The God who came to serve was foretold in the Old Testament. The messiah, God's anointed, would not be great in man's estimation, he would be a servant.

The prophet Isaiah spoke extensively of Christ as a servant:

Three major servant Psalms are found in Isaiah:

Isaiah 42:1-4 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. He will not cry out or raise His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not be disheartened or crushed, Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law.

The Servant Songs: Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:1-8, 52:13 to 53:12, and possibly Isaiah 42:5-7, 49:7, 50:10-11. And a fifth song in Isaiah 61:1-ff

ATTRIBUTES OF A SERVANT:

1. Chosen by God: Isa 42:1, 49:1

Isaiah 49:1 Listen to Me, O islands, And pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me.

2. Empowered with the Holy Spirit: Isa 42:1

Isaiah 42:1b I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

3. Taught by God: Isa 50:4

Isaiah 50:4 The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.

4. Found his strength in God: Isa 49:2

Isaiah 49:2 And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me, And He has also made Me a select arrow; He has hidden Me in His quiver.

5. He would suffer: Isa 53:10, 50:6, 53:3, 53:8-10

Isaiah 53:10 But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.

6. He was weak, unimpressive, scorned by men:

Isaiah 52:14 Just as many were astonished at you, So His appearance was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men.

7. Meek: Isa 42:2

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

8. Gentle: Isa 42:3

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

9. Uncomplaining: 50:6, 53:7

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His

mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

10. He was innocent: Isa 53:9

Isaiah 53:9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

11. He was reduced to despair: Isa 49:4

Isaiah 49:4 But I said, I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity; Yet surely the justice due to Me is with the Lord, And My reward with My God.

12. His faith and trust was in the Lord: Isa 49:4, 50:7-9

Isaiah 50:7 For the Lord God helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set My face like flint, And I know that I shall not be ashamed.

13. He was obedient: Isa 50:4-5

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

14. He persevered or endured: Isa 50:7

Isaiah 50:7 I have set My face like flint, And I know that I shall not be ashamed.

15. He was victorious: Isa 42:4. 50:8-9

Isaiah 50:8 He who vindicates Me is near; Who will contend with Me? Let us stand up to each other; Who has a case against Me? Let him draw near to Me. Behold, the Lord God helps Me; Who is he who condemns Me? Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; The moth will eat them.

Now we must recognize that the Lord Jesus became a servant for a reason. And that reason is you -

And now he calls us to serve him and to be servants to the world:

Some new testament passages:

JOHN 12:26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

There is honor given by the Father to the servants

Romans 7:6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

We do not serve in our own power but the power of the Holy Spirit

Galatians 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

We serve with an attitude of love towards others. And when you love someone you are willing to go the extra mile, and the next, and the next . .

Colossians 3:24 Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

The one we serve, even when serving others, is the Lord himself

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar, from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

The servant in the church age serves with privileges that have never been available in any dispensation before

1 Peter 4:10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

We are gifted by God to serve others. The spiritual gifts we have are not for ourselves, but for others. And we serve others by grace.

Luke 1:74 That we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear.

And we serve without fear, for we are called to serve by the God the Universe, to serve the one who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

But one warning about being a servant: Servants are at times ill treated, they are sometimes abused, and they are often hurt by the ones they extend themselves to serve.

But the master is gracious, He loves us and care for us. He knows what it is like to be a servant

and be rejected, abused, and hurt by those He came to serve.

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

William Dyke was a rich Englishman who had been blind since early childhood. After acquiring his wealth, he fell in love with one of England's most beautiful young ladies. Soon they were engaged and a date was set for the wedding. Shortly before the anticipated event, Dyke submitted to a new surgical procedure that specialists said would restore his sight. Since his bandages had to stay on until the day of the wedding, the couple decided to have them removed during the ceremony. When the day arrived, William Dyke nervously took his place in the church. Soon the bride approached the altar on the arm of her father. Then came the dramatic moment when the doctor removed the last covering from Dyke's eyes. As the groom's eyes grew accustomed to the light, the first sight he beheld was the face of his beloved. As their eyes met, he exclaimed in wonder and joy, At last!

We are going to see in the closing story of Mark, chapter 10 a man who receives his sight and the first thing he sees is the One who loves him, Jesus Christ.

Mark is writing about the closing events of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. While the entire Gospel saw every step Jesus took bringing Him to the mission of the Cross, now His steps quicken and become more definite as He sets his face towards Jerusalem and the betrayal, condemnation, and death that awaits Him.

Luke 9:51 And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem.

Mark 10:46

And they came to Jericho. And as He was going out from Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, a blind beggar

named Bartimeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road.

Jesus had been ministering on the East side of the Jordan and now is going to Jerusalem for the Passover and His Passion.

Jericho is on the West side of the Jordan about 14 miles from Jerusalem.

The ancient city of Jericho had been uninhabited since the days of Joshua. But a new Jericho had been built by Herod the great and was the location of the summer palace.

The events of Mark 10 probably occurred as he was on the road between the old Jericho and new Jericho.

New Jericho was a Roman city and by crossing the Jordan, Jesus was now under the authority of the Romans and the Jewish Sanhedrin or high council of elders.

Jesus knows that he is in enemy territory but that very present danger did not prevent Him from His mission and His ministry, He still had things to teach the disciples and He still was preparing them for their future mission.

And he still has people to help -

The great multitude mentioned in this verse are the pilgrims going to Jerusalem for Passover. As they leave the city with the Lord and His disciples their pilgrimage is interrupted by the shouts of a blind man, Bartimeus.

BAR (son of) TIMAEUS hence Bartimeus -

Now the other Gospels that record this event give us information that Mark does not include and when we study those Gospels we will examine those details. Here we see the details of persistence and priority.

Mark includes the lineage of Bartimeus as son of Timaeus. Now usually a blind beggar doesn't have a pedigree but Mark, writing at a later time, includes this perhaps because Bartimeus is by the time of the writing someone well known in the first century church.

Sitting by the road indicates that he was there begging alms from the travelers on their way to Jerusalem.

Blindness, both from birth and occurring later in life, is a big problem in the Near East. Especially in the ancient days when the trash, garbage, and

discards were burned openly the soot was damaging to the eyes.

A man who visited the Near East in the 18th century noted even then that half the men he saw had problems with their eyes as a result of infections.

So the blind beggar sitting by the road was a common sight in the ancient Near East.

Mark 10:47

And when he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!

The sense of hearing in a blind man is very acute. He listens more intently than those who can see. And here we learn that Bartimeus had been listening. He heard about Jesus Christ and in his darkened world had the opportunity to think about what he had heard.

What he heard was of the words and works of this Jesus of Nazareth. What he was then thinking was that this man was the Messiah, the promised Son of David.

He put what he had heard together with what he knew and came to a conclusion, this is the Messiah who can cause the blind to see - so he then applied:

He began to cry out and say, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

BEGAN is middle voice, he cried out for his benefit

Both CRY OUT and SAY are present, infinitives indicating that he keep on crying out and did so as a result of something else, the information he had in his soul regarding Jesus Christ.

After addressing Jesus, the Son of David, Bartimeus now makes a request:

Have MERCY on me

The mercy of God simply defined is the action of Grace. But it goes a bit beyond that to the action of Grace to hold back the judgment of God that we should deserve.

So with one hand God gives us grace, that which we do not earn nor deserve.

And with the other hand God's mercy holds back the judgment that we should receive for our sin

and rebellion against him. Discipline comes when mercy is slacked.

Psalm 25 is great psalm of David recovering from sin and there he asks God for mercy:

Psalm 25:7 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; According to Thy lovingkindness (Mercy) remember Thou me, For Thy goodness' sake, O Lord.

So Bartimeus seeks the Lord for mercy regarding his blindness. Hold back and remove the judgment.

Mark 10:48

Now many in the crowd saw the shouting of this blind beggar as an interruption of their journey.

And many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me!

The word translated STERNLY TELLING HIM means to strongly censure or rebuke.

The aorist tense of BE QUITE is ingressive meaning that he should ingress or enter a different state, a state of quite rather than shouting.

You see the harmony of their journey was disturbed, they did not see why this blind beggar should force his misery upon them and Jesus.

But this man continued to cry out indifferent to the rebuke of the crowd. He knew that Jesus was here, now, and this was his opportunity to seek the Messiah, the son of David.

He was persistent, he did not let up, even when the crowds rebuked him, he keep on crying out.

Mark 10:49

Jesus, however, would not allow their rebuke to stand. Even while on his way to Jerusalem to complete his mission, he had the time to minister to one who had a need and called out to him.

And Jesus stopped and said, Call him here. And they called the blind man, saying to him, Take courage, arise! He is calling for you.

Jesus stopped and stood in the road and issued a command, call him here (imperative mood).

The crowd, being obedient to Jesus, very quickly changed their tune, they now encourage the blind man to arise and come to Jesus.

The word for TAKE COURAGE is often translated BE OF GOOD CHEER and looks at the boldness of M.A. we are to have in life. To seek the Lord and come to him with a mental attitude of confidence and courage.

Mark 10:50

This gives us the response of Bartimeus:

And casting aside his cloak, he jumped up, and came to Jesus.

We do not really appreciate the significance of this until we consider what the cloak was for a blind beggar.

The cloak was the large outer garment that a beggar used to carry his earthly belongings, to wrap around him as he would sleep in the door ways and in the streets, and even spread in front of him to collect the coins given to him by those who passed by.

The cloak was just about the only thing a beggar owned and it was very important to him.

But it was not as important as Jesus Christ.

Now before we go any further, we need to look at the analogy of blindness and the Lord's healing of this physical limitation.

1. Every miracle of healing the Lord preformed was designed to give us an analogy to the spiritual healing we need. We are blind and deaf to spiritual things, we are lepers alienated from God, we are dead in our sins, we lame unable to walk the Christian walk - we need the touch of Christ in our lives to heal us spiritually.

2. Isaiah 42:18 and other Old Testament passages tell of the work of the messiah in giving sight to blind and hearing to the deaf:

Hear, you deaf! And look, you blind, that you may see.

3. When Jesus healed the deaf and blind he was fulfilling these prophecies that were written about Him. And He was teaching us that we are spiritually deaf and spiritually blind.

4. By way of analogy deafness relates to the unbeliever who cannot hear. Faith comes by hearing and in the analogy the deaf person is cut off from the hearing of the Word.

5. Continuing the analogy, blindness relates to the believer who is blind to the wonderful and great things God has for him. He cannot see them, he is blind to the plan of God.

6. Bartimeus knew who Jesus was and believed that he was the Messiah, the son of David, but was blind and could not follow Him.

In the same way Christians believe in Christ but are blind, sitting by the way side as Christ and His people are moving on.

7. The analogy of blindness was used in the NEW TESTAMENT. in a number of passages:

Ephesians 1:18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

1 John 2:11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Revelation 3:18 I advise you to buy from Me - eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

2 Peter 1:9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.

So then Bartimeus is like the believer who calls after Jesus Christ - and Jesus stops and beckons him.

When Bartimeus throw down his cloak he threw off dependence on earthly things to come without hesitation to the Lord.

Mark 10:51

And answering him, Jesus said, What do you want Me to do for you? And the blind man said to Him, Rabboni, I want to regain my sight!

I think it is very interesting that Jesus would ask a blind man what that man wanted Him to for him. Wouldn't it be obvious that the blind man wanted to see?

But when we come to Jesus Christ, it is not always obvious to us what we really need. The Lord always knows but in our darkened state we do not always know.

So the Lord, with such grace, asks: What do you want Me to do for you?

And that question rings out to us through the centuries, What do you want of your Lord Jesus Christ?

And the answer should be the same answer that was given that day by the blind beggar Bartimeus - I want to see.

Not to just see with eye but with the soul, to see clearly the grace of God, His perfect plan, the abundant life He has for you, to see His highest and best.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 As it is written, Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him. For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

The positive, advancing believer who has doctrine in his soul sees what no else can see - he sees even the deep things of God.

Mark 10:52

Jesus Christ will never refuse a request that is in line with God's will for us.

And Jesus said to him, Go your way; your faith has made you well. And immediately he regained his sight and began following Him on the road.

The faith that makes well is faith that has a proper target or object and that object or target is Jesus Christ.

1. Go your way looks at Bartimeus now having the free will to determine his decisions
2. And He immediately received his sight: God immediately answers the prayers for seeing that which we could not see apart from Christ
3. And then he chose to follow him on the road to Jerusalem.

But there is something that is not here. Mark makes no mention of Bartimeus going back for his cloak.

That which was once all important to him, his protection and his lively hood, now is unimportant in the presence of the Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of David.

And we must recognize, as Bartimeus did on that Jericho road, that there is nothing in life more important than being in the presence of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 11

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: *Only he who believes will be obedient.*

Man will not be obedient as a result of nothing. He must believe, have faith and trust in the one he is obeying. In our passage this morning we are going to see an example of obedience, that was a result of faith.

Karl Barth: *The Easter message tells us that our enemies, sin, the curse, and death, are beaten. Ultimately they can no longer start mischief. They still behave as though the game were not decided, the battle not fought; we must still reckon with them, but fundamentally we must cease to fear them any more.*

How can that be true? It can only be true in your life by faith -

Each of the four Gospels record the Triumphal Entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. Each on includes information that is unique to the purpose of that Gospel.

The Gospel of Mark records the event in subtle terms. It includes the basic information without some of the spectacular aspects found in the other Gospels.

Mark's Purpose is to show his readers that the Lord presented himself as the Messiah to Israel. That this fulfilled the Messianic prophecies. And that while he was received that day, within four days the same crowd that hailed him as their king would shout out *Crucify Him* -

We see contrasts regarding the passion of Christ. His consistency and man's inconsistency. His obedience and man's disobedience. His faithfulness and man's unfaithfulness.

Mark 11:1-3

We see the Lord drawing near to Jerusalem and giving instructions to His disciples:

And as they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, and said to them, Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will

find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. And if anyone says to you, Why are you doing this? you say, The Lord has need of it; and immediately he will send it back here.

Both Bethany and Bethphage are East of Jerusalem and accessed by going over the northern slope of the Mt. of Olives. Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus and became the resting place of Jesus each night prior to night of his arrest. Bethphage is close to Jerusalem and would have been considered a suburb of the Holy City.

The village to which he sends his two disciples would have been Bethphage.

Now he gives them some very specific instructions:

1. As soon as you enter the village
2. You will find a colt, of a donkey, on which no man has ridden
3. Untie it and bring it here
4. If anyone questions what you are doing tell them the Lord needs it and will send it back

These specifics can be accounted for in either of two ways. First, we can assume that the Lord was given information by God in a miraculous manner that told Him where this colt was to found. Or, we could also consider that the owner of the colt and the home where it could be found was with the Lord and gave him use of the animal.

We have no way of knowing for sure, but we do know that the disciples unhesitatingly, followed the instruction

Mark 11:4-7

The obedience of the two disciples:

And they went away and found a colt tied at the door outside in the street; and they untied it. And some of the bystanders were saying to them, What are you doing, untying the colt? And they spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission. And they brought the colt to Jesus and put their garments on it; and He sat upon it.

In these verses we see four things regarding faith and obedience:

1. The execution of obedience

2. The opposition to obedience
3. The vindication of obedience
4. The fulfillment of obedience

Execution of obedience:

The disciples did not question the instructions of their Lord. They immediately did what he told them to do. Although what he told them to do was rather odd.

I think it is interesting that these disciples so quickly followed the Lord's instructions. The instructions were at least rather odd. And considering the religious thinking of the day, the instructions were contrary to what most people would have believed to be the way the Messiah would enter Jerusalem.

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The Rabbis had a real problem with this verse. They saw the single advent of the Messiah as an advent of triumph and victory. How would it be that the King would enter Jerusalem in such a lowly manner.

Eventually the Rabbis reconciled this by stating in the Babylonian Talmud that: *If Israel was worthy the Messiah would come on the clouds of heaven, if they were not worthy, lowly and riding upon an ass.*

Israel had rejected the Word, the Prophets, and now the Son of God. Israel was not worthy, and the Messiah would enter Jerusalem in a humble and lowly fashion. Fulfilling the Rabbis' testimony of their unworthiness.

So the disciples, contrary to what seemed logical, obeyed:

The two disciples executed the instruction, being obedient by faith.

Their faith was not in the logic of what was said or the current religious thinking, but in a person they trusted fully, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The human tendency of the sin nature would be to argue, to seek a reason, to question. They did not; they just did what the Lord told them to do.

Their motive for their obedience was the person of

Christ. Not some plan or some base gain. They did what they did by faith in the Lord.

On the Lord's part, he gave them specific instruction, he gave them His Word. They had the influence of divine truth in their lives.

In the same way, Christians today are called upon by the Lord through His word to do that which may be contrary to our logic, our ideas, our rational, our plans. But we must be in faith-obedient to a person, not a plan or idea, trusting our Lord Jesus Christ.

So the disciples went to Bethphage and just as the Lord promised, found a young donkey tied outside a house. Now as they were executing obedience they receive opposition

And some of the bystanders were saying to them, What are you doing, untying the colt?

Now these bystanders merely questioned the actions of the disciples.

But we will find that as we execute obedience in faith to the Lord there will be those who not only question, but citizen, and even condemn our actions of obedience.

Our Lord has not promised us a life without opposition. As you get serious about following the Lord you can bet there will be distracters who will oppose you.

On the following day as the Lord goes into the Temple, every religious group present takes their shot at Him. But he stands firm on the Word.

Following the Day of Pentecost the apostles were opposed at every turn. But they concluded in Acts 5:29 *But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men.*

v 6 But what we need to examine is how the disciples responded to this opposition to their obedience.

And they spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission.

Principle: They did not get involved in some lengthy discussion as to why they were doing what they were doing. They told them what the Lord said.

1. Your only defense for following the Lord is the Word of God.
2. Those who oppose you will not listen to logic or reason or any explanation. You may try as you

will to convince them, but you will be casting pearls before swine.

3. If you give the Word as your defense either one of two things will happen. The Word will convict and convince the ones opposing you - or it will not.

4. Speaking to Titus Paul emphasized the principle of standing firm on the Word:

Titus 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with doctrine, that he (the communicator) may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

5. We too often try to vindicate our faith and obedience by arguments of Human viewpoint. And maybe we will convince someone that what we believe and do is right. But if we do so by Human viewpoint and not the Word, so what?

We may have won the argument, but we did so by that which was apart from the Lord.

6. These disciples' faith was **VINDICATED** by the Word of the Lord. They told the bystanders exactly what Jesus had said:

Adverb exactly what he had said. Indicates they knew the Words of the Lord. And we must also as the justification of our faith and obedience.

And following shows us the **FULFILLMENT OF THEIR OBEDIENCE:**

And they brought the colt to Jesus and put their garments on it; and He sat upon it.

Now remember that this colt had never been ridden before. And that fits with what we are seeing in this passage.

The colt, a dumb animal, was obedient to the Lord. It did not try to buck him off. Like we so often try to buck him off. And just like this colt, this young donkey, this young jackass, as we should also be obedient to the Lord.

Principle: Better to be a jackass and be obedient than a superior creature, man, and be disobedient.

This also fulfilled the law regarding an animal that was dedicated for a sacred purpose. It was not to have been used in any common way prior to its use by the priests. This animal had a most important task, to bring the king into the city.

Mark 11:8-10

Describes the triumphal entry of Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords, into the Holy City, Jerusalem.

And many spread their garments in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. And those who went before, and those who followed after, were crying out, Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!

Now the custom for a pilgrim coming to Jerusalem to worship during the time of the Passover was to enter the city with great joy but also in a humble fashion.

Even if you had ridden your mule to the city you would dismount and walk through the gates. Yet here we see Jesus, who had walked to the city, find a colt and ride through the gates.

Yet this is the king entering the city, his city, that was the place of his temple. And while this was not the customary way to come into Jerusalem to worship, He was not there to worship. He was there to claim the victory of the Cross.

1. Spread Garments
2. Spread branches, not necessarily palms
3. Cried out four things:
 - a. Hosanna: *God save us.*
 - b. *Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord:* A customary greeting in ancient Israel
 - c. *Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David:* Here is where we see their anticipation of Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. They hoped that Jesus was the promised king.

But they would be disappointed, not because he was not the king, but because he was not the king according to their ideas. He was not there to defeat Rome, but Sin and Satan at the Cross.

d. *Hosanna in the highest:* Orientation to the fact that salvation had to come from God.

The people in their response to Jesus entering the city show tremendous enthusiasm but this enthusiasm is without the confidence of knowing Christ as savior and king.

Mark 11:11

Once in the city Jesus goes to inspect the Temple, His Temple where from the time of Moses and the tabernacle to the time of Jeremiah His very glory was present in the Holy of Holies.

This was like visiting ones home but here after centuries of absence:

And He entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking all around, He departed for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.

What He saw was something that would take dramatic action. He saw the money changers, the thieves, the ones who cheated the people. But they would be dealt with on the next day.

Jesus and His disciples made the journey back to Bethany as they would each night until he was betrayed.

In 1930, the Communist leader Bukharin journeyed from Moscow to Kiev. His mission was to address a huge assembly. His subject, atheism. For a solid hour he aimed his heavy artillery at Christianity, hurling argument and ridicule. At last he was finished and viewed what seemed to be the smoldering ashes of men's faith. *Are there any questions?* Bukharin demanded. A solitary man arose and asked permission to speak. He mounted the platform and moved close to the Communist. The audience was breathlessly silent as the man surveyed them first to the right, then to the left. At last he shouted the ancient Orthodox greeting, *CHRIST IS RISEN!* The vast assembly arose as one man and the response came crashing like the sound of an avalanche, *HE IS RISEN INDEED!*

A famous symphony conductor was once asked what instrument he felt was the most difficult to play. After thinking a while he said second violinist (second fiddle). He added that there were many first violinists around but to find someone who really enjoyed being second fiddle was rare, and yet without a second fiddle there would be no harmony.

In the Christian life we have too often an abundance of first fiddles but we also need the service of the second fiddle and from them we have harmony.

On the morning following the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the Lord and his disciples,

having spent the night in Bethany, are returning to the city.

The Lord is going to use a very insignificant incident to teach his disciples what is about to occur to Israel because of their lack of faith and productivity.

Mark 11:12

And on the next day, when they had departed from Bethany, He became hungry.

The walk from Bethany to the Temple mount was a distance of about two miles. Bethany was on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. As Jesus and his disciples came over the northern saddle of the hill they came first to Bethphage. The name Bethphage means house or place of early figs.

Mark 11:13

And seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

The Lord is going to teach his disciples a Bible class and use as an illustration the very common fig tree.

You can find a Bible class in almost anything you see. Nature itself reveals the existence of God and through the Bible we see natural illustrations used to teach divine principles.

Here the fig tree is going to teach the barrenness and lack of productivity of Israel.

The Lord saw the fig tree, it was in full leaf. However, the last statement in the verse tells us it was not the season for figs.

The fig tree bears fruit twice a year. There is a small early crop that come in late April or May. This incident was just before that first crop. the full crop comes in the fall in October about the time of the feast of Tabernacles.

Jesus, of course, knew that it was not even time for the early crop but he is going to use this to illustrate a point.

Mark 11:14

And He answered and said to it, May no one ever eat fruit from you again! And His disciples were listening.

There are two Greek word translated SAY:

- 1) LALEW which puts emphasis on a process
- 2) LEGW as here which puts emphasis on content

So what is said is of importance in its content not in the process that will result

He spoke directly to the tree: *May no one ever eat fruit from you again.*

Putting this together, the wish or desire that no one will eat of this tree looks to a coming age. An age the disciples did not yet know of, the Church Age.

So what we actually have is an imprecatory prayer by Jesus regarding a fig tree.

But more so an illustration of the Lord's rejection of Israel who has and will reject him. They have been unfruitful and barren and now will wither.

Now before we see what happens on the next day, let's read Luke 13:6-9

And He began telling this parable: A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, Behold, for three years (Length of Christ's public ministry) I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground? And he answered and said to him, Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.

Do you notice something unusual about that parable? It doesn't have an ending. What happened next year? Did it bear figs or not, was it cut down or not?

The end of the parable is not a parable, but a miracle that is going to occur on the way to Jerusalem.

So let's go back to Mark 11, but turn ahead to verse 20:

Mark 11:20-21 The Rest of the Story: Both the parable and the events of the preceding morning:

And as they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. And being reminded, Peter said to Him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.

You would think that after being with the Lord for three years that nothing would surprise the disciples, but this did.

This was a time of the year that the fig tree should have been blooming more and more every day. But now it has, in one day, completely withered.

The verb WITHERED is a perfect, passive, part and looks at the fact that the tree had been caused to die.

FROM THE ROOTS UP is a statement that attests to the miracle that has occurred. This tree did not wither because of some blight that infested it leaves but from the very root.

Just like Israel, who the tree illustrates, was sick in its rejection of the Lord from its roots.

Sin, disobedience, rejection of God comes from the inside, from the roots of the soul.

Peter sees the withering of the tree as a miracle:

John Laidlaw says: This incident stands alone among the miracles as the only one that is not of a beneficial or merciful character.

It is a harsh miracle but it will remind the disciples of the harsh rejection that Jesus is soon to face.

Mark 11:22-25 The Lord explains what has happened:

Now here is where we have to see that there often exists two levels of fulfillment of events and two levels of explanation.

1. Jesus explains what has happened, not what it means
2. It will be a couple of days later that Jesus, in the upper room discourse (John 13-16) will explain the Church Age and the disciple that will come to Israel.
3. That disciple is illustrated by the withered fig tree but the disciples do not know about the coming Church Age at this time.
4. So Jesus uses this situation to explain what happened, not what it means.

And what happened from the preceding day to this was an answer to the prayer Jesus prayed that no man would eat of this one tree in the coming age.

Now when we come to these passages we will examine the power of prayer but not we want to

see the principle of prophecy and to do that we have to learn a little bit about fig trees.

The doctrine of the fig tree: Any horticulturist should like this:

1. The fig tree was used in the Old Testament for a sign of prosperity blessing and also for judgment on Israel:

Zechariah 3:10 In that day, declares the Lord of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.

Jeremiah 8:13 I will surely snatch them away, declares the Lord; There will be no grapes on the vine, And no figs on the fig tree, And the leaf shall wither; And what I have given them shall pass away.

2. The fig tree had two seasons for giving fruit. One in late spring and the second full season in the fall (around the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles).
3. The Lord's earthly ministry illustrated the first season on the figs, the early season. But Israel was found lacking faith as the fig tree lacked fruit.

Hosea 9:10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your forefathers as the earliest fruit on the fig tree in its first season. But they came to Baal-peor and devoted themselves to shame, And they became as detestable -

The Lord had every right to expect acceptance and obedience from Israel, but instead there was rejection.

4. In the near east figs grow both wild and in orchards. The wild fig tree that is not pruned and cared for grows low to the ground, uncontrollable, very wild. The fig trees that are cared for grow very tall, very uniform and give off much more fruit than their wild cousins.

In the same way the Lord cares for his people. Rejecting that care they become wild, low to the ground, uncontrolled, and lack the full fruit of the believers who allow the Lord to care for them and prune them.

5. The fig tree was also one of the fruit trees that were planted at the edge of the field and people and need could come and pick figs. Also the fig tree provides shade under which travelers would often find rest.

In the same way, the people of God are there, at the edge of the field of the world to offer nourishment and shade to others. If we are the Lord's fig trees we are to minister to others.

6. One interesting thing about figs is that the actual flower is found inside the hallow of the fruit and is not seen unless it is cut open.

In the same way the Lord must cut us open so that the flower of faith can be seen by a lost and dying world. We experience the pruning and the cutting open under pressure so others can see the flower of the soul.

7. Between the spring harvest and the fall harvest, the figs were fertilized by packing dung around the base of the tree. When this was done there was a dormancy that occurred that would ensure an even more abundant crop in the fall.

Looking at this dispensationally, the Jewish religious calendar is silent from the spring to the fall. This silence and lack of feasts foresaw the insertion of the Church Age. During this time the fig tree was packed with dung. This represents God's discipline, the fifth cycle of discipline on Israel during the CHURCH AGE

Right now Israel is packed with the dung of discipline but in the fall, the tribulation, the fruit of believing Israel will be abundant.

Now it is during this time, between the harvest of the figs, that we as Christians, believers in Christ in the Church Age, can be the fig trees that produce and give the fruit of faith to the World.

Two applications can be drawn from this event:

1. The fig trees and their fruit belong to the one who owns the orchard. The Lord Jesus Christ is the owner of the orchard and he can expect production and whatever production we have belongs to Him.

And he as the Lord of the orchard will provide everything we need to produce the fruit of faith.

He will care for us, prune us, cut us open so that we can take the doctrine we are learning and thinking and apply it to our relationship with God, to self, and to others. And the fruit of our production belongs to Him.

2. When there is no fruit, no application of the Word, no production, the Lord of the orchard has every right to remove the barren tree.

He did this with that actual tree outside of Jerusalem in our story.

He is doing that right now with Israel under the fifth cycle of divine discipline.

But he will also do it with us. He has a right to expect production and if there is no fruit there he will remove us, taking the ministry he has in store for us with all its blessings and giving it to another.

Principle: Do not be withered with no fruit, having your ministry be given to another.

The attitude of worship is not found in text but in context, it is not an isolated experience or service but a manner of life, appreciating and adoring God who has done everything for you.

On this second day of the final week of Christ's ministry before the Cross we see Jesus exercising what we might call today tough love.

We saw last week how he cursed the fig tree that represented unfaithful and unproductive Israel.

Now as Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem and comes to the Temple we see what is perhaps the most violent act of his ministry, the cleansing of the Temple.

There are actually two occasions on which Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the Temple. One was early in His ministry and is recorded in John 2:14-17. And then the second cleansing of the Temple recorded here in Mark 11.

Mark 11:15

And they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to cast out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves.

The event takes place in the Temple grounds in what is called the outer court or the Court of the Gentiles.

Here was the only place on the Temple mount that Jews and Gentiles could mingle. This was also the place reserved for Gentiles who wished to come to the Temple to pray and worship. But it was no longer a place of prayer and worship, it had become a commercial center for the High Priests to line their pockets with profit.

Now this market, in the court of the Gentiles and under the control of the High Priest Caiaphas was

rather new in origin and was the result of a political struggle between the High Priest and the Sanhedrin or Jewish council.

Prior to A.D. 30, about three years before this time, there were four markets located on the western slope of the Mount of Olives where pilgrims and worshippers could purchase animals for sacrifice, exchange money into the approved Temple shekel, and buy other items approved for worship.

Part of this exchange was legitimate and followed Old Testament law and teaching:

1. The Temple tithe, tax, and offering could only be given in the approved coin. At this time it was the Tyrian shekel which was the closest available equivalent to the Old Hebrew shekel.

Exodus 30:13, This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution to the Lord.

2. Also the markets provided a place to purchase doves for the offerings by the poor, the women, and for the offering made to testify to the cleansing of leprosy.

Leviticus 12:8, But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

So the markets provided an inexpensive place to purchase doves for the sacrifices

3. Also, the markets would exchange an animal, a lamb, a bullock, that was not fit for the sacrifice for one that was. This was like trading in a used car.

Exodus 12:5 Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

4. The four markets were governed by the Sanhedrin and while they did operate for profit, the profit margin was limited.

But the profit went to the Sanhedrin and soon the Priests sought a way they could tap into some of this market.

When Caiaphas became the High Priest he enacted a number of reforms. Soon he decided to go into

competition with the Sanhedrin and open up his own markets on the Temple grounds.

So while the motive was profit for the priests the purpose was political, a political move to exclude the Sanhedrin from making any profit off the pilgrims who came to worship at the Temple.

Now the priests were in a position of political strength.

1. The priests were the ones who controlled the Temple mount area and they had an ideal location to set up their market, right in the court of the Gentiles.

2. Also, the priests determined if the coin for the Temple Tax was acceptable. If they decided a coin was too worn, they could reject it and require the coin to be exchanged, for a slight fee, with another coin.

3. The priests also decided if the animal for the offering was acceptable, and even if the dove met the required standards. If they were not, and they usually were not, they required you to trade for an approved animal or dove.

4. The power of the priests would effectively shut down the four markets on the mount of Olives controlled by the Sanhedrin. So this was politics and profit.

5. But what was even worse was that this market was set up in the court of the Gentiles and thus eliminated the possibility of any Gentile from coming to the Temple to worship God.

So it is into the midst of this political, profit, and power struggle that the Lord Jesus Christ comes and takes decisive action that restores something the priests had forgotten about - worship.

Mark 11:15,16

And He entered the temple and began to cast out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who were selling doves; and He would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple.

Jesus did three things:

1. Threw the merchants out of the court
2. Overturned the tables of the money changers and sellers of doves

3. Prevented anyone from using the forecourt as a shortcut from one part of the city to another

One writer has well said that Jesus' spirited protest brought together not only Old Testament prohibitions but also religious requirements of the day.

Zechariah 14:21 And there will no longer be a tradesman in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day.

Also the Babylonian Talmud states that no one was allowed to enter the Temple Mount with a staff, sandals, or his purse and it specifically denied the use of the court of the Gentiles as a short-cut.

So what he was doing was completely in line with the Scriptures and even the Talmud. And He, whether the priests recognized Him or not, was the Lord of this House.

Mark 11:17

Rarely does the Lord do anything without teaching a principle from his actions:

And He began to teach and say to them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? But you have made it a robbers' den.

The Lord teaches from two Old Testament passages, both found in the major prophets:

Isaiah 56:7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.

Jeremiah 7:11 Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, declares the Lord.

I think it very interesting that the Lord gives as a reason for doing what he did the elimination, by the priests, of a place for the Gentiles to come and worship at the Temple.

NATIONS is ETHNOS where we get ETHNIC and refers to Gentiles.

It states that he was teaching DIDASKW _which is the most formal type of teaching, appropriate for the Temple and indicates that the message was prepared and that it had a purpose.

The purpose was to open the Temple back up to anyone, Jew or Gentile, who wished to come and worship God.

Then, as a second line of reason, the Lord quotes from Jeremiah and indicates that the priests have turned His House into a den of robbers.

This was probably true: Some sources indicate that the priests and the merchants were in co-hoots with a band of thugs who would rob those who were coming to Jerusalem to worship. They would take their lambs and bulls for the sacrifice and then resell them to them at the Temple market.

But the primary problem was that by entering into this illegal trade the Priests prevented people from worshipping God. And that is worse than anything else they could do.

Principles:

We can see problems with what the priests did in establishing the Temple markets:

1. Disregarded the Word of God: The Old Testament prohibited such activities at the Temple but the priests did not care.
2. A lust for power and money: Theses lusts became more important to the priests than their purpose of worship.
3. An inordinate competition: They were competing for power and profit with the Sanhedrin.
4. An insensitivity to others: They excluded an entire group of people from worship and did not so much as bat an eye.
5. An increasing Greed: In the three years the market had operated the priests sought more and more wealth and power.
6. An attitude of superiority formed in arrogance: The priests decided the Gentiles were inferior and expendable and did not deserve a place to worship.

But we have to consider our actions today and ask if we too exclude others from what we have with the Lord? And do so out of some greed for power, profit, or some political maneuvering?

The priests of Jesus' day pre-judged the Gentiles, found them to not measure up to their human

standard, and then dismissed them as being a part of the Temple worship.

Problems we face today:

1. We pre-judge others: We based our judgment on their looks, background, sometimes even the color of their skin. In our arrogance we think we can judge at first sight, know everything about a person. And so often we are so wrong.
2. We judge according to our standard: Rather than seeing others as God sees them we see others through our own weakness and strengths, both part of the Sin Nature.

This results in projection and in projection we are most often wrong. Other people are not us.

3. And then we dismiss people: We even come up with statements like we have no use for some other person, and who ever gave us the idea that we are to use others to begin with?

Everything the priests were doing and so many things believers do today denies the unconditional love we are to have for others, the same unconditional love God has for them.

Mark 11:18,19

This verse shows us that the actions of tough love that Jesus displayed when he drove the money changers out of the Temple did not wake up the religious leaders but added to their callousness.

And the chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for all the multitude was astonished at His teaching. When evening came, they would go out of the city.

Instead of responding positively and taking the rebuke they reacted negatively and plotted to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see FOUR things in this passage:

1. They heard Him: They had correct information and that information required a choice to be made. They now knew, from the Scriptures, they were wrong. They could have confessed their sins and moved on. But they did not. Instead they became more callous.

Principle: The more you reject doctrine the more callous you will become.

2. They began to plot how they might destroy Him: They wanted him dead. He had disrupted their little profit making scheme and they concluded their way to deal with this was to kill him.

Principle: He gave them the message of God, quoting chapter and verse. But they rejected the message and wanted to kill the messenger.

3. They were afraid of Him: The truth of God will either bring comfort or fear depending upon which side of the truth you are on. They were on the wrong side and they were afraid.

And we see that they were also afraid of the people. Remember, these men were political and so the popular opinion of the masses effected them but only to the point of changing their tactics.

4. But the people (the crowd) were astonished at his doctrine:

The word used is EK-PLES-SW and means to be struck with amazement but it does not indicate any change of mind or heart. Only to be amazed. The people listened, were amazed, but did not learn the truth that was taught.

So even the people were merely reacting to doctrine taught and soon would move on to some other form or amazement with no change or challenge.

Conclusion:

So whether the scribes or the priests or the people, the message of truth did not get through. The people present that day walked away amazed but that is not the purpose of the Word.

The Word of God is given to set you free, to change you life, to bring abundance and purpose.

And yet today as then, even Christians are amazed, astonished, but it means nothing

Vance Havner has said: We carry check on the bank of heaven and never cash them at the window of prayer - we lie to God when we pray rather than rely upon him after we pray.

We are going to see the Lord Jesus Christ instruct his disciples regarding prayer. We are going to see the challenge of relying upon God, by faith, in prayer.

We now come to the third day of the final week of Jesus' ministry that precedes His sacrifice on the Cross.

We have studied the Triumphal Entry and the Cleansing of the Temple. And we have also examined the cursing of the fig tree.

The opening verses of this paragraph beginning at verse 20 have already been studied and we noted:

1. The fig tree represented unproductive and unfaithful Israel
2. The fig tree will wither and be set aside in the CHURCH AGE and the Church will serve Christ
3. The Lord cursed the tree and the next day, our passage, the disciples see that it has withered.

Now when asked about this, Jesus explained what happened but not why it happened.

The disciples barely understood that Jesus was going to have to suffer and die. They had no concept of the coming CHURCH AGE Jesus would before his death teach them of this age but not until the night of the Lord's Supper (John 13-16).

So for now, as Jesus and His disciples are walking to Jerusalem, He tells them what happened when he cursed the fig tree on the previous morning.

What happened was a miracle: An answer to prayer.

Mark 11:20,21

And as they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. And being reminded, Peter said to Him, Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.

Jesus knows that very soon he will teach the disciples about the withering of Israel and the beginning of the Church. So he sets aside what the fig tree means in prophetic light and uses the surprise of Peter to teach about faith and prayer.

And there is a PRINCIPLE in this: Even the truth, a part from its proper foundation, can be a distraction.

1. If Jesus had launched into a lesson on prophecy, the formation of the church and the discipline that is to come upon Israel, the disciples would have been distracted from the more important events of the Cross.

2. Proverbs 29:11 refers to the fact that only a fool, or one under pressure, lets his whole mind be known.

3. Jesus was not about to try to explain prophecy while walking to Jerusalem, but he would begin to lay a foundation.

4. The foundation for understanding the things of God will always include faith.

5. So he will explain the basics of faith and prayer and later that week talk about prophecy.

6. In application we must recognize that we are to at all times give truth to others, but first we must lay a foundation of faith and trust in God and His Word.

Mark 11:22

And Jesus answered saying to them, Have faith in God.

And here we very clearly see the transitive nature of faith. The Lord does not just say have faith, but have your faith in the one who counts: God, the one who can do everything and anything, God, the one who is all powerful, God.

Faith is the foundation of prayer and is essential to prayer preparation:

Principles:

1. Prayer is not a formula or technique by which we get God to do what we want.
2. The Name it and Claim it Crowd looks at prayer as a technique that puts God into a box, controlled by the believer following some set procedure.
3. This is not prayer based on faith in God. Faith in God presumes that God is in control, His plan is perfect, and His timing is perfect.
4. Faith is preceded by an understanding of the Word of God:

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

5. Faith in God relies upon His will as being more important than our will.
6. Therefore: Any prayer of faith will be based upon knowing the Word and the Will of God.
7. Any prayer based upon the Word and the Will of God, mixed with our faith in Him and His Word will be answered.

John 15:7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.

Whatever is asked is asked according to the principle of Faith in God, His Word and His Will.

Mark 11:23

Now faith forms the foundation in prayer preparation and now that the principle of faith in God is stated, we move to the second phase of prayer: The prayer itself:

Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, Be taken up and cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him.

Now when Jesus said this he was in the northern saddle of the Mt. of Olives.

And there will be a time, in God's perfect timing when that mountain will split and be moved and Jerusalem will become a sea port.

Zechariah 14:4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Now what about other mountain?

Isaiah 42:15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills, And wither all their vegetation; I will make the rivers into coastlands, And dry up the ponds.

So there is coming a time when God will move the mountains of earth. Do you believe it? Do you have faith in God and His plan and His perfect timing.

These verses all look to the second Advent when Jesus will return to judge the earth, move mountains, and establish His millennial reign for 1000 years.

Principles:

1. Prayer must be preceded by faith in the one you are praying to, God.
2. In prayer you request that God does something according to His will and His word.

3. The content of prayer must be the content of the Word of God.

I John 5:14-15 And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

4. When we pray a prayer by means of faith in God, according to His Word and Will, he says YES. And then by faith we wait upon Him and His perfect timing.

The latter part of verse 23 picks up prayer pursuit. To pray without doubt and with belief and retain these even after the prayer is prayed:

- and does not doubt in his heart -

The warning in verse 23 is that there be no doubt. To doubt that God will do what he has promised to do is to fail back at stage one, no faith in God.

- but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him.

NOTICE: Believes it is going to happen.

Happens: A futuristic pres, middle voice, ind. mood

Shall be: A future, mid, indicative.

Both middle voices look at benefit in the plan of God and His perfect timing

The present tense of happens looks at the attitude of faith for the believer and that faith is in the perfect timing of God.

The future looks at the assured reality of the outcome of the prayer that is by faith in God and according to His Word

Principle: The Word and Will of God are more real than the immediate situation of that mountain not moving an inch.

Whereas FAITH prior to the prayer is a noun, an attitude that comes from knowing God's Word

BELIEVE is a verb, a mental action that continues after the prayer is prayed. Believing the greater reality of the plan of God.

Example: You are single, for the first time or single again. You pray that God brings you to your right man or right woman. Praying in faith in God that His plan is not just anyone but a spiritual help mate or soul mate. You pray the

prayer without doubt that this is God's plan and then you move on believing in His perfect timing.

Example: You pray with faith in God that you will have his highest and best, his happiness, his abundant abounding life, and then you believe and move on in the routine of the Christ Centered Life and when the timing is just right, the reality is yours.

Mark 11:24

Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you.

1. Prayer is the process: By faith in God, praying to God, in the name of the Son, in the power of the Spirit
2. Ask is the Attitude: Making a request of someone in a superior position. Knowing the superiority of God and the inability of man. This looks at the attitude of humility.
3. Believe looks beyond the prayer to the mental action that initiates the routine function of the Christian life.
4. Receive looks at the reality: A greater reality of things even not seen yet part of God's plan.
5. Granted looks at God's perfect timing: A future tense with the pronoun you in the dative of advantage. The advantage is having God grant to you what he wants you to have and what you have prayed for according to his perfect timing. His timing brings the perfect advantage.

Mark 11:25

The Lord deals with one thing we might call a prayer blocker or even a doctrine blocker. Something that will inhibit the routine function of the Christ Centered Life.

And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions.

If we will remember the context we will see why the Lord chose to deal with this one doctrine blocker.

He cursed the fig tree, that represented unfaithful Israel, they were to be disciplined and wither in the church age. They had rejected Christ, they

would arrest Christ, they would manipulate the Romans to put Christ to death.

But he forgave them. As he stood there on the side of the Mt. of Olives, looking over Jerusalem, knowing he was to die, he forgave them of their sin.

Principles:

1. Forgiveness of others is part of unconditional love.
 2. Forgiving others arrests you M.A. of vindictiveness, bitterness, and revenge.
 3. Forgiveness and unconditional love is the position of strength that you maintain as a believer.
 4. Forgiveness and unconditional love does not interrupt the outcome of the volitional decisions of others you forgive and love.
- REMEMBER: You cannot change anyone except yourself
5. Your position of strength, from forgiveness and unconditional love, allows you to continue in the plan of God doing what is the very best you can do for others.
 6. Jesus cursed the fig tree, it withered as would Israel, but he went to the Cross and died for their sins. And even while undergoing the pain of the Cross:

Luke 23:34 But Jesus was saying, Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

7. When you are rejected, wronged, hurt, you must maintain a position of strength that comes from forgiveness and unconditional love. And that is the best thing you can do for someone else.

This is judicial forgiveness based upon the work of the Cross. We are forgiven and we are to forgive others.

When we do not we harbor an attitude of arrogance towards others and we are out of fellowship through the sin of not forgiving.

And we are out of fellowship we are in a position of weakness, and lack the spiritual strength to confess or receive forgiveness from God.

This must not be - Reason: In order that God may forgive you. As you confess your sins and regain the position of strength.

Principle: Don't let the doctrine blocker of an unforgiving attitude rob you from the reality of the Christ Centered Life.

Dwight Eisenhower said: The older I get the more wisdom I find in the ancient rule of taking first things first--a process which often reduces the most complex human problem to a manageable proportion.

Speaking of priorities, Pascal said: The last thing one knows is what to put first.

In this portion of our study of the life of Christ we are going to see the Lord refuse to change his priorities under the pressure of attack by the Jewish council.

Mark 11:27

And they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, and scribes, and elders came to Him.

Jesus and his disciples had spent the night in Bethany and now, on the third day following the Triumphal Entry, they return to the Temple that he had cleansed the day before.

That night, while Jesus was out of the city the religious leaders met to conspire as to how they could get rid of Jesus.

Their first plan of attack was to trap Him in a heretical statement.

From Mark 11:27 to Mark 12:34 we have a record of the inquisition of Jesus Christ. We have three waves of attack on Christ and one Question in this section

This morning we are going to examine the first attack:

Three key words:

CAME is a verb in the Middle voice, He came to this inquisition to his own benefit, even when it would lead to the Cross, it was beneficial for Him for through this He would provide salvation to mankind.

AGAIN, is the word PALIN , which refers to a repetition of an act that was designed to lead to a predesigned conclusion. Like hammering a nail. Here the conclusion was the Cross.

COME, as with the council coming to Christ, is also a middle voice. They came expecting to be benefited from their attacks upon Christ.

So we have a conflict expressed even by the Greek grammar. Christ came to the Temple as a benefit in God's plan. The council came expecting to be benefited by their attacks - who would win? Of course the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders - Represents the council of the Sanhedrin that sat in authority over Israel in religious matters.

Mark 11:28

In their simple thinking they thought they could catch Jesus in some error that could be interpreted as heresy and thus put him to death.

This is so typical of the simplistic thinking of natural man. What they perceived as a profound question can be answered by most children in prep school.

Like the profound question: Where did Cain get his wife? Some of the most intelligent people I know ask that question which has a very simple answer. His niece or even grand niece -

So their question, and remember this was like the Jewish Supreme Court, was very blunt:

By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do these things?

The THESE THINGS looks back to the previous day and the cleansing of the Temple.

Jesus is asked about his authority.

AT ISSUE IS AUTHORITY:

When we deal with any question of authority we are really dealing with that which is most basic and fundamental to all human behavior. Refine any issue down to its essentials and what is left is the question of authority.

Authority can either be:

YOURSELF - the principle of anarchy as you are a law unto yourself.

MAN - the principle of humanism with all its weaknesses

GOD - the absolute principle of the Creator God who is sovereign over all

In cleansing the Temple, Jesus did not even act out of his own authority although as God he certainly could have, but he acted out of the authority of God as recorded in the Old Testament

He even quoted the text of Isaiah 56:7 to them reminding them that the Temple was to be a house of prayer for all nations.

His authority had been stated the previous day. The Scriptures - over which the Sanhedrin were pledged to be the custodians, and yet they had rejected the Word of God.

Principle: They were not willing to accept the divine authority of the Word on the day before, and they were not about to accept any explanation of authority on this, the day after.

As men in authority they were not oriented to authority

Even presidents and kings, despots and dictators are under the authority of God.

Romans 13:1-7 tells us that even the rulers who do not believe they are under divine authority are under the strong hand of God.

For an authority to reject authority puts him in a position of weakness rather than strength.

Good authority will always be humble, submissive, and obedient to the authority over them.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, the God-man, was at all times under the authority of the Father.

The Sanhedrin saw themselves as the ultimate authority even rejecting the authority of the Word of God.

Thus, their question on authority is absurd at the least and borders of heresy.

Mark 11:29

We see the way Jesus replies, calm and in control. He asks them a question:

And Jesus said to them, I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

ANSWER is imperative mood, he commands them to answer

Mark 11:30

Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me.

NOTICE: Jesus asks about the baptism, not the man nor the ministry, but the baptism.

John's baptism had been a new thing in Israel with no precedent in the Old Testament. The Jews had Temple washings but not baptism like John's.

Jesus cleared away the non-essentials. They could not back track on this or play any opinion games. He put them in a dilemma - in chess this is called a fork, its like heads I win, tails you lose.

He asks them by what authority did this new thing occur?

Man's authority or God's? All authority resides in either man or God - under whose authority are we?

Principle: In any given instance in life we are either trying to please men or please God. When we try to please men we are placing ourselves under their authority. When we please God we are placing ourselves under a higher authority.

Mark 11:31,32

John's martyrdom had made him a hero of the people. Thus these religious types were in a bind.

And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, If we say, From heaven, He will say, Then why did you not believe him? But shall we say, From men?-- they were afraid of the multitude, for all considered John to have been a prophet indeed.

Their fear of the people prevented them from giving their opinion regarding John. They did not like John because he refused to be under their pseudo-authority. John was under the authority of the State and under the authority of God. But rejected this little band of little people who tried to set themselves up as an authority.

But the people respected John and the council feared the people.

And that is interesting. The Sanhedrin who saw themselves as the ultimate authority were really a bunch of cowards fearing the ones over whom they attempted to rule.

They were more concerned with Public Relations than Truth. They wanted to cover their assets rather than raise the ire of public opinion.

If they had given an answer, even the wrong answer, the correction would have been given by the Lord. The people would have been upset, even angry at them. They would have been

soundly criticized and in that criticism they may - may have been forced to re-evaluate their erroneous position.

Mark 11:33

But instead the wisest men in all Israel conferred and came up with no answer.

And answering Jesus, they said, We do not know.

They professed ignorance like a child caught in the act.

Who did this ? - I don't know, not me!

Jesus said their ignorance then required him to give them no answer.

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

Principle: God never has to prove that he is God, and the Lord never gave His energy to proving he was the Son of God.

His priority was service, completing the task for which he had been sent by the Father to earth.

His mission was not to prove his mission, but to complete it.

PRINCIPLE FOR US: You do not cast the pearls of truth before swine of unbelief.

Matthew 7:6 Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

In the context of Matthew 7 the Lord was speaking to the religious hypocrites who denied his ministry and mission.

Their denial did nothing to prevent Him from completing his ministry and His mission.

When He went to the Cross he died for their sins, their sin of denial of Him.

The best thing he could do for them was not prove to them who he was or by what authority he did what he did but to - just do it.

In the same way, we who are called by His name, too often think we have to prove or vindicate ourselves. We do not, that is not what we are called to do.

The greatest thing you can do for others, even for those who reject you and hate you is to complete your mission, your destiny in the plan of God.

If we are to be conformed to the image of Christ our Savior we will not waste time in proving ourselves, we will do as did the Lord. Complete the mission -

Chapter 12

Harry Ironsides had some great advice regarding criticism: He said to listen to it. If it is true, then mend your ways. If it is not true, forget it, and go right on serving the Lord.

In our passage the religious leaders are present to criticize the Lord who will go right on serving God, fulfilling His mission. And now the Lord is going to criticize them, and they are going to react in the negative and build even more sin.

We find ourselves a mere few days prior to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. He has chosen to return to the Temple mount and enter the arena of argumentation. A time of intense conflict with the religious leaders of the day who were already angry with Him because of His cleansing of the Temple the previous day.

There are some tremendous apologetical principles in this encounter:

Jesus, alone and with no defense except the truth, went head to head with the greatest religious minds of His day. These Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes were the foremost thinkers of there day - but for the most part they had rejected faith and the Father and embraced legalism and their interpretation of the Law as their standard of life.

So when Jesus, with his message of truth, grace, love, and sacrifice came to Jerusalem, the antagonism would reach a new level that would lead to the Cross.

But have things really changed? If Jesus were here today with his message of truth would the great human thinkers embrace him or attack him.

We know the answer to that because they do attack Him. They attack you whenever you speak his words. You are his representatives, his ambassadors, and just as he was under attack, you are under attack.

But He withstood them by the same means you can withstand the critics today - with truth from God's Word.

And Jesus never expects us to go where he has not gone. He chose to go to the Temple and be verbally attacked by the most learned men of His time - and He won. For US.

Mark 12:1

We are told that he gave them a number of parables, plural, and two are included in this section.

The first uses a figure of a vineyard, a landowner, and tenants. The second uses a figure of a building stone and quotes from Psalm 118.

BOTH are very specific indictments of the antagonism of the religious leaders towards God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

A man planted a vineyard, and put a wall around it, and dug a vat under the wine press, and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey.

This was a common occurrence in Israel. Wealthy landowners would buy a tract of land, invest in improving it and then rent it out to tenant farmers who would share in the harvest with the owner.

In addition, the Old Testament referred to Israel as the vineyard of God:

Isaiah 5:1-2 Let me sing now for my well-beloved A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. And He dug it all around, removed its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it, And hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected it to produce good grapes, But it produced only worthless ones.

So there should be no question in the minds of these religious leaders that Jesus is talking about them and the nation Israel.

Now normally a parable was given to instruct the positive ones while not giving the negative one more to reject.

But this is different: This parable is for the rejecters of truth and we be understood by those who are the antagonist.

Hence, this is a warning parable.

Mark 12:2-5

Tells us what happened at the time of the harvest:

And at the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive some of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers. And they took him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and that one they killed; and so with many others, beating some, and killing others.

The ones who are sent are called SALVE: DOULOS rather than SERVANTS which would be DIAKONOS.

The slave is viewed as one who is obedient to his master while the servant is one who serves his master by serving others.

Here the SLAVE refers to the Old Testament prophets who had as a primary and at times only responsibility of being obedient to God, the owner of the vineyard.

And we see what happened to those slaves of God, they were beaten, ill-treated, wounded in the head (death blow), even killed.

Later on the writer of Hebrews summarizes what Israel did to these true heroes of the faith in the Old Testament economy:

Hebrews 11:36-38 And others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated, men of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

And who did these things to these Old Testament men of God? Not the unbelievers, not the Gentiles, but Israel. And the worse was yet to come -

Mark 12:6

He had one more to send, a beloved son; he sent him last of all to them, saying, They will respect my son.

I want you to see two things with this verse:

1. There was a legitimate expectation that the tenants would respect the son of the owner. In application, God has a legitimate expectation of

his creation, mankind, that man will respect and believe in Christ.

The expectation is based upon the principle of grace. Man did nothing to be created, nothing to obtain life, nothing to obtain eternal life.

A gift is given as it was with these tenant farmers and an expectation of acceptance is made.

This is a legitimate, realistic expectation.

2. Secondly, there is no price too high, no cost too dear in God's love towards us and our need for a Savior. He was willing to send His only Son -

Romans 8:31-32 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Mark 12:7

But those vine-growers said to one another, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!

According to our system of law this is absurd, but the Jewish legal code indicated that if property worked by a tenant farmer was found without owner and heirs, it would be given to the tenants.

The presence of the son could be assumed to mean the owner was dead and the son was coming to claim the vineyard.

Wrong assumption resulting in wrong application, and sin on the part of the tenants.

Mark 12:8

And they took him, and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

And in very few days this is exactly what the religious hierarchy of Israel is going to do to Jesus Christ.

Mark 12:9

Now that is what they are going to do, and now at verse 9 we see what God, the owner of the vineyard, is going to do.

What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others.

This previews the same condemnation upon Israel that Jesus referred to with the cursing and withering of the fig tree.

The privilege position Israel had will be lost, the stewardship over God's creation will be taken from them and given to others - the church in the CHURCH AGE

The OTHERS are you and me: We could put our names in that blank. Christians who are now the stewards over the household of God in this age.

Mark 12:10,11

Again, as with the cleansing of the Temple, we see Jesus giving Scripture as a defense of his actions and his words:

Quoting Psalm 118:22-23 He says,

Have you not even read this Scripture: The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone; This came about from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes?

This Psalm, written 1000 years before the time of Christ took on new meaning as Jesus quoted it to the religious leaders.

Roman architecture was very uniform, and only the rectangular stones would be used until they needed an arch. Then a keystone was required -

Picture the builders setting aside the stone that were not on uniform size, then needing one special stone to serve as a keystone in an arch. And finding again the one that was rejected and now it become the most important stone in the structure.

These verse are actually a promise, some may reject the Lord but others, by faith, will see him as most important.

The rejected stone is Jesus Christ:

1. The Lord was originally referred to as the Rock by Moses in Deuteronomy 32:30-31

Deuteronomy 32:31 Indeed their rock is not like our Rock, Even our enemies themselves judge this.

2. In David's final Psalm he refers to the Lord as the Rock of all Israel:

2 Samuel 23:3 The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me, 'He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God.

3. In the Psalms the analogy of the Lord as the Rock takes on very specific meaning:

Psalm 18:2 The Rock is my fortress and my deliverer

Psalm 28:1 The Rock is the Lord who hears prayer

Psalm 31:2 The Rock is the rock of my strength

Psalm 62:2 He is the Rock of my salvation

Psalm 78:35 The Rock is our redeemer

Psalm 92:15 The Rock is righteous in every way

4. The analogy of the Lord as the Rock looks at the fact that rocks don't change. The Rock is our savior, our deliverer, our redeemer, our strength now and forever.

Mark 12:12

These two parables now put the religious leaders in the position of either responding positively or reacting negatively:

And they were seeking to seize Him; and yet they feared the multitude; for they understood that He spoke the parable against them. And so they left Him, and went away.

Here is something else that hasn't changed. The antagonism, the anger, the hatred of the truth.

They had killed the slaves who came to the vineyard and now they will kill the Son. They rejected the stones and now they reject and desire to destroy the Rock.

And again, as last week, we see these very powerful men cower before the people. They knew the parable was spoken against them, they wanted to kill the Lord rather than confess their sin and correct their error. But they feared the people.

Principles:

1. The parables were the adversity of warning discipline to the religious leaders.
2. Upon hearing the parables they could have repented, but instead they rejected.
3. They converted the adversity of discipline to stress which then drove them to the sin of murder.
4. They had a choice, they had a chance, they did exactly what the Lord said they would do - they killed the son, the dearly beloved son.

When the discipline of God is rejected the heart become harder, more scar tissue in built and sin compounds - listen to the warnings.

Under the principle of separation of Church and State we have to ask ourselves who benefits the most? Does the church retain its autonomy and purity as a result of the lack of infringement upon it by the state? Or does the state more so retain its objectivity by being separated from religion, all religions including those which would remove freewill and choice from mankind?

In the following verses we are going to see the Lord Jesus talk about balance, a perfect, ideal, divine, balance between our faith and our politics.

Mark 12:13

And they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him, in order to trap Him in a statement.

The THEY, which is part of the verb APOSTELLW refers to the Chief priest who were part of the Sanhedrin and in control of all the activities in the Temple area.

The Priests sent some Pharisees and Herodians to confront Jesus Christ:

Here we have two groups that normally were totally opposed to each other.

1. The Pharisees: Supposed loyalty to the Law of God and opposed the Roman occupation of Israel.
2. The Herodians supported Herod and the Roman occupation and often took a stand against the Pharisees.

But these two opposing groups now come together to oppose one whom they perceived as a greater enemy, Jesus Christ.

They were going to try to TRAP Him. AGREUW an aorist, active, subjunctive used only here in the NEW TESTAMENT.

The word meant to trap a wild animal for the purpose of putting that animal to death. And that was their plan for Jesus Christ.

So we have the Priests and the Conspirators, the Pharisees and Herodians as the dupes, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the intended victim.

Principles:

1. Despite the clear warning given by Christ in the preceding parables, the Priests along with the Sanhedrin continued their attacks.
2. Their common enemy, Jesus Christ, would bring together two groups who normally hated each other.
3. Their pseudo-unity was solely built upon their common hatred of Jesus Christ. This is a weak union yet this type of union is common even today.
4. In families, schools, businesses, and churches relationship are often built upon a common dislike of another rather than that which we have in common.
5. That type of weak unity does not build or edify but only tears down and destroys. Once the common enemy is eliminated or defeated, the previous antagonism will still be there.
6. Conspiracies are weak and only effective to bring about evil. This type of unity is completely outside the plan of God.
7. **Application:** Evaluate your relationship on the job, in the school, and in church.

Mark 12:14

And they came and said to Him, Teacher, we know that You are truthful, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?

These guys are smart, real smart. They come to Jesus with all the right words, the smooth flattery, and then slip in a loaded question.

1. First they say that they have known all along, perfect tense of OIDA, that Jesus is a teacher.
2. They add that they think he is truthful, a lie of flattery.
3. Then they continue by saying he deferred to no one. This point of flattering is like saying they know He is His own man and not influenced by any of the religious sects of political groups.
4. You are not partial to any: His teaching does not line up with the heretical sects and parties.
5. But teach the way of God in truth: More flattery. If they believed that they would not be trying to trap him.

Now the interesting thing is that all these statements would be great if they really believed that. But they do not.

Flattery can take on two forms:

1. Flattery can use the truth and speak the truth but do so not believing the truth. The objective here is to convince you that the one flattering you is really your friend and ally. Here you are deceived about others.
2. Flattery can also use that which is not true. It can build you up with false confidence which is arrogance. In this type of flattery you end up deceived about self.
3. In both cases the objective is deception -

The Pharisees and Herodians were trying to make Jesus believe that they were really nice guys in search of an answer to their question.

Mark 12:15

Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not? Shall we pay, or shall we not pay? But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius to look at.

When Judah became a Roman province in A.D. 6, the Emperor established an annual head tax or poll tax on every Jew. The money went directly to the Emperor's treasury and of all the taxes imposed by Rome was the most despised.

Both the Pharisees and the Herodians opposed the tax but for different reasons:

1. The Pharisees opposed it on religious grounds saying the Old Testament forbade the payment of such tax to a foreign power - their interpretation of the Law.
2. The Herodians opposed it because of it was impractical, costing time and money to collect and did not benefit the citizens in any way.

On the surface the question is rather remarkable. It would appear that no matter what Jesus answered, he would raise the ire of one of the two groups or Rome itself.

His Apparent Options:

1. Do not pay the tax: But that would be seen as civil disobedience and while it would conform to the two groups asking the question, it would put him in jeopardy with the Roman officials.

2. Pay the tax under protest: But what would the protest be. Religious or political. A religious protest would be inconsistent with the Herodians and a practical protest would be inconsistent with the Pharisees.

3. Pay the tax with no explanation: But that would give both groups a point of argument and further confrontation and debate.

4. Practically, he would be better off to insult the Herodians because the Pharisees were far more powerful especially in Jerusalem.

5. What these antagonists did not know but we do know is that Jesus had paid the poll-tax while in Capernaum. Matthew 17:24-27.

So this appears to be a heads I win, tails you lose situation. But God never loses -

Mark 12:16,17

And they brought one. And He said to them, Whose likeness and inscription is this? And they said to Him, Caesar's. And Jesus said to them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

I really think that Jesus shrugged his shoulders when he said this. A simple answer, a common sense answer. But it baffled the Pharisees and Herodians:

We read that he knew of their hypocrisy:

The Greek word is HUPOKRISIS

1. A Greek drama term for being a bad actor. One person presented to the audience and another behind the mask. Sad on the outside, happy of the inside or vice versa.

If the chant, HUPOKRIT, was given by the crowd the Greek actor would go off the stage and kill himself. They took their drama very seriously.

2. In the Gospels the word is used for the religious crowd that opposed Jesus. But in the epistles it is applied to believers.

3. Peter was caught up with the Judaizers in Antioch and was called a hypocrite by Paul. Galatians 2:11-14

4. Hypocrisy is a result of scar tissue on the soul and leads to enforced legalism and empty ritual among believers:

I Timothy 4:1-3 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

5. The solution to hypocrisy is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ and have this be the real you and the you that you present to others. The means is learning, thinking, and applying the Word of God:

1 Peter 1:25-2:2 But the word of the Lord abides forever. And this is the word which was preached to you. Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.

6. **Principle:** Apart from learning, thinking, and applying the Word of God, hypocrisy will be the function of the pseudo Christian life.

And they were amazed at Him.

The word AMAZED is imperfect tense, meaning that they were surprised for a period of time. But it did not last.

EKQAUAMAZW only here with the prefix EK. Means to be surprised, to hear or see something unexpected. With the prefix it is intensified. These religious leaders had no expectation that Jesus would be able to answer their conspiratorial question, but He did.

One application we gain from their reaction is that we might be amazed, surprised, even marvel at Christ and His Word. But that amazement will not automatically carry a person to faith in Christ nor lead the believer to faith in His Word.

Far more important is what is there after the amazement ends? For the Pharisees and the Herodians their amazement ended and anger continued its course.

For many today, the momentary amazement we might have at amazing grace and love from God ends and it is back to apathy, the lack of faith.

Their amazement came because Christ so skillfully answered their question. And in his answer we see some principles regarding the believers relationship to the State:

Church and state: the believer's responsibilities and priorities:

1. While Jesus answered and shut down the conspiratorial question of the religious leaders, he also established a principle of balance and priorities.
2. The coin bore the image of Caesar and belonged to Caesar.
3. Money is a detail of life and what money does is a detail of life including paying taxes.
4. Believers are never to be distracted by the details of life. We pay taxes, we may involve ourselves in the legitimate activities of politics, but never to the point of distraction.

Romans 13:6, For because of this (orientation to civil authority) you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

The word PAY is the same word as RENDER used in Mark 12:17, an aorist, active, imperative.

5. The solution to man's problems is not political, nor is it in more taxes or less taxes or a more sound economy or stronger international posture - the solution to man's problems is biblical and founding in learning, thinking, and applying doctrine.
6. Israel, at the time of Christ, was not a free sovereign nation. They were under the despotic control of Rome. Yet believers were not distracted by this. Many grew to maturity in Christ and had fantastic ministries.
7. That which bears the image of the political belongs to the state but in the same manner that which bears the image of God belongs to God.
8. The word RENDER is an aorist, active, imperative (command) that looks at volitional attitude and action in a point of time.

RENDER is APODIDWMI

And here we are to render to God that which bears His image. We are to do this in time, points of time right now as we set priorities.

In the future, God will render reward to us:

2 Timothy 4:8 In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Revelation 22:12 Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

The word itself means to give, give up, or give back what is due. When used of the believer and God it views the believer as being under obligation to give to God what rightfully belongs to Him.

The life he has given us is His life and we give that life to Him.

9. Just as the coin bore the image of Caesar, we bear the image of Christ. All the advantages of our position in Christ total the image of Christ on us.

Furthermore we are predestine with equal privilege and equal opportunity to be conformed to the image of Christ in practice and in application.

Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.

10. So the answer for the religious crowd shut them down. For us it is a challenge, whose image is on you - who do you belong to.

It has been said that the only way to settle an argument is on the basis of what is right, not who is right.

In the following verses we are going to see those who argue with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are also going to see the Lord settle the argument based upon what is right, the Word of God.

We now turn to the fourth wave of attack against Jesus Christ during the confrontation at the Temple. Jesus is in the arena of argumentation and is standing against these religious leaders,

refuting their arguments with the truth of the Word of God.

Principle: Any defense we may apply, against the problems of people or circumstances, must be founded upon the doctrine that we have in our souls. Anything short of that or beyond that is a meager attempt to solve our problems with Human viewpoint.

Jesus Christ is demonstrating the greatness of the Word of God as he endures attack after attack.

At verse 18 we see the Sadducees get into the argument:

Mark 12:18

And some Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection came to Him, and began questioning Him, saying:

The Sadducees were are wealthy aristocratic of Israel. This exclusive religious party developed during the intertestamental period. We are clearly told that they were out of step with biblical and traditional teaching regarding the resurrection of the dead. And yet this is the very point they will use to attempt to trap the Lord Jesus Christ.

Where we see the Pharisees as the religious legalists of their day, adding their pet requirements to the Law, and we see the Herodians as the secular politicians of Israel with loyalty to Rome, the Sadducees are somewhere in between.

Sadducees:

1. The name itself comes from two sources, an aristocratic priest named Zadok (inter-testament) and the Hebrew word for righteous.
2. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament as being inspired. They flatly rejected the Talmud and the Mishnah and any oral tradition.
3. Since the doctrine of the Resurrection is developed in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, they rejected the idea of the resurrection. They believed death to be total extinction, no heaven or hell. Only what you had on earth in time.
4. The Old Testament Law to them required no interpretation. They were very ridged, seeing

things in terms of black and white, even when the Scriptures gave some latitude or flexibility.

5. Since they were the wealthy and the powerful, their focus was on secular matters of politics and society rather than on spiritual things.

I see the parallel today to these religious groups in the following way:

Pharisees: The legalist, ready to add to the Word their own law and enforce this upon others.

Washing dishes a certain way, praying a certain way, the do's and the don'ts. Just like the legalist today.

The Herodians: The believer who is completely distracted by politics and involvement in social causes. The marchers and the protesters.

The Sadducees: The more conventional Christian who has been successful, is perhaps prosperous, and is very involved in society. The service clubs, the political parties, the right group here and the right group there and - even the right and socially acceptable church.

They view their faith as part, a compartment, of their life but not their life itself. They accept from the Word what they want or what is agreeable to them and ignore or reject the rest.

These would not be limited to just the liberals today. Their are some believers in conservative churches who are playing Christianity as it suits them and their life-style.

Mark 12:19

When believers take a low view of the Word, as did the Sadducees, they will not hesitate to only use Scripture or doctrine they do not even believe to gain their purpose:

Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves behind a wife, and leaves no child, his brother should take the wife, and raise up offspring to his brother.

The principle they state as the basis for their question is found in Deuteronomy 25:5

When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

This called the law of the Levirate Marriage. The word Levirate comes from the Latin LEVIR which means a husband's brother or brother-in-law.

Also we can note that they are referring to the non-canonical book TOBIT where a story is told about a woman married to seven husbands all who died without children.

But since the Sadducees did not even accept the prophets as inspired it is absurd for them to refer to a story in a book most people of their day did not even consider inspired.

But in their evil attempt to trap the Lord Jesus Christ they will try anything and use any source.

Mark 12:20-23

From the Law of Moses they now propose an application. This case is hypothetical and it is also hyperbole, very extreme:

There were seven brothers; and the first took a wife, and died, leaving no offspring. And the second one took her, and died, leaving behind no offspring; and the third likewise; and so all seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection, when they rise again, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife.

What we read next is very interesting. The Lord could have shut them down very quickly by telling them they did not even believe in the resurrection so why bother with this hypothetical situation.

But instead He is going to use their question to teach doctrine regarding the resurrection as well as doctrine regarding the power of God.

Mark 12:24

Jesus said to them, Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures, or the power of God?

Jesus' response begins by stating very clearly that they are wrong.

MISTAKEN is the pres, pass, ind of PLANAW which is also translated to be deceived and to go astray.

The present tense rather than an aorist indicates they are continually mistaken. Not only in this but in all spiritual matters.

They keep on being mistaken in all things and there are two reason for this:

1. You do not understand the Scriptures:
2. You do not understand the power of God:

The verb OIDA is used with the negative MJ as a perfect tense. We might say they had a perfect lack of correct understanding.

A FEW Principles:

1. Only by understanding the Scriptures can you understand life.
2. Without the Scriptures you will go through life in a state of confusion and error.
3. Specific Scriptures hold the answers for specific questions.
4. However, problems may fall in an area in which we do not have specific Scripture or the Scripture is vague.
5. That is when we have to understand the POWER of God. In His omnipotent power he is going to work it out perfectly and there are perfect answers from a perfect God.

Illustration: Whenever we come up with an I don't know situation, perhaps regarding a tragedy or death, or losing a job, and we have no answers - We rely upon the power of God. He is in control.

Jesus both answers the question and then teaches regarding the resurrection using Scripture accepted by the Sadducees.

Mark 12:25

For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Jesus begins with an explanatory conjunction: For you see -

When they rise out of the dead: The verb is aorist, active, subjunctive which view a future event as a reality.

Then two statements introduced by the negative OUTE

They, the one rising from the dead, are neither married nor given in marriage:

1. The first negative tells us that earthly marriages are not carried into heaven

2. The second negative indicates that we will not be getting married in heaven

The further information given regarding the church age in the epistles allows us to more fully understand this:

1. The church, of which we are a part, is the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7-9).
2. Israel is referred to as the wife of God (Hosea 2:2-7).
3. In eternity our attention, our delight, our love will be set towards the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Since marriage and the physical union of husband and wife is the greatest grace gift God has given to man to experience and is even greater under the F/HS for the believer and yet this does not exist in heaven:

We are forced to one conclusion -

5. Heaven, and our eternal fellowship with the Lord, will be far greater than anything we can ever experience on earth. That is why Paul so boldly said about death:

Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

6. That is reasoning from the understanding of the power of God. God cannot explain to us that which is better than the best we have. To do so would make the best we have now not the best.

So we look at the best we have and conclude, and stand amazed, and even get a little excited thinking about the fact that heaven is going to be better - It does get better than this.

Then he draws a comparison: But are like angels in heaven.

The word LIKE is the comparative adverb WS which draws a similar but not exact comparison. In this matter, of marriage, we are like angels who also do not marry. But we are not angels, we are higher than the angels in position now and in experience in heaven.

Mark 12:26,27

Now Jesus address the question that was not asked:

But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, I am

the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken.

Jesus refers to the story of Moses and the burning bush which is found in Exodus, chapter three (Exodus 3:6) which is a portion of Scripture accepted by the Sadducees. Hence, they cannot argue the source.

This event in the life of Moses occurred about 1440 BC. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived from 2000 BC to 1870 BC.

They were a long time dead even when God said this to Moses. The Sadducees would have believed them to be extinct, no longer existing. But God said I am, right now, still, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Furthermore, by citing Exodus 3:6 he also reminded the Sadducees of something very current:

The official Jewish prayers of this time include seventeen benedictions. In these the prayers ask for blessing, protection, love and mercy on the one praying but also upon Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Now how could God bless, protect, love, and favor someone who no longer exists?

So with that Jesus states the principle:

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living;

Followed by the application: You are greatly mistaken.

And MISTAKEN is the same word we saw in verse 24 and is used again as a present tense, they continue in error, keep on being mistaken in much more than just the doctrine of the resurrection.

Jesus' response shows us five things:

1. He did not sink to their level and counter-attack
2. He was gracious, gave them an answer even when they denied their own premise
3. He answered with doctrine
4. He answered their question and then went on to address their problem.
5. He was aggressively in applying doctrine to every situation and question
6. And He used what they believed, He quoted from the Law of Moses. He met them where they

were and gave them an opportunity to get with truth.

But with all this grace and truth, they rejected.

And in rejecting the truth of God's word they rejected the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us who have received the Son of God also receive the truth and the power of God -

Love, it has been said, flows downward. The love of parents for their children has always been far more powerful than that of the children for their parents; and who among the sons of men ever loved God with a thousandth part of the love which God has manifested to us?

In our passage, the Lord Jesus Christ will emphasize the importance of God's love, and our love for Him and others.

In this arena of argumentation Jesus now comes against a Scribe who is asking questions rather than trying to entrap the Lord.

Mark 12:28

And one of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, What commandment is the foremost of all?

The Scribes of the ancient world were the ones who were learned in the Law of God. They were jurists who interpreted the Law and determined the valid application of the Law. They were also teachers of the Law. Of all the people present that day, the Scribes knew the Word of God better than anyone - except the Lord Jesus Christ.

This scribe was not a part of any of the groups who had argued with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I see him as one who silently was standing by, listening to all that had transpired. And now seeing the Sadducees walk away, he approaches and seeks an answer to his questions.

Application: That comes from this situation is that often we will find it will be the ones who are not the targets of our conversation who will learn from our conversation.

We have a string of participles that precede the main verb which is asked or questioned Him. These participles show that the scribe was not only listening but observing the activity that had been going on.

When it states that He recognized that He (Jesus) had answered them well, we have an adverb for WELL: KALWS which is a relative adverb as opposed to AGAQOS which is absolute.

So it was the superior answers as compared to the inferior questions that struck this scribe as unique.

At this point he is not thinking of Jesus being the Son of God but just that Jesus' answers were the best he had ever heard. But that is enough to get him to further inquire of Jesus.

What commandment is the foremost of all?

Foremost is the word PRWTOS from which we get prototype. A first type or first of a kind.

Now here is where we have to understand a little more about what the scribe is asking.

The prevailing argument of the day between the Scribes and the religious hierarchy regarded which laws were the most important:

1. The leaders stressed the legal or the Laws that proscribed behavior. The biblical commands to keep the Sabbath, to not eat certain foods, to do this and do that.

As well as the additional law that were developed during this time. The extra-biblical laws.

2. The scribes stressed the ethical. Not so much the doing but the attitude involved with the doing. They would not abandon the Laws but were very concerned with proper motive, proper attitude.

3. So the question does not ask the Lord to pick one commandment out of the ten found in the Decalogue, but asks what category or type of commandment is most important.

As we will see the Lord Jesus Christ is also more concerned with the motive and the attitude than the mere following of ritual.

Now he does not abandon the ritual, even in the CHURCH AGE we have the ritual of the Lord's Supper which we are commanded to do. But the attitude, the right attitude must precede the doing.

Mark 12:29

Jesus answered, The foremost is, Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord;

This statement which quotes Deuteronomy 6:4 is from the Jewish SHEMA, which was quoted every morning and evening by the pious Jews.

They establish a basis for the actual command Jesus is about to state. Since God is our God, since He is One, since he is our Lord - we must love Him fully.

Mark 12:30

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

William Lane states of this passage: *To love God in the way defined by the great commandment is to seek God for his own sake, to have pleasure in him and to strive impulsively after him. With this Jesus demands a decision and a readiness for God and God alone, in an unconditional manner.*

The word LOVE is AGAPAW and is a future tense.

This type of love always begins as a mental attitude and the future tense looks at that which is an assured outcome of existing conditions.

Now that is interesting. Our love for God is viewed as progressive, increasing, built upon that which is currently existing.

Principle: We love God right now because of where we have been with him and what he has done in our lives.

If i were to ask you why you love God, your initial thoughts would go back to what you have learned about him, what he has taken you through, and the victories you have experienced. All things past So this love looks back and then demands a present decision, to continue to love God with your total being:

1. With all your heart: The conscience part of the soul
2. With all your soul: The whole soul including emotions
3. With all your mind: The intellect
4. With all your strength: The Physical

These cover the entire person. The whole being. And it is the whole being that is to love God. Not mere intellectual assent, not mere emotions, not just in ritual worked out in physical actions - but a love that is total.

Mark 12:31

Now the scribe did not ask for the top two commandments, only the most important one. But Jesus is not about to tell only part of the plan:

The second is this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.

THOU SHALL LOVE is the same verb used in verse 30, a future tense that looks to the past with present action.

To love your neighbor as yourself looks at wanting the best for your neighbor as you would want the best for yourself.

The word NEIGHBOR is used in the Old Testament Law for fellow Jews, and is specifically used here to refer to those who are present that day at the Temple.

We have all the various religious sect represented, most were at each others throats constantly. The division and antagonism among the Jews at this time was rampant. And now they are divided against the Lord Jesus Christ.

This command tells us to treat other as we treat ourselves and includes:

1. Forgive others as we are forgiven
2. Be gracious to other as we are gracious to self
3. Want the best for others as we want the best for ourselves
4. Be objective towards others as we are objective towards ourselves

Now our problem is we fail to correctly love and evaluate ourselves and when we do that we are incapable of loving others.

We need to have unconditional love towards self. Because that is the love that God has for us. We love ourselves as God loves us and then we love others as God loves them and as we love ourselves.

Principles:

1. When Jesus introduces these two great mandates he begins with God:
2. He describes God as the Lord who is one: This focus attention on God as God, in all His essence, only one, full of power, the creator. Thus worthy of all respect and honor.

3. But Jesus also includes the title twice, and this double emphasis looks at the relationship of God to His people. He is the Lord over His people.

4. Over twenty times in the Gospels the word LORD is used in relationship to the servant. If God is our Lord then we are to be slaves and servants of our Lord.

5. The first commandment, to love God with our total being, mandates love and obedience as slaves to our great Lord. You cannot love and be disobedient nor can you love and dishonor.

To love the Lord our God with our total being means to volitionally place ourselves under his authority and at his disposal as slaves. It is the goal of maturity in Christ.

Coming to the point where he is everything and we are nothing.

6. From being a slave of God in loving Him with our total being, we will then be servants to man.

To love others are we love ourselves -

7. Thus, the first mandate looks at our vertical relationship with God. That we are His slaves obedient to Him, in love with him.

The second mandate is horizontal, and views our relationships with others as we love others as God loves others, loving them as we love ourselves.

8. Both of these commandments are fulfilled first in our mental attitude. Then and only then is there action. This scribe very well understood that -

Mark 12:32,33

The Scribe responds, restated, and applies:

And the scribe said to Him, Right, Teacher, You have truly stated that He is One; and there is no one else besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.

This scribe does things that show us that doctrine has been learned:

1. He has listened and learned: He affirms what Jesus has said, gives full agreement to it.

2. He has thought about it: In restating it he uses his own words to restate the same truth. Whereas Jesus said heart, soul, mind, strength, the Scribes uses

a. Heart or KARDIA for the emotions

b. Understanding for the conscience part of the soul

c. And strength for physical abilities

By restating we see that he has been thinking

3. Then he applies: He applies the principle to the burnt offerings and sacrifices and see the attitude as being more important than mere actions.

We see the Scribe: LEARN ----- THINK ----- APPLY doctrine

Mark 12:34

And when Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, You are not far from the kingdom of God. And after that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

Jesus saw or perceived that the scribe responded intelligently.

INTELLIGENTLY is from the word NOUS the mind or the intellect.

In other words, this man was thinking, using his reasoning ability, comparing, learning, thinking. And for that the Lord is going to compliment him.

Jesus Christ, in his humanity, the same humanity that now sits at the right hand of the father, the same humanity to which we are to be conformed to through growth in the Word, saw something in this man that deserved commendation -

You are not far from the kingdom of God.

The Lord commends this man's thinking, the conclusion that he has reached and tells him he is very close to understanding that which all the others, all the religious leaders are missing.

The attitude of loving God and loving others is far more in line with the kingdom of God than the works, the rituals, the legalisms and Human viewpoint of the religious leaders.

Application: The Lord brought faith down to its most basic terms. Love God and serve him by serving others.

Everything else, all the intricate doctrines that we have available to us, are based upon some very simple truth, love God, love others -

LET US NEVER FORGET THE BASICS

Larry Crabb in his book Inside Out, states that conventional Christianity with all its programs and preaching does not penetrate life with liberating truth, but such a modern style of our faith maintains a conspiracy of pretense, pretending that things are better than they are or ever can be until Christ returns. We end up unprepared to live but strengthened in our denial.

There is no pretense with the Lord Jesus Christ -

The two paragraphs found in the next six verses (vv 35-40) are often studied as separate rounds of conversation. But there is a connection. A connection of contrast that sets the confidence of personal sense of identity possessed by the Lord Jesus and the pretense of the religious leaders who appear to one thing when they are driven by evil motives.

Further more, the Lord Jesus Christ also shows us a confidence of his personal sense of destiny. In His teaching he tells the people that there is a time when the Messiah would be invited to sit at the very right hand of the throne of God and that would be while the Father was bringing all things subject to Him.

Jesus Christ, in his humanity, knew who He was and knew where He was going. And in Him we who are called by His name, Christians, can have that same confidence.

Why is unbelieving world lost? Certainly because they lack the security of salvation in Christ, but also they are lost because they do not know who they are nor where they are going - but many Christians are also lost, not in regards to salvation but lost, not knowing their identity or destiny.

Mark 12:35

And Jesus answering began to say, as He taught in the temple.

If we look at the end of verse 34 we see that the no one dared to ask him any more questions following his conversation with the scribe.

But here in verse 35 he answers them, WHO ?, not the ones who are asking questions because no one is. But the ones who need information whether they know it or not.

ANSWERING is an aorist passive participle which precedes the main verb SAY:

TEACHING is a present participle that tells us the type of communication. Not mere talking but teaching.

The passive voice of ANSWERING sees Jesus as being caused to say something, to teach doctrine.

A principle we can see in this is that the Lord will provide information:

1. When we want it
2. When we do not know what we want but need it
3. And even when we do not want it, the truth is still available.

This is grace, even when we don't know what we need the Lord provides, he answers the questions we do not even know to ask.

TEACHING is the present tense of DIDASKW which refers to a more formal type of teaching that follows preparation and includes application that is designed to facilitate a change in attitude or action.

Mark 12:35b,36

How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, Until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet.

First: Jesus poses a question, How is it that the scribes, the ones who study and interpret the Scriptures, say that Christ is the son of David?

The title CHRIST means the anointed one and refers to the expected MESSIAH.

This title puts emphasis on the deity of the Messiah while the term SON as used in the phrase son of David, looks at his humanity.

Jesus also uses a present tense indicating that even now, as He is there with them, the Christ is, right now, the Son of David. Not future, not past, but right now.

The question that Jesus asks then sets up the restatement of revelation regarding the humanity and deity of Jesus Christ, the anointed one, the promised one, the Son of God, the Christ, the Messiah.

Fully God and yet at the same time fully man -

Then Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1 which reads (The NT has more references and allusions to this verse than any other):

A Psalm of David: The Lord (YHWH the Father) says to my Lord (ADONAY the Messiah): Sit at My (Father) right hand, Until (or while) I make Thine (the Messiah's) enemies a footstool for Thy feet.

In Mark 12:36 Jesus quotes from the LXX except for a change on the word UNDER THE FEET, in which the LXX uses one word while Jesus used the genitive phrase under your feet.

The possible reason is that the genitive phrase shows a stronger possession of the enemies being brought under control of the Messiah.

If we look at David's words in David's times we can establish three principles:

1. David spoke of the Lord as existing then, not just in the future. He was able to say: The Lord said to my Lord -
2. David spoke of a time of honor and rest for the Messiah. Honor and rest, sitting at the right hand of the king implies victory and success in battle.

The Lord would be invited, in his humanity, to sit at that place of honor following the victory of the Cross.

3. And the Messiah would be in that position of honor during a time in which the Father would bring all the enemies of the Messiah subject to Him.

This looks ahead to the second advent, unknown by David but David did know that Israel would be restored by the Messiah as a true divine Kingdom.

In light of those principles we can also see a number of implications:

1. The Messiah is God existing then and now.
2. The Messiah is the Lord
3. The Messiah will be victorious
4. The Messiah will be in a place of honor
5. The Messiah will reign supreme even over his enemies

But the most important implication comes in the next verse and comes in light of that which was mentioned in verse 35:

The Messiah, the Lord, is the Son of David.

Mark 12:37

David himself calls Him Lord; and so in what sense is He his son? And the great crowd enjoyed listening to Him.

The scribes often spoke of the Messiah as being the Son of David, his descendant. But now Jesus adds that David called the Messiah his Lord.

This created a paradox that can only be answered by a correct understanding of the hypostatic union:

Principles:

1. The Messiah was identified as the son or the descendant of David. This is part of the Davidic Covenant and the promise of 2 Samuel 7:16
And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.
2. Yet David, to whom the promises of the covenant were given calls the Messiah his Lord.
3. How can Messiah be both David's son and David's Lord? Because the Messiah is the God-man, who ever existed as God and took on a human nature.
4. At the incarnation, the virgin birth, eternal God the Son took on a human nature and became fully man and had always been fully God.
5. He then became the unique person in the universe, never anyone like him nor never will be again. This union of undiminished deity and full humanity is called the Hypostatic Union.

Hypostasis is from the Greek meaning to subject to stand and looks at real personal substance of a person, specifically, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the people listening to Jesus had to consider the issue he raised. Son and Lord, humanity and deity, uniqueness, and they were listening to the one who was that unique person.

In this Jesus reveals his identity and while the religious crowd probably understood this, they did not accept it.

In this Jesus displayed his humility. Humility is knowing where you fit into God's program. How you are too look at yourself and how God looks at you. The bottom line of humility is GRACE, we receive what we did not earn nor deserve. And

Christ is revealing himself and displaying his humility -

Principle: God will reveal himself to man and man may even understand, but man must accept by faith what God reveals about Himself, His Son, His plan.

The people, the crowds, listened to him, enjoyed what they heard, but did not accept by faith that which was revealed:

ENJOYED is EIDEWS and adverb used only three times in the New Testament Here and in Mark 6:20 where Herod Antipas enjoyed listening to John the Baptist and later killed him. And in 2 Corinthians 11:19 where Paul indicts believers for gladly listening to false teachers.

The word is then never used in a sense where there is a positive outcome. It only shows a response that is for the moment with no lasting effect.

And that is what the great crowd was like then, they were entertained by the teaching of truth but with no difference in attitude or action. And that is what the great crowd is like today. Entertained but not intertwined with Jesus. They may smile but only for awhile, they may laugh but they don't last, they agree but soon they avoid, they may applaud but they do not accept.

Jesus Christ was telling them who he was, no pretense, not pretending, not holding back, they had opportunity to believe, to accept by faith, and they refused.

Mark 12:38,39

In Contrast, the religious crowd. Whose identity is hidden, who live behind the facade of false motive and empty actions, who have no personal sense of identity or destiny and live life pretending.

In His teaching He was saying: Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at banquets,

These verses contrast with the clear statement of identity of the Lord Jesus and the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. And also contrast with the next section that examines the gift, the meager gift given by the poor widow.

Between the Lord and His confidence of identity and his revelation of himself and the pure motives of the poor widow we have the pretense of the religious crowd.

This morning I do not want to go into the description of these hypocrites, but I do want to examine one word that is found in verse 40:

The word PRETENCE is PROFASIS which means to speak before. Thus to assume something in order to hid one's true purpose.

1. In Acts 27:30 it is used of sailors trying to jump ship by pretending to lower an anchor when they were actually trying to lower a life boat in order to escape.
2. The Lord warned of those who used long prayers to promote a false front of spirituality (Luke 20:47 and Mark 12:40).
3. John 15:22 spoke of a cloak or pretext for sin, in attempting to rationalize or excuse sins.
4. In I Thessalonians 2:5 Paul exclaims that he never ministered in pretense, never hid behind any false motives.

While Jesus describes the pretence or pretending of the religious leaders of his day, the same manner of life, a pretence or a pretending can describe the conventional Christian.

Larry Crabb in his book Inside Out, states that:

Biblical changes never require us to pretend that we are something we are not. Christ wants us to face reality as it really is, including all its fears, hurts, resentment, and self-protective motives we work hard to keep out of sight, and to emerge as a changed person. Not pretenders, not perfect - but the person God saved us to be.

The pretend Christian life, so common to most believers, is a life that lives on pretence fueled by denial. Denial of reality, denial of helplessness, denial of hurt and pain, and denial of that vague sense that something is so often.

God never calls us to pretence, to denial, to pretending before him that are that which we are not.

The one who knew who he was, the one who had a commanding grip on His personal spiritual identity looked beyond the actions and appearance of the religious crowd to that which was in the soul and exclaimed -

When Jesus Christ looks at us, the Christian today, what does he exclaim. Are we pretenders.

We never have to pretend before God our Father, he can take that which we may be working so hard to cover up, and conform it the image of Christ. The one who has the confidence of who he is. He alone can make us the person he saved us to be.

Actions without attitude is alien to the plan of God. Practice without principle leads to perversion. Works without the Word are wasted in the plan of God -

In the closing verses that describe the Lord at the Temple just a few day before His crucifixion, we see Jesus, shifting from the arena of argumentation to the technique of teaching.

We saw that he taught the scribes who He was, boldly and with great confidence revealing His personal sense of spiritual identity and destiny:

He was the God-man, fully God, fully man, the Lord who was also the Son of David.

And there would come a time, as part of his destiny, when all His enemies would be put under His feet.

Identity and destiny: Two things he had in his humanity, two things we can have, and two things sorely lacking in the pretense of the religious leaders.

His teaching regarding the scribes in vv 38-40 stands in contrast with his revelation of identity and destiny. But the activity of these scribes, who saw themselves as so devote, also stands in contrast to the attitude of the widow mentioned in the closing verse of this chapter.

So His teaching regarding the scribes serves as a hinge of contrast between the one who know who He is and where He is going and the one who gave without expectation all that she had to serve her Lord.

BEWARE is the Greek word BLEPW and in the form found here, as a present, active, imperative (a command) it is found 26 times in the New Testament and tells us to be on the look out, to beware, to watch out for 13 potential problems:

1. Matthew 24:4 False Christs who will mislead you
2. Mark 4:24 What you listen to as far as doctrine

3. Mark 8:15 The corruption that comes from religion (Christianity is a relationship)

4. Mark 13:22-23 False signs and wonders

5. Luke 21:8 Those who set a time for Christ's return

6. I Cor 3:10 How you build in ministry upon the foundation of Christ

7. I Cor 8:9 How you use your liberty in Christ, never to be a stumblingblock

8. I Cor 16:10 Not to intimidate another believer or put them into fear

9. Galatians 5:15 Not to devour or consume one another

10. Ephesians 5:15 Not to walk in the Christian life as unwise

11. Colossians 4:17 How you conduct your ministry

12. Hebrews 3:12 That you not go into reversionism

13. 2 John 8 That you not lose out on reward in heaven

14. Philippians 3:2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision (Legalists).

15. Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. (Beware of Human viewpoint and world view).

Now here the charge is given to watch out for or beware of the hypocritical pretense of the Scribes.

The Lord tells us in these verses that they love four things

1. Wear long clothing: This was a long, white, linen robe. Very impractical in the dusty desert environment. The long white robe was worn to make a statement, the scribes did not work as the common people nor did they get dirty, as the common people. It was worn as clothing of distinction. We might say the same thing about a ministers robe or backwards collar today.

2. They also enjoyed the salutations received in the marketplace. These would have included the titles: Rabbi, Father, Master. When a scribe walked down the street, the people were to rise and greet

them. The only ones exempt were tradesmen busy at their craft. Tradesmen worked real diligently when the scribes were out and about.

3. The chief seats at the synagogues: These were seats in the front of the hall that faced the crowds and put the scribes back to the chest containing the Torah.

4. As important feast were held by prominent citizens of Jerusalem, it was a status symbol to invite a scribe and give him a place of honor over women and even the elders.

The attitude towards these distinctions is given to us in the word LIKE or LOVE:

It is a present, participle of QELW _in the genitive case.

This is what the scribes desired, wished for, wanted to possess as part of their position.

It was not their wish to grow, to serve, to love as God loves, but to be served, to be esteemed, honored, elevated above the common man.

Mark 12:40

But when you allow yourself to be driven in your desire to be above others, you soon come to disregard the ones you think you are over, the ones you assume are inferior.

Who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation.

The word DEVOUR is the same word used of birds eating the seed that was sown and also the same word used for the Devil who desired to devour Christ (Revelation 12:4). It means to consume, to eat to one's satisfaction, to plunder.

The scribes live primarily on the gifts given to them by the people. It was considered meritorious to relieve a scribe of any regard or worry over financial matters. People would boast of supporting a scribe.

But if no support was found, the scribes would sponge off the hospitality of people, even the widows who had very little would be marks for the scribes.

How many widows today have lost so much giving to this evangelist or that one. The lack of integrity is abominable - it was then and it is now.

For appearance's sake offer long prayers:

We looked at this word last week and noted that it was doing things by pretense, living a pretend spiritual life.

Offering long prayers to impress others and not out of any devotion to fellowship with God and lead others in the fellowship of prayer.

And where is their evil and pretense going to get them:

These will receive greater condemnation -

The future, middle, indicative looks to an assured reality that is reflexive to the ones involved in this pretense.

Principles:

1. The scribes desire or wish for prominence among men, lofty positions and titles.
2. The believer is to desire to follow Christ, giving God the honor, and shifting any prominence to the one who is pre-emanate, the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The scribes real love was for self promotion and this was a pretense before God.

They fooled themselves into thinking that action before man was more important than attitude before God.

4. This pretense before God lead to a pretense before man and a spiritual life was nothing more than pretending to be and do what others considered spiritual.

5. This pretending eliminated any chance for a solid spiritual identity, true humility, and biblical grace orientation.

6. This pretense lead to sin in the taking of money and property from the innocent and unsuspecting.

NOTICE: They are doing things that appear to be spiritual but are just one step away from doing that which is sin -

7. And their destiny will be a result of their present attitude, they will receive greater condemnation.

The comparative adjective GREATER (PERISSOS) is a superlative that is only used here regarding future condemnation.

In the parable of Luke 12:47-48 the Lord gives the reason for such greater condemnation:

And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall

receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

The scribes had greater opportunity, greater opportunity to study the Word, to grow in the Lord, to be a slave unto God and His servants to man. But they rejected this opportunity and lived a life pretending to be something they were not.

The word for CONDEMNATION is KRIMA and other than the three uses in the Revelation in which it refers to eternal judgment the only other use of KRIMA for eternal judgment specifies this by the adjective ETERNAL.

All other 24 references are to judgment or condemnation, discipline in time.

So the Lord promises discipline in time against these scribes who live by pretense.

Their discipline will be greater because they had greater opportunity - to whom much is given much is expected.

Now in contrast we have the poor widow:

She is not prominent, does not hold a high station in life, has no lofty titles nor possessing any place of honor except in the eyes of the only one who really counts: The Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 12:41

And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the multitude were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums.

According to the Mishnah, there were thirteen trumpet-shaped receptacles for receiving the offering located against the wall of the Court of the Women.

The fact that the Lord knew that many who were rich were giving a great deal was because it was customary to announce the size of the gift publicly. Also, the horns were metal and if you threw in a handful of heavy copper, gold or silver coins, the sound would ring out.

Mark 12:42

In contrast to the rich who were giving much and even in contrast to the scribes who devour widow's houses we have a poor widow:

And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent.

The coins were the Hebrew Lepton which were equal to 1/400th of a shekel. Mark adds for the Roman readers that these were equal to a Quadrans.

Which was not circulated in the eastern empire, only in the west.

OUR MONEY: 1/4th of a penny, not much.

Mark 12:43,44

Jesus saw in this woman an example for the disciples to appreciate and to follow. Especially in contrast to the religious crowds they had been dealing with.

And calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.

Principles:

1. She gave not to be noticed but to worship. Commemorating the grace of God
2. The sum is not as important as the attitude
3. She was a widow, with no one dependant upon her so she gave all that she had at that time to live on knowing that God would supply her needs
4. The larger sums given by the rich would be used in the Temple but God loved the attitude of the poor widow
5. **Principle:** God can always get a few rich people to give, but it takes doctrine, and a grace M.A. to please God in our giving
6. She gave more, although the sum was less, than all the wealth that was given

APPLICATION:

1. Mental attitude is of supreme importance to God, not the amount
2. We need to develop an attitude of wanting to give

3. When we give, even we think we cannot afford it, we become more dependant upon God.

If you give sacrificially, remember it is you who are making the sacrifice - not your husband, your wife, your children, your loan officer, etc.

4. You may wish to give to the point where you do without, but that is only applied to you. You do not have the right to impose a sacrifice on others

5. If your desire is right, God can always get others to give to make up the gap between your desire and your capital.

In this entire portion of Mark 12, the one principle we keep on seeing is that God wants the right attitude first. There is no value in pretense in the Christ Centered Life. God wants you to stand before him as what you really are and then - let Him conform you to the image of Christ, making you into the person He saved you to be.

Chapter 13

It has been said that ignorance in life is inevitable. We simply cannot know everything there is to know. Stupidity, however is said to be optional and comes when we could know more and yet refuse to listen, refuse to learn.

Chapter 13 begins with the conclusion of a long day at the Temple where Jesus entered the arena of argumentation and rebuked, debated, questioned, and taught the religious leaders of Israel.

He took their best shot, and He won -

The disciples had been observing all this. It was not until the end of chapter 12 that we saw Jesus given attention to them. Up to that point they were observing and should have been listening, learning, thinking upon what the Lord said and what the Lord taught.

But like so many people, Christians even today, they listened but they did not learn, they were thinking but they were confused. And as a result, a superfluous question is asked.

Mark 13:1

And as he was going out of the Temple -

The scene is set for us by this statement. After an entire day of debate with the religious leaders the Lord, now with His disciples departs. He is again

with friends and the disciples are again with their master.

But a certain amount of tension is in the air. The disciples are very quiet. No one daring to ask the Lord questions regarding what was said that day.

Now they heard a lot of truth. And they did not understand a lot of what they heard. We might assume the questions would fly and that deep discussion would follow. That all that had been said that day would be examined, talked about, questions would be answered.

But instead, a meaningless comment is made.

And one of His disciples said to Him, Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!

Let me try and illustrate how superfluous this question is:

Let's imagine you had a Christian friend visiting from out of town. You bring them to church. Bible class is great that night, you look in the Pre-school rooms and the four year olds are reciting and defining the essence of God. You see believers in prayer, people are talking about the Lord as their friend. And your friend intently observes. You can see the look of wonder on his face. But then you are in the car driving home and you ask him, Well, what did you think? And he pauses, and then comes back with: I really like your lawn, it so palatial and green, beautiful trees and the location of the building on the lot is really great.

Okay now you tell me, what is going on? In politics they call it stonewalling, we might say changing the subject, avoiding the issue, making an end run.

Often the questions we ask reveal not merely our interest in a certain subject, but our desire to avoid certain subjects.

Observations:

1. Questions, comments, statements can be intended to change the subject rather than seek truth.
2. In our attempt to avoid the spiritual issues which might deeply touch our lives, we ask superfluous questions and make meaningless statements.

3. The conventional Christian can talk a lot about religious things and thus avoid meaningful spiritual issues.

4. Paul described this manner of conversation and learning to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:5 and 7 as those who:

Hold to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these - always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

5. People will talk about their pastor, their programs, their building, their Sunday school teachers, their fellowships, their choirs and their music - but not about the person who really matters, Jesus Christ.

6. This avoidance of reality is a pretense regarding what the Christian Life is all about.

And pretense or pretending in the CHRISTIAN LIFE is a result of denial, a denial or divorcement from reality, and that comes from one of the three lifestyles: Fear, anger, shame.

For the disciples the initial problem was fear. A simple fear of not understanding what the Lord had said and taught. This resulted in a denial of the deep things that were communicated by the Savior and lead to pretense - Look at this fine building.

Mark 13:2

But Jesus is going to bring the conversation back to reality, the important and deep spiritual truths that will effect their lives.

And Jesus said to him, Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down.

Jesus is going to use the focus of their attention, a building of blocks and stones, to shift their attention back to reality:

Do you see these great buildings? And great they were. The Temple of Herod was a massive structure, with numerous other buildings and quarters. The blocks that were used to build this building were massive, some weighing as much as 100 tons.

But then He makes a remarkable statement: Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down.

The word for TORN DOWN refers to a taking apart, a destruction not by natural means but a result of demolition by invasion of hostile forces.

The Lord was looking ahead, prophetically, to 70 AD when Titus the Roman would invade Judea and destroy Jerusalem.

The prophetic picture painted by the Lord in this chapter looks to both events that are near and now past history for us and events that are far, and still future for us:

Verses 2-13 Prophecy regarding the Church Age

Verses 13-37 Prophecy regarding the Tribulation

Mark 13:3

The Lord's statement of verse 2 has captured their attention. Now, four of the disciples seek further information:

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately.

In his first major discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord was also on a hill side. Now in this final discourse he is also on a hill side. The first dealt with the conditions of the Kingdom and this, the Olivet Discourse, deals with the coming of the kingdom.

Four disciples now come to Him: Peter and Andrew (brothers) and James and John (brothers).

Mark 13:4

Now an important question, no longer statements of buildings and stones, no longer looking at what man has done, but at what God will do:

Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?

The word SIGN is very specific in the Greek text. It looks at that which distinguishes one thing from another.

These disciples knew that hard times existed even then. That the Temple had been destroyed before and could be destroyed again. But what was the Lord talking about, what will distinguish the time he refers to from other difficult times?

By asking for that which will distinguish these disciples were showing more common sense than many believers have today. They knew world

events could imitate divine judgment, that even natural events could simulate God's work in bringing his ages to a close.

So they asked specifically, what will distinguish what you are talking about from all the other things that go on in the world?

Application: Believers today are very quick to look at world events or natural catastrophes and proclaim that the rapture is near, the end is at hand.

The disciples did not want to do this, they asked the Lord for wisdom, wisdom to distinguish the times and the seasons.

Mark 13:5-8

Jesus first describes what the signs will not be:

And Jesus began to say to them, See to it that no one misleads you. Many will come in My name, saying, I am He! and will mislead many. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end. For nation will arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

Notice: The last phase of verse 8, these are not the signs, these are merely the beginning of the signs. Birth pains are not birth, they tell you birth will come. Like morning sickness tells you that the birth pains will come, labor will eventually occur, but birth can be many months away from the upset stomach in the morning.

In the same way the conflict and catastrophes we experience tell us that there will be an end.

The first thing that Jesus tells them is that they must focus not on the events, not on what is going on in the world, but on Him. They must not be distracted:

See to it that no one misleads you. Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many.

JESUS LISTS THREE AREAS OF DISTRACTION IN vv 5-8:

1. Being distracted by those who claim to be the Messiah

2. Being distracted by international events and conflicts

3. Being distracted by natural events and calamities

So before he even begins to tell them about the signs (down in verse 14), he warns them about distraction -

And the major, primary, number one distraction is to be drawn away from the person and the power of Christ.

Even in Jesus' day there were those who claimed to come in the power of God. A few even claimed to be the Messiah. But they did nothing more than distract and mislead.

Today and throughout the church age we have had the false Christs. Those who claim to have some hot line to God or even to be God's prophet or the Christ.

And they mislead the simple, the unsuspecting, the naive

Fallen men living in a fallen world live on the edge. On the edge of conflict, war, upheaval of nations.

Do not let these things frighten you. They must take place, that is the nature of fallen man. He cannot bring lasting peace out of the chaos of a fallen world.

For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

This will occur so long as man is on fallen earth and under the control of Satan and his evil plan. Peace will not come apart from Christ.

The adversity of war is inevitable -

There will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

In addition to political and national conflict there will also be natural disasters. Earthquakes and famine.

But these are not the end, merely the beginning of the sign that the end is coming.

The wars, persecutions, the earthquakes, the famines, all occurred even prior to 70 AD and the destruction of the Temple:

1. The Emperors Caligula, Claudius, and Nero all threatened war against the Jews.

2. In AD 38 in Alexandria the Jews were persecuted by the Romans. In Seleucia over 50 thousand Jews were killed.

3. Four major earthquakes rocked parts of the Roman empire all between the time of this prophecy and AD 70:

One in Crete (AD 46), one in Rome (AD 51), in Phrygia (AD 60), and in Campania (AD 63).

4. Also there were four major famines during this period one which is mentioned in Acts 11:28 in Judea in AD 44.

But all these are just a beginning of the sign that will point to the end.

But what do believers do with these events:

1. They are distracted trying to interpret God's plan in light of human and natural events.

2. But before that distraction occurs there is a prior distraction that has taken them away from the Lord Jesus Christ. Mislead -

3. When we focus on Him, looking unto Jesus who is not only the author of our faith but the finisher of our faith, we will know that He is in control.

4. When we see that He is Lord we will know that He is greater than the wars, the earthquakes, the famines. The Lord is Lord, he is in control.

5. And when your eyes are on Him, there is no distraction, there is no fear. Even when the calamity of human events turns against you -

Do not allow:

1. False teachers and false Christs to distract you

2. International strife and conflict

3. Natural disasters

4. Do not even allow persecution to take away you focus that must be on the person of Christ.

We live in a fallen world, among fallen men, but we serve a risen Savior.

All the prophecy given in this Chapter is designed to do one thing, to focus attention, to give glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus and His disciples have come to the mount of Olives, across the brook Kidron from the Temple.

Upon leaving the Temple one disciple made a superfluous comment about the magnificence of the Temple. Jesus used this meaningless and

distracting statement to bring attention to what God will do prophetically.

After crossing over to the side of the mount of Olives, four disciples, Peter, Andrew, James, and John, come to the Lord and ask when will this occur -

With that the Lord does three things:

1. In verses 5-8 He tells them how easily it is to be distracted by people claiming to come in the power of God, by international events, and by natural disasters.

2. Secondly he describes the persecution, the problems, the adversity that will be a part of their ministry and the up coming church age (Mark 13:9-13).

3. And then he tells them of the prophetic plan of God. Which deals with events still future for even us and events that are a part of the tribulation period (Mark 13:14-37).

I think that it is very important for our proper perspective on prophecy to recognize what the Lord took time to explain even before he mentioned future events.

He warned the disciples and this is a warning to us that we can be distracted by attempting to interpret God's plan in light of current events rather than the Word of God.

Through the centuries Christians have taken note of some event or some person and sincerely believed that the rapture was due any moment. They have sold all, abandon responsibilities, and some have even sat of roof tops or climbed mountain so they could get a head start to heaven. That is distraction.

You cannot be in Bible class learning about the Lord if you are on some roof top.

The second warning the Lord gives us is regarding persecution. Through the centuries Christians have faced persecution. Some have even been put to death for their faith. How easy it might be for the believer to begin to think that God has abandoned His plan, that God is no longer in control, that He has lost his grip on the human race.

In the midst of persecution, prophecy should give us confidence, a confident hope that God is in control and no matter how bad things may seem

as mankind turns against God and the believer, it will get worse when God pours out his wrath upon planet earth.

Mark 13:9

Begins the warning regarding persecution:

But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.

This is a very interesting statement. The Lord gives a command to be on the look out but then gives a list of three things that will happen to believers:

First the three mentions of persecution. Each of the verbs used in these statements are future tense which indicates a definite future fact, not merely a possibility as does the English future tense.

1. For others will deliver you to councils and you will be beaten in the synagogues.

Two connect statements: Delivered to the courts and beaten in the synagogues.

This is a warning of religious persecution. This was very real for the disciples. In the book of Acts we read of how the Jews opposed the Christians, bringing them before their councils and even beating some.

And through the church age the Christian has so often been opposed by other Christians. One of the first great reformers, an ancestor of mine, Jan Huss of Bohemia, was burned at the stake in Prague because he proclaimed a Grace salvation.

Even today the believer who lives by grace will be persecuted, the cutting remarks, the rejection, the judging, and this adversity will come from other believers.

And when it does you keep it on the outside and deal with it by way of principle. It was the religious leaders of Jesus' day who opposed Him, who persecuted Him, who put Him on the Cross to die.

2. The third statement looks at persecution before the civil and criminal courts.

And you will stand before governors and kings -

This happened to the disciples as they were dragged into the courts and accused of disloyalty

to Caesar. But even today there are nations that view being a Christian as a crime against the state and impose penalties against believers.

And attitude towards this adversity must be the attitude that Christ our Lord had towards His adversaries. God is in control, our lives, our destinies are in His hands.

Hebrews 13:6 That we confidently say, The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?

But now we need to go back to the initial statement in the verse and consider a problem:

The Lord tells the disciple: Be on your guard:

Now why would we be on guard, BLEPW _be on the look out for something that was surly going to happen?

Normally you tell someone to look out in order to prevent something from occurring. But the future tenses in these statements makes them inevitable.

Adversity in life is inevitable. Through the 2000 year history of the CHURCH AGE believers have been persecuted. It could happen to us. In minor ways and even and even in more severe ways.

So what are we to be looking out for?

1. First, that we are not distracted in the midst of persecution. Be on guard that persecution doesn't throw you, take you away from Christ. Shift your focus from the one who is the solution, Jesus Christ.

I am sure Peter had this concept in mind when he wrote:

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

2. Secondly, we are to be on guard, undistracted, so that any persecution we might face will be turned to a testimony of Christ.

This persecution need not be without meaning and purpose. The Lord adds that this adversity will occur for His sake and as a testimony to the ones who persecute you.

The way you handle the persecution you receive can be a testimony of the faithfulness of Christ. That He is your strength and in times of great adversity, you do not turn adversity to stress but handle it according to principles of doctrine, the very mind of Christ.

Mark 13:10

This is a verse that is often taken out of context:

And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations (Gentiles).

Some have taken this to mean that the Lord cannot return for his bride the church until all the world has been evangelized.

And while the greater context of Mark 13 is the return of the Lord, specifically the Second Advent, the immediate context is the persecution of believers.

NOTE: The immediate preceding and following verses.

We have a connective KAI which links the evangelizing of the Gentiles to the testimony of Christ by believers under persecution.

The preposition is EIS which can be translated with a view towards. The events of verse 9 occur with a view towards the result in verse 10.

The word FIRST is PRWTOS which can mean first in an order of events but also first in importance.

And in the Church Age God sees the evangelism of the unbeliever as a primary importance.

So much so that even persecution of His people, which at first may seem to be a negative, become an opportunity to be a testimony of Christ to the Nations.

If you of - On your guard, on the look out, knowing that persecution will come.

Mark 13:11

Here is another verse that is often taken out of context and used to dismiss preparation for communication. There are some groups who actually take pride in their ignorance. Their pastors do not go to school, seminary, they do not prepare for their messages, and they boast in this.

Illustration: First time I encountered this was in Hope, Arkansas when a another pastor told me it was too bad I had to spend all that time and money going to seminary and university when I

could have, by faith brother, just opened my mouth and the Holy Ghost would have spoken through me.

But what is the context of this promise, and it is a promise:

And when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.

The context and setting: When they arrest you and deliver you up before the courts -

Then a warning and a promise that is to give you comfort:

1. Do not be anxious beforehand about what you are to say:

Being ANXIOUS is to WORRY, to fret about the situation and what you are to say when the courts examine you.

The Lord is telling us not to worry!

2. Whatever is given (dative) you IN THAT HOUR, this you are to speak.

For you see (GAR) you are not the one speaking but (ALLA) the Holy Spirit.

Here we have a promise that was given to the disciples who would be arrested and be before the courts. And in the book of Acts we can see the fulfillment of this prophecy.

But these statements and promises of the Lord are all prior to the first sign that is given in verse 14 which means that these have application to the entire CHURCH AGE

If you were arrested for you faith and brought into court you could rely upon this promise.

Mark 13:12

But all persecution will not be from strangers, some will be from the least likely sources, you own family:

And brother will deliver brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.

While this describes what will await the disciples as they proclaim Christ, it also has bearing on the entire CHURCH AGE when believers will suffer persecution. But the ultimate fulfillment will be

during the Tribulation, when the Jewish community of believers, having believed in Christ following the rapture, will be persecuted, and families will be torn apart, treachery will come from even the closest of sources.

Even in recent world history in nations where being a Christian was considered to be a crime against the state or at least a mental illness sufficient for long term hospitalization (in Siberia), brothers turned against brothers and parents against children and even children against parents. In China following the inglorious revolution, children were encouraged to turn in their believing parents and in the killing fields of Laos it was often the children who pulled the trigger against their parents.

But even adversity of that magnitude or even the heart break of a parent seeing a child, a believer, turn against the Lord and go into rebellion, reversionism, and anger is an adversity that must stay and can stay on the outside.

As great as the pain may be it is handled on the outside by the application of principle:

1. Jesus told us it was going to happen
2. Jesus also told us that:

Matthew 10:37 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.

Mark 13:13

Brings these warnings and promises to a close as Jesus prepares to answer the question asked by the disciples back in verse 4:

And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

The specific application is to the Jews. The Jews have been the only people who have ever been hated by the nations and this hatred will increase during the Tribulation and be directed at those who are racial Jews and spiritually believers in Christ.

But even now in the church age we have application to the Christian. There have been times when being Christian in and of itself invoked hatred on the part of others.

But we are to endure to the end that we might be saved.

SAVED here is not a spiritual salvation that occurs when we believe in Christ but a deliverance.

Kenneth Wuest states: Salvation here is not spiritual, no one is ever saved by enduring anything, but is physical, physical protection and well-being for those who have endured the sufferings -

ENDURANCE is UPOMENW and is aorist, active, participle.

The aorist tense looks at endurance during specific time of trouble and persecution. The point of time application of a principle of truth that keeps adversity from becoming stress.

The participle sees it as an action that attends something else and the something else here is the life of faith. Do you believe that if you endure in Christ you will be delivered? That is accepted by faith.

UPOMENW it self is used as the expression of HOPE. We have a confident assurance of our eternal destiny and that is our confident hope. Endurance is the mechanics of that hope in which we struggle every day, keeping our eyes fixed on the goal, eternity with Jesus Christ.

And the things the Lord is describing in these verse are those things that rob us of our endurance through distraction:

1. The false Christ's and those who claim to come in the power of God
2. World events, wars and rumors of wars
3. Natural disasters that cause us to think God is no longer in control
4. Persecution from other believers and from the World
5. Betrayal and persecution from those closest to us, our own families
6. And the ever presence of death

Adversity in life must never be a distraction from our goal, we are to endure because we have a confident assurance that God is in control.

A little statement appeared in a denominational journal that stated: Every tomorrow can be grasped by one of two handles. By the handle of worry and anxiety or the handle of faith.

In our passage the Lord Jesus Christ is telling his disciples of some terrible things that are to come but in doing so he encourages them to grasp hold of the future by the handle of faith.

One of the most important and yet often neglected principles of understanding prophecy is put the prophecy in its context. This is especially true when the prophetic pronouncement is a response to a statement or question as is the case here in Mark 13 and the parallel passages of Matthew 24 and 25 and Luke 21.

Remember the statement that begins this chapter: A statement of distraction as one of the disciples starts talking about the greatness of the Temple, avoiding the deep content of the Lord's messages that day.

With that statement Jesus now is wanting to teach his disciples to not be distracted from truth, wrapped up in buildings.

So in verse 2 He states: Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down.

In order to focus attention on the plan of God, Jesus talks about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

This then brings us a question on the part of Peter, Andrew, James, and John:

Then, in verse 4, Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?

Actually two questions: When (looking for a time), and what will be the authenticating sign (looking for a sign)?

And the Lord answers the second question first and then goes back to the first question.

In verses 5-13, the Lord talks about what the signs will not be:

In this portion of His message He gives a warning against distraction:

1. Do not be distracted by false Christs, international events, natural disasters, persecution, or betrayal
2. These events are afflictions that are coincidental to living is coincidental to being a believer
3. The warning in verse 9 Be on guard (BLEPW look out) is to be on guard against distraction and

on not using the difficulties of life and faith to present Christ - to be a testimony to others.

4. These events are the beginnings that point to the assurance of the signs and the absolute assurance of the fact that these prophecies will come to pass.

They are like the mourning sickness that tells you that you will have labor pains and then the labor pains foretell the reality of birth

5. **Principle:** Do not be distracted trying to find signs in international events, like the war in the Persian Gulf, in earthquakes, in the famines of Africa, in the persecution and betrayal of believers.

Application: Keep focused on the Lord Jesus Christ and endure in your confident hope that God's plan is sure.

Mark 13:14

But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be [let the reader understand], then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

The rather cryptic statement by Mark cloaks the presence of the abomination of desolation standing in the Temple for the sake of the Roman audience to which he writes.

He is not willing to be specific because of the tension that already is existing at the time of his writing between Rome and Israel.

The other Gospel writers did not have a need to be cryptic:

Matthew 24:15 mentions the Holy Place, the Temple

Luke 21:20 specifically states that armies will surround Jerusalem.

So for us we have to ask, when is this sign going to occur?

Three events are referred to, one past, one in the life time of the disciples, and one yet future:

1. The past fulfillment of this was a prophetic event for Daniel when he spoke of it in Daniel 11:31

And 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.

This was first fulfilled in 167 BC when Antiochus Epiphanes the Syrian ruler erected a statue to Zeus in the Temple and sacrificed a pig on the altar. These story of the Maccabean revolt.

2. Now the disciples, knowing Jewish history, would have thought that the prophecy of Daniel had been fulfilled. But there is often more than one fulfillment of prophecy. There are at times minor fulfillments that lead to the major fulfillment.

3. Since Jesus spoke of this as yet future, it is to fulfilled again:

In the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, within the lifetime of these disciples, the Jewish Zealots had taken over the Temple in AD 67 and established an unqualified priest, Phan-nie, as high priest.

At that time the Christians of Jerusalem fled the city and went to Pella, a city in what is now Jordan.

4. But there is yet to be another, yet future time when this and all these events will be completely fulfilled:

The dictator of Palestine during the tribulation, the second beast of Revelation 13, the false prophet, sets in the Temple an image of the Antichrist, the dictator of the revived Roman empire, demanded its worship and even causing it to speak (Revelation 13:14-15).

5. So for the disciples there will be a near fulfillment and for future Israel, a far fulfillment.

Now here is the principle we have to apply as we study this portion of prophecy:

While the Lord is talking about events that have to do with the latter days, the tribulation, there is also interpretation for the events prior to and including the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by the Romans.

What I want to show you in this passage of prophecy is the mental attitude of Christ and the attitude that Christ wants the believer to have regarding the future that is in God's hands.

The first thing we see is that it is in His humanity that Jesus received from the Father this prophetic information. This was revealed to the humanity of Christ and not part of the omniscience of His deity.

In verse 32 Jesus tells his disciples that the day and hour of his return is unknown even to Him:

But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

And now from His humanity Jesus has a very hard message to give. A message that includes desolation of the Temple, believers fleeing to the mountains, tribulation, false Christs, the darkening of the sun and the moon, the heavens being shaken, and His return in the power to judge and the glory to be worshipped.

This bad news is not given to frighten or to create worry and anxiety, nor is given to scare people into faith in Christ, but it is given for two reasons:

1. To demonstrate that God the Father is in control of the destiny of the human race.
2. And secondly, that God the Son, cares for us, has compassion on us, and in any difficult situation, in any adversity, will provide for us His plan and His power.

We can see in this prophetic message seven aspects of the humanity of Christ:

1. Compassion on those who have placed their faith in Him
2. Faith in the Father's plan
3. A desire to not see the believer distracted
4. A confidence that the Father is in control
- 5 The power He has to act on behalf of believers
6. The personal faith He has in the Word of God
7. And the concern He has that believers stay of the alert.

Mark 14b-18

The compassion of Christ in the midst of Crisis:

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. And let him who is on the housetop not go down, or enter in, to get anything out of his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! But pray that it may not happen in the winter. For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall.

At the desecration of the Temple in 70 AD and the future desecration in the Tribulation, God allows the evil of man controlled by Satan to be unleashed on the earth. This is accompanied by His divine wrath on unrighteousness. Believers are to flee to the mountains of Edom, Moab, and Ammon.

While this is for their safety it is also difficult and in calling believers to do a difficult thing the Lord is compassionate, that woman not be pregnant, that they do not have nursing babies, that this flight not be in winter.

The tribulation that is yet to come will be difficult but in the midst of that harsh time the believer has the compassion of Christ.

Application: We may find ourselves in some harsh times as believers in Christ in the CHURCH AGE, but Christ has a love, a tenderness, a compassion towards us.

Mark 13:19,20

We see the faith the Lord has in the Father's plan. His faith in the Father for us -

For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved (SWZW); but for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD stands as one of history's most horrid invasions. But even greater horrors are to come when Satan attempts to rule the earth and God's wrath is poured out in judgment.

Man's inhumanity towards man will not be fully revealed until the tribulation period and we can truly say right now, that no matter how bad things get, they will get worse (but we, the CHURCH AGE believer will not be here).

We see in verse 20 Jesus' faith in the Father's plan.

The Lord, here referring to the one who is Lord over these events, the Father, will cut short the time of destruction.

1. In 70 AD this occurred when Titus Flavius was left as the commander over the Roman forces in Palestine while his father, Vespasian, was recalled to Rome to become the Emperor. Titus quickly

brought the war to an end with the capture and destruction of Jerusalem. Many had predicted a much longer war.

2. In the tribulation period, the time is cut short by another invasion, the invasion of Jesus Christ, with us and the elect angels to the earth. The second advent cuts short man and Satan's evil plan for planet earth.

So while man and even Satan may inflict their reign or terror on the earth, the final outcome is under the control of God.

Application: Our Savior had faith in the Father's plan for us, and we can have that same faith, God is in control.

Mark 12:21,22

For a second time in this chapter, Jesus gives a warning of false Christs. This will be especially pertinent in the tribulation as the antichrist will try to lure believers back under his control by putting out the rumor that Christ had returned.

So a warning not to be fooled or distracted:

And then if anyone says to you, Behold, here is the Christ; or, Behold, He is there ;do not believe him; for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray.

One important observation: The false Christs (Antichrists) and the false prophets will show signs and wonders in order to distract the elect.

Application: Even Satan can perform a miracle, he can show man signs and wonders. Do not believe the lie, stick with the truth.

Mark 12:23

Another note of Compassion is given:

But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance.

The prophecy is the advance message that prepares believers for hard times that are ahead. We are to be on the look out for these that our faith is not shaken.

Mark 12:24,25

Jesus' confidence that the Father is in control of all things, and that control extends from earth to heaven:

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.

The sun and the moon reference God power over creation.

The stars falling from heaven and the powers of the heavens refer to angelic creation. And while there is judgment on rebellious man during the tribulation, there is also judgment on rebellious angels who followed Satan.

And God controls all of it - now don't you think he also can control your life, your circumstances, your destiny.

Mark 13:26,27

The power the Son has to act on behalf of believers:

And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven.

The THEY refers to the people living during the Tribulation.

Here we see that the Son of Man has the power to act on behalf of the believers of the Tribulation.

And he has the power to act on our behalf right now.

Mark 13:28,29

Jesus has, from verse 14 with the mention of the abomination of desolation, to verse 27 with the regathering of Israel at the Second Advent, predicted the events of the second half of the Tribulation.

The parable he now gives deals with the signs of those events. Signs during the second half of the Tribulation which predict the coming of the Son of God at the Second Advent.

Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door.

Mark 13:30

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

The word GENERATION is GENEAE fem, sing, nom. and of the eight times it is so used in the Gospels the word would best be translated RACE.

Promise: The Jewish Race, this race, will not pass away until all these things are accomplished.

Mark 13:31

A SECOND PROMISE:

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

The word of God is the greatest reality we have, greater than the events of history and even the human events of the future.

Principle: You can always trust the Word of God

Mark 13:32

Now verse 32 ends this paragraph with a statement that the appointed time of these events is unknown, even to the angels and the humanity of Christ:

But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

And so not knowing the appointed time we are left with a question.

Knowing that God is in control of the future, how should we then live, not knowing when, only knowing what will happen?

The prophet Ezekiel wrote at a time when Israel was separated from the land, captive in Babylon. The people had the sum total of the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many of the minor prophets. They knew that God had a plan for Israel. They knew that one day they or their descendants would return to the land of promise, that they would be going home.

Today we are in a land that is not our own, we are citizens of a greater, eternal kingdom. We are citizens of heaven. But we are in the World although not of the world.

The people of Ezekiel's day, as they heard the message of dependence and trust in God and His ways and His grace and His plans asked a question that is worthy of consideration today:

Ezekiel 33:10 How should we then live -

Mark wrote his gospel account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ mainly to Romans, Gentiles. In it he includes this chapter relating the message of Christ given on the Mount of Olives. Matthew, writing to Jews gives a much more extensive account of this Olivet Discourse.

The Jews as a race were very involved with signs and the events that were to come upon Jerusalem in 70 AD and the events that are yet to come upon Jerusalem during the Tribulation demanded more information to be given to God's Old Testament nation.

Mark, on the hand, includes this chapter to establish a number of principles that while used by the disciples and other believers prior to 70 AD, when the Romans would invade and destroy Jerusalem, also have application to us as Christian in the CHURCH AGE

From this chapter and the study of its prophetic message we have already established a number of principles:

1. Distraction occurs when we try to interpret prophetic events in light of world affairs and natural disasters
2. Persecution and betrayal must not distract the believer but present an opportunity for evangelism
3. God in His omnipotent power controls even the future, He is in control now and forever
4. Jesus Christ has the power to act on our behalf both now and in the future
5. Neither men, angels, or even the humanity of Christ knows the day nor the hour of these prophetic events.

In light of these principles the next paragraph in Mark 13 answers the question - How should we then live?

Mark 13:32

But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Some have taken this to mean that while we do not know the literal day or the literal hour we can know, in the broader scope of time, when the Lord will return.

My question is how broad do we want to get? If the hour or day is unknown, then do we assume we are to now the week, the month, or the year, decade or century?

Through out the scriptures the word DAY is often used to designate an unspecified period of time. The day of judgment could be a decade, the day of the Lord is certainly more than a 24 hour period.

At times the word day is used for a literal 24 hour period and at other times as an extended period of time.

In the next verse and in the parable that follows we see this day and hour as referring to a unknown period of time, just as the Lord states - no one knows but the Father.

Mark 13:33

Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is.

The words AND PRAY found in the KJV are not in the Greek New Testament

The word TIME is KAIROS which can be used for a short time, a long time, an unspecified time.

That is what no one knows the time and therefore, we have two command given in this verse:

1. Take heed:
2. Keep on the alert:

But these are not the only commands in this section, a third one is coming up in verses 35 and 37 so we will examine all three in a few minutes.

The reason for the commands is that the believer in the tribulation period does not know when these things will occur.

Mark 13:34-36

To illustrate our obedience to these commands the Lord gives the disciples a short parable:

It is like a man, away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. Therefore, be on the alert-- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrow, or in the morning-- lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

We begin the parable with the relative adverb *WS* indicating a near comparison. This is not exact, but does illustrate the point.

The adverb assumes the words *IT IS LIKE*, and relates the parable to unfolding events of prophecy.

1. The man is the Lord Jesus who goes away from home, as the Lord is away from us right now.
2. Upon leaving his house he puts his slaves (*DOULOS*) in charge.

CHARGE is *EXOUSIA* _authority that is delegated to others.

In this same way the Lord has delegated to us His authority.

3. With that authority we have responsibility: Authority without responsibility is despotism, and our Lord has not delegated authority to us in vain.

This divine authority delegated to us is part of what makes us complete in Christ:

Colossians 2:10 And in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.

4. To each one is assigned his work: *ERGON* :

- 1) The work we have as a result of the delegated authority of Christ is both corporate and individual

- 2) All believers share in three ministries: The ministry of witnessing (reconciliation), the ministry of encouragement, and the ministry of teaching or passing on doctrine to believers.

- 3) In addition, every believer is given spiritual gifts to fulfill specific ministries within, to and out from the local church.

5. Spiritual gifts were initial given by Christ at the time of his ascension to the right hand of the Father. As with the parable, upon leaving.

Ephesians 4:8 When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men.

After the initial gifts were given by the Lord, the Holy Spirit perpetuates the gifts in the Church Age:

I Corinthians 12:7 and 11 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good - But one and the same Spirit

works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

6. The porter is the doorkeeper in the ancient world who guards the entrance to the house. This can parallel the Holy Spirit in the *CHURCH AGE* who has sealed and secured believers and continues to guard them.

Therefore, be on the alert-- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrowing, or in the morning--

The word *ALERT* here is different that v 33: But the same as the word found in v 37 ending this section:

So we have then three command: Three things we are to be doing while the Lord is away and we await for Him to return:

1. v 33 *TAKE HEED*: This is *BLEPW* which is used to catch the attention. In the context of Mark 13 it is used to catch the attention of the believer so that he is not distracted by persecution but rather uses persecution to make a testimony for Christ.

We are forewarned against distraction by having information. We have been told that events which could bring distraction will occur.

So the first command is to keep an eye out for the things that will distract.

2. v 33 also includes the second command: *BE ON THE ALERT* or *BE WAKEFUL*:

This is *AGRU-PNEW* _which means more that mere wakefulness. It means to be awake but also to be intently watching for something.

In our context we are to be intently looking ahead for the Lord's return.

As we live the Christ Centered Life we keep one eye on the future knowing that even in the future of the next moment, the Lord might return for us.

This intent watchfulness gives us three things:

- 1) Motivation: We are motivated to our jobs, complete the task, finish the race. We do not know how much time we have.
- 2) Efficiency of time: As Paul said in Ephesians 5 we are to redeem the time.
- 3) Encouragement and Comfort: We know that the Lord is coming for us, and with confident expectation we have that Hope.

3. The third command is found in v 35 and v 37 and is translated BE ON THE ALERT but is a different word than found in v 33.

Here we have GRE-GO-REW (Gregory). Which means to keep watch, and includes being keeping awake.

In the Roman army to sleep on watch was a capital crime. Not only for the century but for the whole unit.

It includes alertness, vigilant, fully awake.

The idea of this command is too be on guard, to use everything available to you to do your job.

So we then live under these three commands:

1. We are on the look out for things that would distract us from what is really important in life. our relationship of faith and friendship with Christ.
2. We anticipate with confidence that He is coming again. That for all eternity we will be with Him and that is our destiny.
3. And we stay the watch, utilizing the assets that are available to us as we await our master.

But all believers are not living under those three command:

Lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

Some believers are asleep and when you are asleep your:

Unaware of what is going on around you -

Paul saw this as a problem in Ephesus so he wrote:

Ephesians 5:14 Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.

The sleeping believer goes through life wondering what happened, what is happening, and what will happen.

Mark 13:37

Jesus tells us that these commands are not just for the disciples, not just for the believers in the Tribulation, but for all believers . . . for you and for me:

And what I say to you I say to all, Be on the alert!

The Lord is too gracious to ever do this, but I envision believers in heaven walking around with a sign on them that says - I was asleep though my life.

Let us not sleep, be on the look out, be alert, stay the watch.

Chapter 14

Harry Ironsides during his ministry to the Indians of Northern Arizona once asked a man if he knew what the conscience was: The man replied that he did, it was like a three cornered stone in his heart. When he was doing what he knew was right the stone was still. But when he did what he knew was wrong the stone turned and the corners hurt very much. But if I keep doing wrong the corners wear smooth and it doesn't hurt anymore.

The people we examine in this chapter have had the corners of their conscience worn smooth - it no longer hurts.

While our Lord is on the Mt. of Olives teaching his disciples about things to come, the religious leaders were also talking. They were trying to find a way to eliminate, exterminate Jesus Christ.

Throughout that day at the Temple they had tried to dismiss Him with words and that did not work. In the arena of argumentation, Jesus won. So now they decide that He must go, that they must somehow arrange His death.

Mark 14:1

Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread was two days off; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth, and kill Him.

We are told that the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was two days away. We know that Jesus was crucified the day prior to the Sabbath. But that was not the weekly Sabbath but the Sabbath that commemorated the Passover.

If we are to accept literally that Jesus spent three days and three nights in the grave, we must put the crucifixion on Wednesday which is really a position that predates that Roman Church's view of a Friday crucifixion.

With the crucifixion on Wednesday, the account at the beginning of Mark 14 would be Monday night with the events of the remainder of Mark 14 being on Tuesday.

There is no doubt that the four Gospels create some confusion as to chronology. And we may have to at times admit we cannot reconcile all the

statements of chronology we also proclaim we know someone who knows it all, to the minute, our Heavenly Father.

As Mark writes this account of the conspiracy of the Chief Priests and the scribes, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he intensifies their evil by beginning with the fact that the Passover is just two days away.

Even verse 2 testifies to their resolve and how set they were in their evil scheme and even worked their plot around one of the most holy celebrations in Israel.

Mark 14:2

for they were saying, Not during the festival, lest there be a riot of the people.

In these two verses we see three things:

1. Rejection of dependence
2. Difficulty and,
3. Indifference

As they approached this most Holy of times for Israel the Chief Priests and the Scribes were entrenched in reversionism and sin:

Chief priests and the scribes:

1. These two groups represented the spiritual and legal leadership of Israel.
2. The Chief Priest: The High Priest at this time was Caiaphas and was the son-in-law of the former high priest, Annas, who continue to wield considerable power. The collective term Chief Priests included the High Priest, the Captain of the Temple, the Temple overseers, and the Temple treasurers.
3. The responsibility of the priestly group was a spiritual responsibility. They were to lead the people to God through worship and instruction.
4. The Scribes were the lawyers of Israel. They interpreted Old Testament Law and the Talmud and made application of these principles to nation.
5. Hence, the Scribes represent the legal arm of Israel while the priests represent the spiritual impetus in Israel.

And both have turned against the Lord Jesus Christ, the very institutions that were to serve now turned to seize the Lord and kill him.

I want you to realize where this puts the Lord: He was without help. Formal Spiritual help was not available and the legal system was now set against Him - He was being put into a helpless situation.

But not hopeless -

How would you feel if your church turned against you. If the board and I were plotting your death, if we even got the police and the county attorney's office in on the conspiracy. If every place you turned for help rejected you? You would be in a helpless situation, but never, never hopeless.

God was preparing the humanity of Christ for tremendous glory and honor. And in doing so he was allow the plan of Satanic evil to turn against the One who came to serve and to save.

The reason they had to keep on trying to figure out how to do this is because their plot to kill the Lord conflicted with the Passover.

This was a difficulty but they were so firm in their evil resolve that they would work, and work, and work at getting around this problem,

Principle: Evil can be very tenacious, Once man establishes that the attaining of a certain goal will fulfill his needs he will usually stop at nothing until that goal is reached.

Even with the Passover at hand, they were going to figure out a way to reach their evil goal.

Principles of the Passover:

Israel's Passover was a very important annual event for the Jews and is steeped in Biblical regulation as well as centuries of cultural tradition.

Every aspects of the Passover shares one thing in common, they all point to the person and work of the Messiah, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

And it is in this that we see the INDIFFERENCE of the Priests and the Scribes. They were working around the Passover, that points to Christ, while working to kill Christ.

Historical background:

1. The Passover celebrates the event that lead up to the Exodus. When Pharaoh of Egypt allowed the 2. 5 million Hebrews leave Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

Exodus 12 explains how the faithful of the Hebrews were to sacrifice a lamb putting the blood on the door posts and lintel of the house.

With this as a covering and a picture of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, the angel of death passed over those houses and brought death of the first born only to those who had not heeded the command.

Pharaoh's son died that night as did many Egyptians, but the desired result was secured, Pharaoh let the people go.

2. The historical event of the passing over and the subsequent Exodus was celebrated annually by the Jews in the first month of the Hebrew calendar.

This celebration recognized a dramatic event in the history of Israel and represented a division between bondage to Egypt and freedom in living unto God.

Application: By the death of Christ and the application of that death to the individual believing sinner, he is passed out of death unto life.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

3. The celebration of Passover actually involved two feast that came together as one. The Feast of the Paschal (Passover) Lamb and the feast of unleavened bread.

The Lamb looked to the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

The Bread looks to Christ as the bread of life.

John 6:35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

John 6:48 I am that bread of life.

The Lamb looks to our salvation while the bread looks to the sustaining of the Christ Centered Life.

4. The Lamb was to be a male lamb, one year old, without spot or blemish. Peter states that Jesus was such a sacrifice.

1 Peter 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

5. The Passover sacrifice was the only sacrifice that was not to be done by the priests but by the members of the family who together would partake of the Passover supper.

In the CHRISTIAN LIFE we recognize the universal priesthood of all believers, as does the scriptures:

1 Peter 2:5 You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

6. As the lamb was prepared, no bones were to be broken. Furthermore it could not be boiled, but had to be roasted over the fire.

In the same way no bones of Christ were broken although that was a normal event in crucifixion.

John 19:36 For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Not a bone of Him shall be broken.

7. The Passover supper was a communal supper for a family or a number of people. Not for just one.

Just as Jesus Christ made salvation available for the entire human race:

1 John 2:2 He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

8. In the Jewish home on the night of the Passover supper, the door of the house was to be open at midnight and left open. The Jews saw this as symbolic of the prophecy that the Messiah could come at any moment.

In the same way Christians of the Church Age keep a figurative door open realizing that Jesus could return at any moment. This is what is meant by the imminent return of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

9. A portion of the blood of the paschal lamb was to be collected and the priests of the Tabernacle were to throw the blood at the base of the altar.

This was symbolic of the effectiveness of the sacrifice and thus the future work of Christ in dying on our behalf.

Colossians 1:14 In [Jesus Christ] whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

I Corinthians 10:16 Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

10. Everything about the Passover looked to the Messiah, the Lamb of God who would once and for all take away the sins of the World. Our Passover is Jesus Christ.

Back to Mark 14:1 and 2

The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth, and kill Him; for they were saying, Not during the festival, lest there be a riot of the people.

So it in the midst of the preparations for Passover that the religious leaders and the legal representatives of Israel conspire to kill the Lord Jesus Christ.

With everything around them, the masses of people who are visiting the city for the feast, the worship at the Temple, the sacrifices, the celebration, that they, in their indifference to that which is right in front of them desire to kill the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Principles:

1. Jesus Christ came with the truth, these religious and legal leaders rejected the truth.

Jesus invaded their comfort level, their pretence, their style of relating. He rocked their boat.

2. For these leaders Jesus was adversity. And these had three choice they could have made:

Use adversity as opportunity to change: But their style of relating, of separatist ministry, was too secure for them to consider they could be wrong.

To change would make them dependant upon God and they had spent too much in gaining their independent stature of control over the people.

Deny the adversity: Which they had done but Jesus kept on presenting truth.

Eliminate the adversity: Kill the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Their personal needs and the goals that were established from those needs were overriding common sense, integrity, legality, morality, and every other thing that was right.

4. They were blinded by their arrogance and hardened in their hearts, which resulted in evil in their actions.

5. They would, even in the face of the difficulty presented by the Passover, they would find a way to kill the Lord Jesus Christ.

And ever since then we see people in the face of all the facts, in the presence of the proof, in the reality of the revelation, in the evidence that tells man of eternal God - continue to scheme, to plot, to conspire to kill the Lord Jesus Christ.

But while they put him to the death of the cross, He did not die, death could not hold the Lord of Glory and today, while some think they have killed the knowledge of the Lord Jesus and removed Him from our world - they have not.

It is only their refusal to depend upon Him, their continuing evil in the face of difficulty, and their indifference to truth that allows them the fantasy that they can do away and do without the Lord Jesus Christ.

As Jesus prepares for the unknown of the Cross, we have seen him deal with the religious leaders and teach his disciples of things to come. Last week we saw the reaction of the Priests and Scribes as they plotted his death. Now we shift the scene to Bethany, where Jesus and his disciples have retired for the night.

Mark 14:3

While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head.

Simon was a resident of Bethany of Judah who had been healed by the Lord of his leprosy.

Leprosy was a disease that made a person an outcast among his people. But now healed he is living in the village, entertaining friends. And with Jesus and his disciples being in Bethany he invites them over for a feast.

So at the beginning of this paragraph, we see the response of appreciation. Simon had been an outcast, but Jesus touched him and he was healed, now he again a part of society, but takes advantage of an opportunity to express love and appreciation for the Savior.

Reclining at the table is idiomatic for dinner. And dining together is a picture of fellowship. So we see a time of fellowship sparked by Simon's appreciation.

The fellowship was not limited to Simon and Jesus alone. In John's Gospel we find that Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and the disciples are all present.

Principle: Fellowship with the Son, our Savior, includes fellowship with others who are His.

1 John 1:3 What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Principle: Christ's fellowship with us is something that we can extend to others. It is not something we hold in private but express to others.

Now in midst of this dinner party, one of the guest, Mary of Bethany (John 12:3), comes to Jesus with an alabaster vial of costly perfume of pure spikenard, and begins to anoint the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now at this point we need to examine four things:

1. The purpose of Mary
2. The attitude of the disciples
3. The response of Christ
4. The result of this anointing

First we must understand a very simple truth: Mary loved her Lord, Jesus Christ -

Now consider what it meant for Mary to love her Lord. What is it like to love someone for whom you can do nothing.

We most often express our love by doing something for the one we love. Love can find its highest expression when it can do something for the one we love that they cannot do for themselves.

But to love the Lord of Glory, the one who was very God, the Savior, the Messiah who has come

to earth to pay the price for sins - how can show your love for Him?

In it is this love with this strong desire to express her love to her Lord that she comes to Him with an alabaster vial.

The alabaster vial:

1. In 1 Chronicles 29:2 David assembled the items for the Temple of God. We are told that there was alabaster in abundance.
2. Alabaster is a white, pure, marble type of stone that is formed from stalactites in caves.
3. Two interesting things about it: It is high in hydrated calcium sulphate and it takes a long, long, time to form.
4. Calcium, one of the basic building blocks of the human body. Giving strength to bone, to the frame. And sulphate, which burns with a clear blue flame. And alabaster takes years, centuries to form in caves of the earth.
5. The calcium looks at Jesus' humanity, the sulphate at the pure deity of the Lord, and the time of formation the centuries of promise that predicted that Messiah would come -
6. And what did Mary do to that alabaster vial, she broke the vial. Just as Christ would be broken on the Cross.

And then in her love she pours its contents on his head and on his feet.

Can you imagine what it was like for Mary who wanted to do something to show her love to Jesus, and could do nothing. But then remembers the alabaster vial, perhaps the most costly and precious thing she has, something she may have had with her for years, and she gives it to her Lord.

Now I do not think she understood the significance of what she was doing. That was not important to her. She just wanted to show her love for Jesus Christ.

And she was doing something that is not prohibited in the Word of God, in any of the pages or pages of Law, it was not even contrary to the Talmudic Law.

She had the right, the freedom, the prerogative to do what she did, but notice the attitude of the disciples.

The Attitude of the Disciples:

Well, simply put I have to describe the attitude of the disciples as intrusive, interfering, out of line, and filled with pretense.

Mark 14:4,5

But some were indignantly remarking to one another, Why has this perfume been wasted? For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor. And they were scolding her.

Now notice: The act of adoration and appreciation was between Mary and Jesus. Although it was in the presence of others it had nothing to do with them. But they chose to intrude.

We are told in Mark that some were indignant, in Matthew we are told this group was the disciples, and in John we find the spokesman was Judas.

Not only were they INDIGNANT: The words means to be angry or to be unwilling.

It is used only in the Synoptic Gospels to describe the attitude or emotions directed at a real or assumed wrong.

And while their attitude was one of indignation against Mary, their actions went even further:

1. For what purpose has this perfume been wasted. They assume this was waste of a valuable commodity. This assumption is totally based upon their norms and standards. They assume and they conclude - a waste

2. Then they get into the I've got a better idea syndrome. For this perfume might have been sold for a whole years wage and the money given to the poor. Now over in John 12:6 We are told that Judas was saying this - not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. But as he said it the others concurred with his better idea.

3. The result was that they started to scold Mary. SCOLD is a word that actually means to snort like an animal, and means to express great displeasure, and to give stern warnings.

It is a verb in the middle voice, they thought they could benefit themselves by putting down someone else.

Now can we even begin to imagine how Mary felt in the midst of this?

Put yourself in her place. She comes with most precious thing she had and freely, willingly gives it to her Lord. And all of sudden everyone is against her, criticizing her, accusing her, and coming up with their better ideas.

Have you ever done something you believed to be so right and have interpreted as being so wrong.

For a moment don't even think in terms of spiritual things, just the things we do for others and right when we receive think we will receive commendation, instead condemnation.

We think applause and receive attack,

We want praise and instead we are punished,

We want to be the hero and end up the goat,

We have all had things like that happen but now think of it in terms of spiritual service and worship.

The words spoken, the innuendos, the judgments, the criticism, all coming against us for doing something we thought was so right.

But into this conflict comes the Lord.

Mark 14:6

But Jesus said, Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me.

I think we can well imagine what she felt like but notice she did not speak up. Perhaps she was too confused, too frustrated, more likely, too hurt. She did not attempt to vindicate herself, justify her actions.

She did not have to, her Lord would speak for her.

1. Let her alone

2. Why do you bother her

3. She has worked a good work to me

A few observations:

1. What she did opposed no standard or law. She gave the most precious thing she had to the Lord Jesus Christ

2. What she did had nothing to do with the others

3. The disciples were wrong in intruding into another's adoration and appreciation of the Lord

4. The Lord vindicated her. She did not have to reason with the disciples, explain to them what she

was doing and why, try to convince them and justify herself. The Lord would do this for her.

Deuteronomy 32:36 For the Lord will vindicate His people, And will have compassion on His servants; When He sees that their strength is gone, And there is none remaining, bond or free.

5. The Lord Jesus was not going to allow Mary to be harmed and the disciples to be so wrong.

Application: How many Christians have had their enthusiasm stolen, their love for God lost, their desire to serve subverted, by the critics?

Application: In any area of service and worship that is dictated to in the Word of God people may need to be taught what is right and what is wrong but what about in the things that are not specified in the Scripture? And there are many. Have we any right to criticize and judge? Of course not - but we do.

Let's look at it this way. Were the disciples ministering encouragement to Mary? Or were they ministering discouragement.

6. We must put ourselves on both sides. We must not criticize others in areas of non-essentials and when we are criticized we must let the Lord vindicate us.

We must let alone and be left alone in the worship of our Savior and Lord.

Mark 14:7

The Lord is not going to allow this incident to pass without taking advantage of it to teach a Bible class.

We should not think it unusual that the Lord saw a Bible class in everything. He is going to use this situation to teach three principles. These principles describe:

1. Priorities
2. Assets
3. Promise

For the poor you always have with you, and whenever you wish, you can do them good; but you do not always have Me.

Your priorities will determine your taking advantage of opportunities.

The contrast the Lord draws is between what is always present, the poor, and the rare

opportunities we might have to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

We always can do something for the poor but how often do we get a chance to advance the cause of Christ?

The Lord is not taking anything from the poor but he challenging the disciples and us to take the opportunities that he presents to serve Him.

The only way this will be accomplished is if He is our priority in all of life.

Mark 14:8

She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.

The statement in the Greek text reads that she did with what she had.

The Lord Jesus never asks us to do anything more than that. To use the assets we have that are really provisions of His grace, in His service.

In doing this she also did something she was not aware of. She anointed His body for burial.

Application: Just as she was unaware of the significance of what she did, we are unaware of the significance of what we do as we serve the Lord. We often have no idea of the far reaching implications of our application of doctrine in sacrifice and service.

But it is the Lord Jesus Christ who can take the meager things we do and make them significant and as the next verse tells us, make even us significant.

Mark 14:9

And truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, that also which this woman has done shall be spoken of in memory of her.

The Lord makes a promise, a promise that the sacrifice of this one woman, Mary of Bethany, will be spoken of in the whole world.

Now I want you to see something in summary:

She willingly sacrificed what she had as a simple expression of love to the one who was her Savior.

She was opposed and misunderstood, even criticized for what she did.

She was vindicated, not by her power but by the Words of the Lord.

And then she was given an honor that she could not have worked for, planned for, or even dreamed of -

She became a memorial of love and grace to the world.

Mary of Bethany is the only one in the Bible this promise is made to.

I think we can learn a few things from Mary's sacrifice and service about the character of christian service today:

1. She did what she did without talking about it. She knew what she wanted to do and it was within the area of flexibility of the Scriptures and she did it without approval of the disciples.

Too often today we hesitate, we talk instead of walk. We hear about great plans that never come about. We seek approval where no approval is needed.

2. She did not delay in her service. She was not even in her own home but she could not wait until later to give to the Lord.

Today we procrastinate, we say we want to serve and never get around to it. We are carried away on the winds of worry and the cares of this world.

3. She did plan - she had to bring the alabaster vial with her to the dinner party.

Too often those who do not hesitate also do not plan. You need to plan but remember what Patton said:

A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow - there are no perfect plans.

Principles:

1. Don't procrastinate or hesitate. If you desire to minister in service to the Lord do it now.
2. Plan, even seek wise counsel and advice, but don't let the strength of your service rest in the approval of others.
3. Don't be distracted from your service by the critics. The critics will be with you always. Leave them

As we begin to see the betrayal of our Lord by Judas we have two questions to ask and to answer:

1. Are there Judases in your life?
2. And what power over you do they have?

Mark 14:10,11

And Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests, in order to betray Him to them. And they were glad when they heard this, and promised to give him money. And he began seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.

These two verses reveal the initial overt action of betrayal by Judas Iscariot.

Each of the Synoptic writers mention this action. Matthew adds that the amount of money given was thirty pieces of silver, Luke adds that Judas spoke not only with the chief priests but also the captains of the Temple guard. Luke also adds that Judas sought a way to betray Christ in the absence of the people, to do this by stealth.

But what we see here is not some mere isolated incident of overt sin. Overt sin really is - what we see here is the result of a process that had been forming for a very long time. Forming not only during the public ministry of Christ but from ages pastas conditions were set up by Satan and yet controlled by God, that would eventually lead to the Cross of Christ.

Read Acts 1:16

Prior to the day of Pentecost, after Jesus had ascended to sit at the right hand of God in glory, Peter gave a brief message to the faithful gathered in Jerusalem.

Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

Peter recognized that the betrayal of Jesus by Judas was a fulfillment of prophecy that was written 1000 years prior to the actual act of sin.

Peter refers to Psalm 41:8-9 A wicked thing is poured out upon him, That when he lies down, he will not rise up again. Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.

While David spoke this regarding very real situations in his own life, the prophecy of this passage refers to Judas' betrayal of Jesus Christ.

A few observations:

1. The betrayal of Christ was predicted 1000 years before it occurred.

2. Jesus, in His humanity, knew the Scriptures and knew of this prophecy.

3. The reference to raising the heel goes back even further to the time of the fall. In condemning Satan God said the heel of the Messiah would crush the head of Satan.

In the betrayal of Christ, Satan uses Judas to try to turn this around. That the death blow may be to Christ rather than on him.

4. **Principle:** While Jesus knew what Satan was attempting and what Judas would do, He also knew something more important, that God His Father would preserve Him and protect Him.

Read John 6:70

In the passage the Lord is talking about the utter uselessness of human effort in following Him. Upon hearing this, many who had followed him out of the energy of the flesh went away - but the twelve remained:

John 6:70 Jesus answered them, Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?

In this remarkable statement we have two principles revealed:

1. Jesus Christ chose the one who would eventually betray him.
2. He did nothing to prevent the betrayal. Instead He put His trust, His faith in the Father's perfect plan. The mention that one of the disciples is a devil reveals the one who is directing Judas in his negative volition, Satan is playing Judas, using him a part of his plan of evil.

And eventually Satan will even completely control Judas and posses him.

Now, back to Mark 14:10.

These two verses continue the opening verses of Mark 14, as the chief priests and the scribes sought a way they might put Jesus to death.

There hope in pulling off their evil deed rested in finding someone who had been with Jesus who would accuse Him of false teaching.

This plot proved to be an opportunity for Judas to advance himself. But Judas involvement in the evil plot did not just develop out of thin air.

We can look at a number of things that brought Judas to this point in time when he would betray Christ:

1. He had misplaced loyalty: Of all the twelve, Judas was the only one who was a Judean. All the others were of Galilee.

Being a Judean he had more of a loyalty to the religious leaders of Jerusalem than the others.

However, this was a loyalty that was misplaced

2. He had wrong expectations: Being a Judean, Judas had a greater desire to see the Romans out of Jerusalem than did the rather distant Galileans.

Thus, when Jesus started to talk of a spiritual kingdom rather than a literal kingdom that would expel the Romans, Judas became disenchanted with the Messiah.

This is a problem of expectation. Judas was willing to follow and serve Jesus as long as He was the Messiah according to his own definition.

This is a distraction based upon wrong expectations

He wanted the Lion and rejected the Lamb

3. He was also greedy: In the account studied last week we noted that John tells us that it was Judas who was angry at Mary for wasting the valuable perfume. And put forth the idea that it should have been sold and the money given to the poor.

John 12:6 Now Judas said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.

So he was out for profit rather than the prophet of God.

His priorities were wrong and this lead to sin.

4. He was afraid: As Judas had heard Jesus speak of His sacrifice and death, he soon figured out that this leader, this Jesus, was not going to be around much longer.

Even when Mary anointed Jesus, Judas heard the prophecy that she was anointed Him for death.

Judas concluded that this was the time to change sides, do what he could to secure His future. He was afraid what his association with Jesus might mean if Jesus was to die.

5. And then, into the midst of this, we have the influence of Satan. Satan's plan was to destroy the Savior and he found a willing pawn for his game in Judas, the Judean.

Satan had an agenda, and at this time he thinks his goal will be accomplished.

6. **Principle:** The attitudes of disloyalty, wrong expectations, the sins of greed and fear, all worked tossed up the conditions that allowed Satan to control Judas and for Judas to betray Christ.

Sin is not accomplished in a vacuum, there are reasons, some very deep in the soul and deep in development, that eventually result in overt sins.

But one thing we must bear in mind: This sin, this betrayal, this evil working of Satan, is fully known by God - and God is in control.

And it is here, in the humanity of Christ, and His response to His betrayal, that we can make a very important application to the Judas that we may have in our own lives.

What is Jesus doing while Judas is betraying Him, look at these passages, what is our Savior doing - nothing!

Betrayal is evil!

It is for money, base gain, it is done in secret. Judas did not even go to the Temple but the priest's residence or palace. And as he considered how to carry this off he again knew he had to do what he would do in secret.

Now all of us have experienced disloyalty, maybe you were even betrayed by someone. If you have suffered a divorce you know exactly what I am talking about. The feeling of being thrown away by another human being and it is even worse when the one who throws you away is someone you love.

And that is exactly what is happening with the Lord Jesus Christ, as Judas threw him to evil authorities.

Let me paint a picture for you:

Let's say I introduce you to someone. You are single and they are single (good, more frowns than smiles). And then I tell you that you are going to fall in love with that person. And I also tell you that they are no good, they are not loyal, they are manipulative, they are greedy, they are out for themselves, and they will betray you.

You would probably punch me out and get away from that person as fast as you could. And that would be the proper action to take -

But what if I also told you that God spoke to me (now we are just imagining this remember, use some of your way out imagination) and that I then tell you, that what this person will do to you is part of God's perfect plan. Then what would you do?

That was exactly the issue faced by the Lord Jesus Christ. And he not only did nothing to prevent the betrayal but knowing it was to come he continued to love Judas.

NOW HE WILL warn him, but he did not tell Peter to go take care of him, He did not leave town, He did not try to vindicate himself before his accuser.

Instead he trusted in the plan, the perfect plan of the heavenly Father.

Principles:

1. People are an adversity. In normal relationships we will experience the adversity of our fallen condition. More so in a situation where one has turned against us.
2. God is greater than the adversity of people. God is in control and he has not lost his grip on our lives nor has he failed us in his plan for us.
3. We cannot control what others do to us nor what they might say to us or even about us. You can only control yourself and you can only change yourself.
4. God alone can bring the cursing of adversity into blessing in our lives.
5. We cannot see into the future, God can. He knows the beginning and the end of everything that happens in our lives.
6. The Judases in your lives have no power over you. The power of God is greater, His plan is perfect - all we must do is live the life of faith in the person and finished work of Christ and in the Father's perfect plan.

Mark 14:12

And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?

We are living in a new age of evangelical legalism. No longer the mere do's and don't's of things considered right or wrong, but a legalism that says we can come to love the Lord by service. It is a subtle legalism that tells Christians that by their doing they will eventually have the love, the joy, the grace of God.

Jesus and His disciples are in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. This Passover will, however, be the last. The week of celebration will end in the crucifixion. The once and for all sacrifice of the lamb of God for the sins of mankind.

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

The final, complete, finished, once and for all sacrifice.

But the sacrifice of the Cross had not yet occurred and the Lord Jesus Christ is going to use the last Passover to institute the Lord's Supper.

We have already examined that the Passover celebration was not only the first feast of the Jewish calendar but also of all the feasts it most directly pointed towards the coming of the Messiah.

The feast was one that was celebrated with family and friends and included the eating of the Pascal lamb, fresh fruits and vegetables and the new or unfermented wine.

The feast looked back to the birth of the nation of Israel as they were released from the bondage of Egypt in 1440 BC after their death angel has slain the first born of every house on which was not placed the blood of the innocent lamb.

As every other Passover looked back to the birth of Israel, this Passover would look ahead to the birth of the church.

Now the disciples came to Him and asked a question:

Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?

This is a remarkable statement that we will return to. But for now I want to deal with the remaining verses in this paragraph.

Mark 14:13-16

And He sent two of His disciples, and said to them, Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him; and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, The Teacher says, Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples? And he himself will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; and prepare for us there. And the disciples went out, and came to the city, and found it just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

Simply put, we see that Jesus, at some time during the days before the Passover, had made prior arrangements to celebrate the Passover meal with His disciples.

Some observations:

1. There is an element of secrecy in the preparations for the Passover meal.

Even prior to the Triumphal Entry, the religious leaders had put out a covert warrant for Jesus arrest:

John 11:57 Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.

We have also noted that the religious leaders feared the people and would not arrest Christ in a public place.

So the time of Triumphal entry was out as was the time Jesus and his disciples spent at the Temple. In the evening the Lord retired to Bethany which was outside of the jurisdiction of the Temple guard.

BUT NOW the Passover meal, which must be celebrated in Jerusalem, was at hand. And there was a need for secrecy.

2. Jesus had made an arrangement with a man, called here the owner of the house, to provide a place and the provisions of the Passover meal.

Some suppose this may have been Mark's parents home and the same home and upper room mentioned in Acts 1.

3. The owner of the house had a male servant who daily drew water from the one of the city wells.

Normally, the women of Israel carried the water. So a man carrying water was not a common sight.

Jesus knew if his disciples, Peter and John (Luke 22:8), went to the city they would spot this servant.

4. Peter and John were to follow the servant to the home, go in and speak to the owner saying:

The Teacher says, Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?

This was a pre-arranged signal, the mention of the Teacher, with the definite article indicates a specific teacher, the Lord Jesus, and a specific signal.

5. The room was furnished and ready and the disciples were then to prepare the meal.

FURNISHED is a perfect, passive, participle. Indicating that this was a past completed accomplishment, and that it was done for the disciples.

There part was to take that which was provided and prepare the meal.

6. Verse 16 tells us that this all occurred according to plan.

Back in verse 12 --

And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?

I mentioned before that this is a remarkable statement made by the disciples and it shows a change in attitude previously not seen.

The disciples are coming to the Lord and wanting to do something for Him.

Where do you wish us to go and prepare the Passover that you might eat?

And once there, prepare for you the Passover that you may eat:

The remarkable thing in this question is that the disciples were wanting to do something for Jesus Christ their Lord:

They wanted to serve the Savior!

Principles:

1. Prior to this time the disciples were more concerned with how Jesus could serve them and help them. Now, after three years of ministry, they desire to serve Jesus Christ.

2. Serving Christ was going to require some work. Yet they desired to do the work. Now this is a very simple point but important. If someone just walked up to you, some casual friend, and said I want you to spend a whole day preparing a fantastic feast for me, you would no doubt find an excuse to be busy that day.

But if there was someone you loved you might even invite them to a fantastic feast that you had spent the whole day preparing and have great joy when they sat at your table and enjoyed the meal.

Now what is the point: You never hesitate to do something, even if it requires time, money, effort, for someone you love.

Is it a heavy burden to do things for those you love. No. Quite the opposite. It is a joy, a pleasure. But only when the love is there first.

3. Their desire to serve the Lord was not a means of fulfilling the life of faith but a result of the life of faith.

It was only after the years they had spent with Christ that their love for Him became the motivation for their desire to serve Him.

And here is where we make a dramatic distinction of doctrine with the pervasive thinking in Christianity today.

Most churches, even Bible Churches, teach that by doing, by service, by somehow developing a servant attitude, that we grow closer to Christ.

But they have it backwards, it is growing closer to Christ through faith and trusting His Word, resulting in friendship and love, that we then serve Him as a result, never a means.

This distinction is very subtle. Most Christians are taught that they must do something, maybe only develop an attitude (not even as extreme as any works legalism), and in doing that they will find fulfillment in the Lord.

Illustration: Kindred Spirit, Autumn 1991, page 3.

Develop a Christ like Character, make a personal impact for Christ, have a vibrant expression of life - all which can be accomplished by pretence.

And pretence is a heavy burden to carry in life.

Matthew 11:28-30 Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in

**heart; and you shall find rest for your souls.
For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.**

Did you hear those words of our Savior. *My yoke is easy, my load is light?*

There are a few things in life that really frighten me. And perhaps top on the list is hearing someone say that the Christian life is really hard.

Whenever I have heard that, from two people in the past years, they have gone negative, they have set aside the priority of Christ in their life..

When I hear that expression of a heavy burden in the Christian life I know something is all wrong. That the flesh has found it way into their pretend Christian life.

Now granted, if you are pretending that the Christian life is a very heavy burden, it is a load that will break you, and cause you to reject Christ and His word.

You are primed and ready for the reaction-distraction stage of reversionism (backsliding).

Because the christian life is not hard unless you are going about it all wrong.

Illustrations:

Men, have you ever tried to do a job and not had the right tool. How good is a lawn mower without a blade? Every try to work on an imported car without a set of metric sockets and wrenches?

Ladies, how easy is it to prepare a fine meal if you are missing the main ingredient? Or to teach our children in Sunday school without a lesson.

There are main ingredients or essential tools that are necessary to get the results. With that tool the job is easy, without it, it is a difficult task.

Husbands and wives: How hard and what a heavy burden it would be to serve your spouse, to work and share your earnings, to prepare a meal, to iron a shirt. To do all the things we might do for each other if there was not that essential ingredient of love?

Would any of you be so foolish to try and develop a relationship and a love for another by doing things for them.

Think back when you were dating. Think of some of the extraordinary things you did for that one special person you loved. Did you ever hesitate thinking the burden of the relationship was heavy,

not at all. Even the most tasks that took time, and money, and effort, became very light.

Are you beginning to see how absurd we have become in telling Christians to live the Christ Centered Life apart from the essential ingredient of a personal love and relationship with Christ?

And with that attitude we have developed a generation of Christians who see the Christian life as heavy burden rather than a load that is light?

Have you ever said or perhaps thought, that being a Christian is really hard - if you have something is terribly wrong.

Principles: The light burden of the Christ Centered Life:

1. When you love someone that love motivates you to want to do things for them.
2. In doing things for the one you love the labor is not heavy but light, joyful, exciting.
3. It is only when you try to do a part from love that the burden becomes heavy.

NOW LOOK AGAIN AT MATHEW 11:28-30

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.

The invitation is to the believer, who is carrying a heavy burden because they are trying to live the CHRISTIAN LIFE from pretense and the energy of the flesh.

Preceding this we have a prayer of Jesus in which he praises the Father revealing truth to those who are as children. Those who have no false expectation and easily give their burdens to the Lord.

The promise is the promise of rest

Then we are to take upon us the yoke of Christ. This is to be in harness with Him.

Then, once in harness (in fellowship, moving in the same direction) we are to learn from Him. This is what the disciples did for three years and what we do in the CHRISTIAN LIFE

The motive for this is a precedent for us: The Lord is gentle and humble in heart. There is no

pretense or pretending with the Lord. We can fully trust Him, He hides nothing from us.

And again we have the promise of rest but here connected with the Old Testament prophets:

Jeremiah 6:16 Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls.

Then a functional motive: For you see (GAR) my yoke is easy and my load is light.

To be in harness, in fellowship with Christ, moving in the same direction he is moving, is easy.

CHRISTOS fit for use, pleasant, mild, good, the exact opposite of bitter.

The word LOAD refers to that which is carried without reference to weight. It does not bear down. It is light.

When you say the Christian Life is hard to live - something is wrong. You are trying to live by pretense, getting the works, the serve before the love for the Lord.

Remember the pattern: The disciples have been with the Lord, learning from Him, about Him, walking with Him day by day.

Now, out of their maturity and love for the Lord they want to, desire to serve Him.

And then what happens? The same thing that happens today when you grow in Christ, are conformed to His image.

You find that he has already made the provision.

1. The disciples anticipated a very hectic and busy day finding a place, getting a lamb, butchering it, cooking all the food, setting the table, on and on.
2. But they wanted to do this because of their maturity and love for the Lord.
3. But Jesus had already made the provision of the place and the food.
4. The heavy burden of a busy day, became very light

Just like for us today, the heavy burdens of life became very light because of the provision and the power of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 5:44 the Lord Jesus Christ taught that we are to love our enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.

In verse 17 to 21 we are going to see the grace of Lord as he warns his disciples that one of them will betray him and given Judas an opportunity to repent.

Mark includes nine verse that describe the Last Supper. Of all the Gospel writers, Mark includes the least information regarding this event. The reason for that is he is concerned with getting across just three important points of information.

1. The final fellowship that Jesus had with his disciples, his close friends, the twelve, on the evening prior to the Cross.
2. A warning regarding the disciple who would betray the Lord Jesus and the Lord's confidence that God was in control.
3. The instituting of the Lord's supper. The breaking of the bread and the taking of the cup. No longer a looking back to Israel's Passover, now a remembrance feast of Fellowship with Christ.

Mark 14:17

And when it was evening He came with the twelve.

The mention of the time of day as being evening is significant in the attempt to work out the chronology of the last days and even hours of the earthly life of Christ.

Normally, the Jews of Israel ate an early meal, later afternoon. Understandable since they did not have extensive artificial lighting. But the Passover meal was celebrated to be observed on a specific day and since the day for the Jews began at sunset (rather than midnight), the meal became the first event of the new day.

The conflict comes in when we find that the Passover was to be celebrated on Nisan 15th which would make this Thursday evening or the first hours of Friday. Which would put the crucifixion on Friday rather than on Thursday which allows for the literal three days and three night in the grave. When we study the Gospel of John where the problem is more apparent we will spend some time with Christology. For now let me offer two options. First, this was a meal celebrating the upcoming Passover which Jesus knew He would not attend. It was permissible to celebrate the meal early. Second, Jesus and His disciples followed a different calendar that the Jew of Jerusalem. The Qumram community (the dead sea

scrolls) noted in their writings that different groups and even geographical regions held the Passover on days other than Nisan 15th.

Jesus provided and the disciples prepared. The disciples had prepared the place, the lamb, the bread, the vegetables cooked in bitter herbs (reminder of the bitterness of their Egyptian sojourn), and the new wine (boiled grape juice), looking forward to the sinless state of eternity.

As part of the preparation for the meal the owner of the home, who we briefly meet last week, would have gone through the home and removed any leaven.

Jesus' provision was of a room, furnished and made ready as a place for the disciples to prepare the meal. Jesus had previously arranged for the lamb, the ingredients for the bread, the vegetables, the herbs, the grapes. And he had made the room ready which meant that the leaven had been removed.

Leaven is a symbol for sin, for evil, for human view point. The disciples were not expected to get rid of the leaven themselves. Just like today, God does not expect us to use our human ability to get rid of the sin, the evil, the Human viewpoint in our lives. He does it, he forgives, he cleanses, he restores, and then he conforms us to the image of Christ.

The fact that Christ provided all that was necessary for the meal parallels the provision of Christ today. He provides what we need for life, for happiness, for friendship and fellowship. He provides the logistics we need to live and to grow in Him and then he provides the special blessings as we have capacity to appreciate and enjoy His grace.

All the disciples had to do was show up, make themselves available, and take that which was provided and prepare it.

The PREPARATION is a picture of the believer applying the provisions of doctrine, the promises and the principles. The Lord provides them, we apply them.

The participle used for the phrase: When evening came, is middle voice as is the verb Came when it refers to Jesus and His disciples coming to this upper room.

The double middle voice indicates strong benefit, the benefit of the Passover meal and the benefit of this time of fellowship with these believers and their Lord.

Principle: Time spent with the Lord in fellowship and time spent with other believers in fellowship will benefit you.

Mark 14:18

And as they were reclining at the table and eating, Jesus said, Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me-- one who is eating with Me.

The first part of this verse describes the traditional setting for a meal in the ancient world:

They were reclining on reclining couches around a low table. They did not sit in chairs as we do but they reclined on their sides with the heads at the table.

A few observations:

1. The upper room was a secure place unknown by the Temple authorities who wanted to arrest the Lord.
2. The ones present, except for Judas, were all believers.
3. The center or focus of attention was the Lord Jesus Christ
4. During the courses of the meal the Psalms were read and the story of the original Passover was told. The Word of God was a part of this meal.
5. And the disciples were relaxed, reclining at the meal.
6. All this adds up to a picture of what we have today: A security in the presence of Christ, kept safe from our enemies; The fellowship of other believers, encouraging one another. Our focus is on the Lord Jesus Christ and on the Word of God which is the mind of Christ

And in our environment we can recline, which is a picture of faith rest. Faith rest while we fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

But into this secure fellowship the Lord brings some adversity:

Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me-- one who is eating with Me.

This announcement no doubt had an upsetting impact upon the disciples. Everything was so

pleasant, so great, there would have been laughter and joy around this table. And the for their Lord to say that one of the ones present with them would betray Him would have been a shock.

The word betray is PARADIDWMI _a verb used about 120 times in the New Testament with the idea of delivering over, or giving over, or betraying for destruction.

The Lord uses a future tense which makes the indictment even more sure. This is not mere speculation or possibility, this will happen.

The inclusion of the additional statement: One who is eating with me -

Makes this situation even more horrendous. The height of treachery in the ancient world was to betray one you had actually sat down with and eaten a meal.

The meal table was to be a place of fellowship and rest and here it has become a pretense for treachery and betrayal.

This is also the fulfillment of prophecy given in the Psalms by David:

Psalms 41:9 Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.

Historically that was spoken of Ahithophel who turned against David. Prophetically of Judas.

Now the Lord did not reveal which disciple would do this so the speculation runs rampant.

Mark 14:19

They began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, Surely not I?

GRIEVED is LUPEW _pres, passive, inf. They were caused to grieve by this statement.

It is a word that could be translated STRESS, and is translated sorrow, and distress.

In their grief and sorrow and stress they one by one ask a question: Is it I?

MEITI EGW _Surly, not I, which expects a negative answer.

One by one: Meaning that Judas also asked the question.

A very important thing to note at this point:

Here we have the Lord Jesus Christ telling his disciples that he is going to be delivered over for

destruction, death, by one of them and they - are more concerned about covering themselves, exonerating themselves, getting themselves off the hook and in the clear than they are about the imminent death of their friend, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The news that one of them would betray Jesus shifted the attention of these disciples from the Lord to themselves. Their focus is now on self rather than on the Savior.

I think we all have to ask ourselves whether we would react any differently, or do we react any differently.

When we find in the Word of God that we all potentially turn from Christ in our sins and in our Human effort, what is our reaction - Is it I?

Principles:

1. All the disciples, except John, abandoned the Lord Jesus Christ when He went to the Cross.
2. Apart from Christ, the whole human race is under the condemnation of sin. All have sinned, like sheep we have all gone astray.
3. We are warned in the Word that the potential of fallen away from Christ is very real:

1 Corinthians 10:12 *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

2 Peter 3:17 Be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness.

4. When we are warned of our frailty, our potential to sin, to fall short of God's grace and perfect plan, we must keep focused upon Jesus Christ.
5. We can never protect ourselves against this potential. Only the Lord can protect us and provide what we need to make the right decisions in the Christian life.

In every temptation he has provided the way of victory.

The disciples were distracted by self-protection and their attempt at self-vindication.

Mark 14:20

The Lord did not answer their questions but gives them a warning:

And He said to them, It is one of the twelve, one who dips with Me in the bowl.

Again we see the indictment that the treachery is so extreme that one who fellowships with the Lord at this meal is the same one who will betray Him.

The bread was dipped into the bitter herbs and was a reminder of the bitter past, of the time prior to the Exodus when Israel was under slavery in Egypt.

Here is Judas, having already gone to the Priests to conspire to betray the Lord, dipping the bread into the herbs of bitterness and yet at the same time planning a bitter betrayal of the Lord Jesus.

This statement served as an opportunity for Judas to repent, to believe in Christ as his Savior - yet he did not.

Mark 14:21

So there is a further warning:

For the Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.

This verse establishes a contrast, on the one hand the death of the Messiah was foretold and will be the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament

The word GO is UPAGW which means to depart, to return, to return home. And this is what the Lord will do by way of His sacrifice of death, return in victory and glory to the Father.

But on the other hand, the one who would betray the Savior is under great condemnation.

Principle: While nothing happens that is out of the control of God, to oppose God and His plan brings condemnation. God allows man to have freewill, freewill even to oppose Him.

But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.

The word WOE is an interjection translating a horrible state, how horrible it will be -

To that man though whom the Son of Man is betrayed.

Then the warning:

Good for him if that man was not born.

What Judas is doing, out the hardness of his heart, from the blackness of his soul, covered by the scar tissue of rejecting and rejecting Christ as his Savior seals his fate. Condemnation in time as well as through all eternity.

But I want you to consider this -

The same thing that was said of Judas can be said of anyone who dies without Christ, without hope, and without eternal life.

The eternal cries of the unbeliever in hell will forever echo this statement - had I never even been born.

His sin had found him out, he was warned by the Lord, his fate of eternal damnation was revealed by the Savior.

But it did no good. He was hardened in his sin. He knew he was wrong, he knew he was headed for tremendous condemnation.

Yet he did not repent. After this he got up and left the meal. And in this we see that the one who opposes the Lord who has done everything for them can never stand in the presence of Christ.

We of course know the rest of the story. That in his remorse Judas tried to give the money back to the priests, that he regretted but did not repent and turn to the Lord. That in his depression he tried to take his own life only to have the rope break and he fell upon the rocks where his intestines burst open.

What a horrible fate, and yet just as Judas was warned man today is warned and yet rejects.

The believer will never face the horrors of eternal damnation in hell but discipline received in life can make hell on earth for the believer.

Listen to the warnings, focus upon Christ, realize that everyone of us is just a decision away from betraying Christ and living in reversionism.

Caesar Marcus said: *He lives doubly who enjoys the memories of the past.*

Neil Strait said: *The memory can draw the good things from experience and draw dividends from them through out life.*

Paul Boese states: *The beauty of memory is that it still see memory even when the beauty has faded.*

In the following verses, we are going to see the Lord establish a memorial, a time set aside to

enjoy, to draw from, to see the beauty in who He is and what He has done.

Mark briefly records the important events of the Last Supper that became the precedent for the Communion Supper celebrated by the Christian in the CHURCH AGE

So much of the Gospel of Mark lays for us a foundation in which we can see the words and works of the Lord Jesus Christ and build from that foundation a relationship, a personal relationship with Christ today.

Mark, if you remember, was writing mainly to Roman believers and Mark, more than any other Gospel writer, reveals more of the actions of Christ. And it is from the actions of Christ that we can see the divine ideal for the Christian.

We are to be conformed to the image of Christ. This conformation process is not accomplished out of our own effort and energy but by the renewing of the mind by the learning, thinking, and applying of the Word of God:

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

So it is in passages such as this that we see the character of Christ, we see His promises to us, His compassion, and His warnings. In these verses we see the Savior institute a memorial which we today, even 2000 years later, observe as we remember Christ and have confidence that His promises are sure.

In this passage we will also see one of the primary problems of life. Promise verses integrity. Because while the Lord is going to make a promise from his integrity, we will see in the following section that the disciples are also going to make a promise that will lack integrity.

Mark 14:22

And while they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it; and gave it to them, and said, Take it; this is My body.

The PASSOVER feast was a formal worship celebration. It followed a set procedure that had been observed in Israel for nearly 1500 years.

Every aspect of the celebration, even when food was not being eaten, was considered part of the meal.

The sharing of the bread would have occurred prior to the main part of the meal and after Judas had left the upper room (John 13:30).

The first formal round of conversation occurred when the youngest person present would ask the host why the Passover was observed.

Probably John ask this of the Lord Jesus Christ and Jesus responded with the story of Moses and Pharoah and the night in which Pharoah let the children of Israel leave Egypt.

The telling of that story was a very solemn part of the meal that would give way to joy and celebration.

This looked ahead to the blend of the joy and sorrow that is part of life and is meet by the provision of God in His grace and His care.

That story reminded all present of the power of God and his lovingkindness over His people.

After the Passover story Jesus took the bread and broke it with his hands.

The bread:

1. There were three loaves of unleavened flat bread at the Passover table.
2. These were round cakes wrapped in a white linen cloth.
3. The three cakes reminded the people of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.
4. The Lord would have taken the middle loaf and started to break it with his hands.
5. The Jews never put a knife to bread, always breaking it with their hands.

Then Jesus gave each disciple a piece of the bread and said:

Take it, this is my body -

The bread is a symbol of the body of Christ, His sinless life lived on our behalf.

The sinless life of the Savior established two precedents:

1. The qualification of Christ to be the one, the only one, who could die for the sins of the World. Only the innocent lamb of God could be our substitute on the Cross.

2. The sinless life of Christ also established a precedent for the Christian life. Christ was sinless in His humanity, by the power of the Spirit and the Word that he used and applied.

In the same way sin need not be our master. When we, by our own decisions, make ourselves slaves to sin, we have a precedent in Jesus.

He was the bread of life and as we partake of that bread we can live, by God's power and provision which is Jesus Christ, a life unto God and not slaves to sin.

Now we will sin but as Paul would later teach, Sin and the sin nature need not have any power over us.

A few more observations of the bread:

1. The bread was unleavened, and unleavened bread is great when freshly baked but soon turns hard and is very hard to eat.

This reminds us that we must partake of the bread of life, the Lord Jesus Christ, every day. Daily learning, thinking about Him and applying his truth to our lives.

We cannot merely store up the Word which is the mind of Christ. Carrying it around, unused, unapplied, saving it for a time of spiritual hunger.

We must daily partake of that which God provides. If we do not we will go into the food basket for bread and find that is hard as a rock, unusable, unable to be applied.

2. When the bread was baked it was baked on racks which put dark stripes on the loaves.

When Jesus was arrested he was beaten with whips and his back showed the stripes of this abuse.

Peter would later write and quote Isaiah 53:5 and say:

1 Peter 2:24 The Lord Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His stripes you were brought together.

A subtle reminder that the Lord Jesus would suffer for the sins of the human race.

The lamb was to be a male, a year old. It was killed between the evenings of the day prior to the Passover meal. The blood was taken to the Temple and poured on the brazen altar. The

bones of the lamb were not to be broken and it was roasted over the fire.

Jesus Christ was the lamb of God and he was sacrificed between the evenings. No bone was broken and his sacrifice was received by God as a propitiation for our sins satisfying once and for all the justice of God.

1 Peter 1:18-19 Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

During the meal the guests also eat bitter herbs that reminded the Jew of his bitter past apart from the work of God. Every bit made the Jew think of the bitterness of life apart from the perfect plan and provision of God.

The guests also eat this meal with their sandals on and their walking sticks near by to remind them of the possible swift deliverance of the Lord.

Following the washing of the disciples feet mentioned in John 13 they would have put their sandals back on.

Both prior to and following the meal a number of Psalms were read:

Prior to the Meal Psalms 113 and 114 were read:

Following the Meal Psalms 115 to 118 were read:

Consider the significance of the Lord himself reading Psalm 118:

It is better to take refuge in the Lord Than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord Than to trust in princes. I shall not die, but live, And tell of the works of the Lord - The Lord has disciplined me severely, But He has not given me over to death - I shall give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me; And Thou hast become my salvation. The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone.

It would have been prior to the reading of these last Psalms that Jesus took the cup and established a second memorial in His name.

Mark 14:23

And when He had taken a cup, and given thanks, He gave it to them; and they all drank from it.

The cup contained unfermented wine, really nothing more than boiled grape juice fresh from the vine.

This was the one feast in which the Jews did not drink alcoholic wine. The juice must be without fermentation which parallels the purity of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.

One interesting regulation of cup was that the Jews who were observing the Passover were to obtain the fresh, unfermented juice at all costs. Apart from the Lamb no other item or regulation was considered more important. The Jews were to have this emblem present even if it meant going in debt or selling off household good to obtain it.

Now when we realize that this cup was a symbol of the new covenant made by God through Christ we see why there was such importance attached to it.

There is nothing more important than to obtain salvation, go in debt, sell your good, set all else aside to have salvation in Christ.

During the meal four cups were passed and enjoyed by the guests. The first cup was the cup of greeting, the second was the blessing, the third cup was the cup of thanksgiving which was the cup that Jesus took at this point.

The blessing was asked prior to the meal and thanksgiving was made following the meal.

Mark 14:24

After the Lord offered a prayer of Thanksgiving he gave the disciples the cup and they each drank of it. He then said:

And He said, This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

The BLOOD OF CHRIST is a symbolic metonym for the violent deaths that Christ died on the Cross.

His spiritual death satisfied the Justice of God and became, once and for all, the substitutionary payment for our sins.

His physical death was a testimony of completion and the work of Christ being done. In his physical death His body went into the grave, His spirit returned to the Father, and His soul descended into Sheol, the place of the dead. Three days later the omnipotence of God the Father and God the

Holy Spirit reunited the body, soul, and spirit of Christ and our Lord was resurrected.

We celebrate this unique resurrection every Sunday as we worship God in Spirit and in Truth.

The word COVENANT is used specifically. There are two words in the Greek language for covenant or testament:

1. SUNTHEIKEI which refers to an agreement made between two equals each having responsibilities in the covenant.
2. DIATHEIKEI which refers to an agreement with the terms arranged by only one part and the conditions benefiting a second party.

It is the second word, DIATHEIKEI, we have in our passage. An agreement made by God on behalf of man and then extended to man - that is grace.

And that is what we have symbolized by the CUP, the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross that rejected human involvement, human effort, human merit, human good.

But took human sins and paid the price. Jesus was our substitute and that is the New Covenant under which man now exists - believe in Christ and be saved.

The preposition FOR is looks at a substitution, Jesus Christ took our place on the Cross, he had you personally in mind and died for your sins.

Mark 14:25

This verse is a promise to the disciples and to us:

Now we have already observed that there were four cups passed at the Passover meal. The one mentioned in v 23 was the third cup, the cup of Thanksgiving.

Jesus now does something unusual. He does not observe the fourth cup but instead says:

Truly I say to you, I shall never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

The fourth cup is the Cup of Completion, taken to show the completion of all things. But for Christ, all things were not complete.

Following his sacrifice on the Cross, he was resurrected, then ascended to be seated at the right hand of God where He is in present session.

He will return for His church, He will judge the earth during the Tribulation, He will come to earth at the Second Advent and establish the Millennial Kingdom, and it is only after these things that He will drink the fourth cup of completion.

After the resurrection and prior to the ascension, Jesus eat and drank with His disciples. But it was not the fourth cup, that is reserved for the Kingdom, in the Garden of God, when we take the Cup of completion and toast our Lord Jesus Christ.

The words FRUIT OF THE VINE are specific, used to distinguish this ceremonial cup of the Passover and the completion of all things from the standard word for wine.

Here we have GENEIMATOS TEIS AMPELON

The word for WINE is OINOS (EE-NOS) which is used about 35 times in the New Testament including Ephesians 5:18 and I Timothy 5:23.

So the Lord is talking about a special drink, a special toast, we will share with Him in eternity.

This last Passover became the Lord's Supper that we continue to celebrate, a time that we take the Bread and are reminded of the humanity of Christ, when we take the cup, and are reminded of the Word of Christ.

And we look ahead to a time when we will raise the cup in honor to our Lord Jesus Christ.

But don't ever forget that there was one only eleven disciples present. One had left, one whom Christ loved, who had the same opportunity as every one else to believe in Christ.

There is only one ritual as part of the Christ Centered Life and that is the ritual of the Lord's Supper that Christ instituted that night in Jerusalem.

We, as Christians, are commanded to many mental attitudes but only one action. To partake of the bread and the cup remembering our Lord and Savior, His life and His death.

I Corinthians 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

Are a Christian, are at rest at the table with your Lord, are you remembering Him - tonight we will have an opportunity to do just that.

Will you stand with Him or leave with Judas?

We live in a day and age when there is a real problem between promise and integrity. A lot of people make promises but they do not have the integrity to follow through on their promises.

In our passage we are going to see one of the disciples make a promise he does not have the integrity to keep.

After the last Passover supper which became the first Communion supper, the Lord and His disciples left the upper room, went out of the city, and came to the Olive grove on the western slope of the Mt. of Olives.

Mark 14:26

And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

UMENW, with the hard breathing mark is the word from which we get the English HYMN.

The tradition end of the Passover supper was for all present to sing a hymn. This would have been anyone of the Psalms adapted to music or from the hymn writers of the day.

They would have gone out of the city just south of the Temple mound area, as they went along the south side of the Temple and through the East Gate I can only imagine that Jesus thought of the historical events that had taken place near that gate. David, fleeing the city at the time of the Absalom rebellion, later Ezra being called upon by the people to teach them the Word of God, and now Jesus, walks out of the city past the Temple that was erected to be the seat of His glory and had become a den of apostasy.

They would have crossed the brook Kidron and then gone into the olive grove. In the center of the grove was Gethsemane, the press of Olives, and this would be their destination.

Mark 14:27

As they making this short journey, perhaps thirty minutes, the Lord began to teach them with predictions and promises:

In his humanity, Jesus knows that the hour has come for his betrayal, arrest, conviction, and death.

He also knows that on every previous occasions where he has attempted to prepare His disciples

for His death that they have resisted, even argued that this must not happen.

So now, as the hour draws even closer, His desire is to prepare them, but not prepare them so much for His death, but prepare them for their reaction to His death.

And Jesus said to them, You will all fall away, because it is written (Zechariah 13:7), I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

The word SAID is the present tense of LEGW, . Mark could have used either this word or LELEW, by using LEGW he put emphasis on the content of what was being said. LELEW put emphasis on the process of that which is explained.

The present tense indicates that this statement was repeated as a warning to these disciples.

The word FALL AWAY is SKANDALIZW " •, a future, passive, indicative.

Kenneth Wuest: SKANDALIZW means to see in another what I disapprove of and what hinders me from acknowledging his authority.

John Grassmick adds: It means to take offense at someone or something and therefore to turn away and fall into sin.

So Jesus' prediction is that His disciples while be offended at His suffering and death, they will not acknowledge His authority that existed even in His own sacrifice, they will run, they will turn from dependence upon Him, they will fear that what happens to Jesus could also happen to them, they will scatter.

Jesus applies the Old Testament statement found in Zechariah 13:7

I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

In quoting this portion of this verse, Jesus goes all the way back to the Hebrew Text, ignoring the Septuagint in order to bring out a singular noun as well as the tense of the Hebrew Text.

1. It is God (Singular rather than the plural of the LXX) who smites the Shepard. The death of the Messiah may be at the hands of men but God is in control.
2. The subject of the second of the quote is the sheep who are caused to be scattered (passive),but

not by God, the subject of the first phase, but by the suffering and death of the Shepherd.

As with SKANDALIZW the verb DIASKOR-PIZW, is a future, passive, indicative.

Some observations:

1. Jesus is giving them a prediction regarding what they are going to do.
2. The future tense and the passive voice, used twice, both indicate that this is a prediction rather than a warning
3. A warning is given so something can be avoided. A prediction of something that is going to occur is given to alert someone so their reaction will not be inappropriate.
4. Jesus taught His disciples and His Word teaches us with both warnings and predictions.

Illustration:

Isaiah 53:6 and I Peter 2:25 We are all like sheep and have gone astray.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

5. The Lord tells us, we will sin. This is predicted so that when we do sin we can be on the alert. Alerted to the fact that we have not lost our salvation, that we can rebound and recover.

1 John 2:1 I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

6. It is the Lord's plan to prepare us, not only for what he has for us, not only for our spiritual successes, but also for our failure. The problem is we too often refuse to believe the predictions and when they become reality, we are ill equipped and ill prepared to deal with ourselves, our sin, our turning and running from the Lord.
7. In our passage the Lord alerts the disciples that they will turn and run, but that is only part of the prediction.

Mark 14:28

But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.

With the prediction of their sin of running away to save their own necks - there is a promise.

This promise begins with the strong contrast ALLA, in contrast to their reaction we have divine action.

The word RAISED is an infinitive that looks to the results of his death, death would not hold the Lord Jesus and that was a promise.

That is really good news, and the good news should eliminate any sorrow over the bad news of his death and their running away.

He goes on to say as part of His promise:

I will go before you to Galilee -

The verb GO BEFORE is a future, active, indicative which looks at the assured results of a current situation.

The pronoun YOU is UMEIS, a second person plural. This become a promise, I will be in Galilee and you, the eleven disciples, will be there with me.

So we could say that in these two verse we have prediction, that is the bad news, and promise, which is the good news.

BUT NOTICE WHAT PETER does with all this:

Mark 14:29

But Peter said to Him, Even though all may fall away, yet I will not.

He disagrees with the prediction and at the same time ignores the promise.

And in doing so Peter expresses so real arrogance:

The pronouns ALL and I are real emphatic in this verse.

1. By ALL he is referring to the other disciples present, they may fall away but no Peter.
2. The pronoun I which is EGW, is rarely used in the Greek language, usually it is part of the first person verb, but here it is used and used at the end of the statement which makes it even more emphatic.

They all may fall away but yet not I -

Peter sets himself up for a fall. In denial, when you think you are above falling, it is only a short time before you will fall.

Let's consider what Peter has done:

1. FIXATION: Peter ignored the promise and fixates upon the prediction that he and the others will fall away
2. ARROGANCE: He takes issue with the prediction and goes into arrogance
3. UNREASONABLE: He fails to see through the prediction to the promise that he will be with Jesus in Galilee. He is not using proper reason and thinking.
4. SELECTIVE LISTENING: He is not listening to the whole message, and gets upset about the one part he does listen to
5. CRITICAL: He becomes critical and condemning of the other disciples
6. LACK OF THINKING: He fails to think, to consider the promise and gets hung up on the prediction

But recognize that Peter is not that different than any one of us. We too often reject the whole message and get hung up on the part that might offend us or tell us that we will fail, that we are weak. We can too easily go into arrogance thinking that we could never fail or fall away.

We look at a statement such as the one made by Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:10

- for when I am weak then I am strong.

And we get hung up on the weakness and fail to see the promise of divine strength that we can have in Christ

In dealing with Teenagers over the years I have so often seen a statement of warning become a point of arrogance, not me, it would never happen to me, I'd never do this or that.

And I have had to stand by and see the very thing denied become a reality - because of arrogance, ignorance, failing to see one's self as weak and sinful

Mark 14:30

At this point the Lord Jesus has two options: He can emphasize the promise, repeating that He will again be with the eleven disciples, including Peter, in Galilee even after His death - . or

He can emphasize the prediction with the intention of getting Peter to abandon his arrogance and be prepared for the failure he is going to face.

IT IS THE SECOND OPTION the Lord takes. The reason is, is that the promise is no good unless the sin is first dealt with.

Peter is in arrogance, in denial, refusing to believe he could ever fail his friend, his Lord and Savior, Jesus. And whenever a believer falls into that type of denial he is putting emphasis on self, one's own ability, one's own strength.

The wonderful promises of future fellowship in time with the Lord Jesus Christ can be made void by us when we fail to face our frailty and weakness.

In our own supposed strength, loyalty, determination, and even condemnation of others we move away from dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ and depend upon the weak vessel of self.

So the Lord is going to deal with the arrogant boast of Peter but it is going to do no good.

Again a prediction, this time very specific:

And Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you, that you yourself this very night, before a cock crows twice, shall three times deny Me.

As the boast of Peter was very emphatic, this statement of the Lord is also very emphatic.

YOU - YOURSELF using the second person pronoun

The cock crowing was idiomatic for the time just before sunrise and the Lord says that prior to that time Peter will deny him not just once, but three times.

The verb DENY is a future, middle, indicative. The middle voice carries even a greater indictment, the denial will be to benefit self. To protect self. To save his own skin.

This denial contradicts the one thing we are to deny:

Mark 8:34 And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Perhaps it was because Peter remember not only this prediction but also the earlier words of his Lord and the instructions to deny self that caused such great shame when he did, before the next

morning, deny even knowing Christ on three occasions.

So great would be his shame that he went out of the city and wept bitterly and on the day of the Cross was hiding, in fear of the authorities, and in anger at self, and shame before his Savior.

Mark 14:31

But on this night, as the Lord was so eager to prepare His disciples for their own weaknesses, Peter's arrogance would not listen to reason:

But Peter kept saying insistently, Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You! And they all were saying the same thing, too.

Peter made a big mistake:

He began to identify himself by his actions and attitude towards the Lord rather than the actions and attitude of Jesus towards him.

We make the same mistake when we begin to shape our identify by who and what we are and what we think we will or will not do rather than depend, entirely, upon Christ and see ourselves only in Him. When we shift our attention to self, we become self protecting, and will even fall into denial and demanding when our mistaken identity is challenged.

So in his mistaken view of self, Peter is so insistent that he would never deny Jesus that the other disciples chimed in. Their arrogance did not want to be left out -

He was insistent - He kept on saying -

And then he goes even further in His boast:

Even if I have to die with you, I will not deny you!

But Peter there was only one who would die, the One whose death would mean more than end of life, but rather a beginning of new life, a forgiveness of sins, a death that was an entrance to life forever for Jesus and for all who believed Him.

But arrogance never listens to the promise, and will go to even greater and greater lengths to protect its pretence.

The Lord chose to end the conversation right here. If He had gone on, who knows, Peter may have ended up boasting He could die for Jesus rather than the other way around.

We see here a scenario of arrogance, denial, self-protection, pretence, even demanding and condemning of others.

What type of a person who could for so long walk so closely with the Lord and then fall into this type of sin?

A person just like Peter, a person just like you and me. Think not? Do you think that this could never be your story? Peter thought that and before morning he deny: His Lord, His Savior, His friend.

But even greater than Peter's denial, our denial, our sin and our falling away is the love of our Lord Jesus Christ:

1. As with Peter, He prepares us to face our own weaknesses
2. As with Peter, He gives us promises of hope in time and in eternity
3. As with Peter, He teaches us about the devastating sins of arrogance can bring
4. As with Peter, He will be there waiting for us and as with Peter, He never says I told you so -

Read John 21:7

The promise was that Jesus would be with them in Galilee. Peter and the disciples are fishing and a man appears, standing on the shore -

That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord. And so when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea.

You see, the real issue is not in your weakness, your turning away, the issue is not in your sin but in your Savior. You will sin, that is certain, but will you be the first to jump the ship of sin and swim to be embraced by the Savior who is there - waiting for you?

The great German reformer Martin Luther said: There are two things every man must do alone. He must do his believing alone and he must do his dying alone.

In the Garden of Gethsemane we see Jesus, on the eve of His death, surrounded by His disciples, but we see Him alone.

We are with Jesus and His disciples the night before the crucifixion. We are mere hours away from his arrest, trials, and death on the Cross. In

this portion of Mark, chapter fourteen, we see the agony of anticipation that rested heavily upon our Lord as He faces the unknown.

We are going to see Jesus, in His humanity, face the greatest adversity of His life. And we are going to see Him face it alone. His disciples who have followed after him for three years, who have proclaimed loyalty. Who have declared they would never let their friend down are going to be of no help, no comfort, no encouragement in this great hour of need.

But He will endure His distress and His trouble and he will do this with one thing in mind - your salvation.

Mark 14:32

They came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, Sit here until I have prayed.

Jesus had been prepared, in His humanity, by the Father with truth for what was going to be the greatest crisis of His life, the Cross.

Having doctrine, applying doctrine, He now prays.

Mark punctuates his Gospel with three times in which Jesus prayed:

1. At the onset of His popular ministry in Galilee, Mark 1:35
2. At the beginning of His specific ministry to His disciples, Mark 6:46
3. And now as He prepares Himself for the sacrifice of the Cross, that hour that He must endure alone, Mark 14:32

The verb PRAYED is PROSEUCOMAI an aorist, middle, subjunctive.

From this we see that Jesus planned to pray. This was not spontaneous, but pre-determined

The middle voice looks at benefit to the one who prays. Jesus would be benefited by praying to the Father just as we are benefited when we pray to the Father.

Principles:

1. As we face dramatic events in our lives we must apply doctrine and accompany that application with prayer

2. This type of prayer is predetermined and designed to benefit you in your hour of trial

As we examine the Lord in the garden and the distress he endured as he faced the Cross we will see how we can also face the difficulties of life. We will see the value of prayer in the process but we must remember that first, there was the application of truth learned, metabolized, and applied - followed by prayer.

Mark 14:33

And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled.

Of all the disciples, these three were the closest to the Lord. It is understandable that at a time of great distress the Lord would want His closest friends near-by.

But there is another reason these three were chosen to come with the Lord and observe His distress and listen to His prayer.

Each one, Peter, James, and John, had boasted of their resolve to follow Jesus wherever He went, even to death. Each one had a confidence that was falsely built upon their human resolve and their human outer strength.

Peter: Mark 14:31 Even if I have to die with you, I will not deny you.

James and John: Mark 10:38-39 They boasted that they could be baptized with the baptism of Christ and even drink of the cup of death that he would drink

Here we have three disciples who thought they had it all together, who could do anything, never fail, never stumble, no sign of weakness or distress or trouble

But they would see their Lord, the God-man, on His knees before the Father and they would hear the prayers of absolute dependence that He would offer to the Father.

They would see that in the weakness of the humanity of Jesus there was the omnipotent strength of God the Father.

Mark 14:34

And He said to them, My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch.

Peter, James, and John not only saw the distressed and troubled Savior but hear Him declare that He was deeply grieved.

We have three words that describe the mental attitude of our Lord:

1. DISTRESSED: This is ADJMONEW a present, active, infinitive that shows this is a result of something else, the impending hour of the Cross.

It means to be weighted down, to sense the heavy burden, here, the heavy burden of bearing the sins of the world.

2. TROUBLED: This is EK-QAM-BEW again as an infinitive of results, but here as a passive voice.

It is used only by Mark and refers to the idea of being surprised, amazed, troubled.

3. DEEPLY GRIEVED: Which is PERILUPOS a nominative fem adjective.

The feminine form of an adjective parallels the infinitive in that this is a responsive action. It means to be deeply sad. The PERI prefix intensifies this sadness.

These three words describe the Lord's response and action regarding the three categories of adversity He was facing that night prior to the Cross:

1. He was distressed at His disciples. There inability to comprehend the magnitude of what was about to occur.

So easily had Peter said, I'll die with you. So quickly did the other disciples agree. Jesus, was distressed over His friends, and that was adversity.

2. He was troubled at He faced the unknown. He was about to become sin for us.

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

Jesus Christ, who had resisted the temptations of Satan himself, now had to take upon Himself the sins of the world. This was one of the two unknown adversities he faced.

3. The other unknown resulted in Jesus being deeply grieved. The word grieved carries with it the idea of missing someone, grieving a lost loved one or someone who is far away.

As Jesus faced the Cross He knew that He would be separated from the Father during the hours of darkness on Golgotha. Never, in all the eons of eternity past, had He been separated from the Father.

As he anticipated this unknown He was intensely grieved.

When it says "He was Grieved to the point of death" we have improper preposition with the genitive form of the word death.

This looks at the Lord anticipating His death, that hour that has now come. It is not be understood to mean that He was ready to expire in grief, but He grieved his impending death.

Mark 14:35

In each of these categories of adversity, Jesus had and would continue to applied doctrine.

Prior to going to the Garden of Gethsemane He had taught His disciples in the upper room. The account recorded by John in John 13 through 17 tells us of the doctrine taught and applied and the Lord's high priestly prayer on behalf of his disciples.

So the distress was handled with doctrine accompanied by prayer.

In verse 34 we see the Lord praying regarding the third adversity, the separation He would experience from the Father.

And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground, and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by.

Very few verses in the Bible focus our attention upon the humanity of Christ as do these verse of our Lord in the garden.

If we fail to understand that Jesus was fully man while at the same time being fully God we lose valuable application that can be made from these passages.

Look at the next verse:

Mark 14:36

And He was saying, Abba! Father! All things are possible for Thee; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt.

These verses demonstrate the humanity of Christ. His anticipation of the Cross and the very real

desire He had to avoid the unknown - but more importantly, they demonstrate the dependence, the trust, the faith He had in His heavenly Father.

In His humanity the Lord was no different than anyone of us who, when faced with the unknown, when anticipating that which is a legitimate fear, would not cry out to God and ask - if there any other way.

But the victory is in the last statement of verse 36:

Yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt -

Without sin, without evil, without malice, our Savior puts His case before the Father and puts His destiny in the hands of an omnipotent God.

As far as i am concerned, this is the greatest statement a child of God can ever make. It is the zenith of the Christian life, it is the goal we should all seek, the very apex of faith - not my will, but you will be done.

Let's analyze this prayer:

1. The HOUR referred to is, as we have noted, the time of separation on the Cross. When Jesus would rhetorically cry to the Father, My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me.
 2. The Lord does not ask the Father to take this away, only if it is possible, if there is any other way to achieve the goal of salvation, let it be done.
 3. When the Lord addressed the Father with the Aramaic term ABBA, He was showing His close and personal intimacy with God.
- The Jews would never have used such a personal term. Abba was what a child would endearingly call his father, some have said our word Daddy comes close to the personal intimacy expressed with the word Abba.
4. Jesus recognizes the omnipotence of God, all things are possible for Thee. This statement is a declaration of the trust that Jesus had in the Father, and that the Father was in control of all things.

5. The CUP looks at the baptism of the Cup, when the sins of the human race would be poured out upon Christ while He was on the Cross.

Jesus would be called upon to face with all horror, the sins of mankind. Every sin you ever committed or ever will commit, was poured out on Christ, the sinless lamb of God, and He paid the price, so that you could have so great a salvation.

6. Nevertheless: ALLA _the strong contrast, Not what I will but what Thou wilt.

Jesus put Himself wholly in the hands of a holy God, a God to whom all things are possible. A God with whom if there had been any other way of salvation would have removed the hour and the cup from His only begotten Son.

But this sacrifice must be made, the justice of God could be satisfied in no other way but by the death of the Cross.

In this final statement we see that Jesus depended upon the Father and that His motive for doing so was your salvation, my salvation, the grace of salvation offered to the entire human race.

Why was Jesus willing to let God's will be done? Because of you and I and His love for us.

Jesus had you personally in mind at the Cross but he also had you personally in mind as He approached the Cross, as He prayed in the garden for the strength to endure spiritual death so that we might have spiritual life.

Mark 14:37

When we put the four Gospels together we find that Jesus left the disciples three times and went ahead alone to pray.

Each time, upon returning to where the disciples were left to wait, watch, and pray, He found them asleep.

And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?

Jesus wanted His closest friends, these disciples, to be praying for Him and with Him in this great time of trial. But instead, they chose to fall asleep.

Now granted, they had a busy day and a busy evening celebrating the Passover meal. But this is a very critical moment in Jesus' earthly ministry. He needed their support in prayer. But they did not have the maturity to give it.

There are two principles and two applications we find in these verses:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ had to face the Cross and endure the Cross alone. Even at the Cross all but one of His disciples would abandon Him. He alone could go to the Cross because He alone was

the sinless Lamb of God who could take away the sins of the world.

Application: There are times that you must go through the trials of your life, fulfilling God's destiny for you, alone -

You may even ask help and comfort of others but the help and comfort will not be there.

This shows us the importance of maturing to the point of spiritual autonomy. While we may have a tremendous support system from other believers, there is that time when we will find ourselves in no-man's land.

You may be hurting, others will see you hurting, but they will not understand. You may reach out for help, but no one is there.

But there is someone there, someone who is always there, someone who has said; I will never leave you nor forsake you. When you think you are all alone facing the trials of life, remember, you are never alone, God is always there.

And while the disciples slept, Jesus knew He could depend totally upon the heavenly Father.

2. The second principle we see is in the Lord's response to the sleeping disciples.

Now if you asked someone to do something for you and they let down, how would you respond.

Jesus did not scold, He did not rebuke. Instead He used this opportunity of failure on the part of the disciples to teach them.

Mark 14:38

Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

How is temptation avoided: By watching and praying.

The word WATCH means to stay on the alert, and we avoid temptation when we are alerted to temptation. Our weakness, the sins that so easily throw us.

And then we pray, prior to the temptation because the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

The words willing and weak are both adjectives that describe the condition of the spirit of the believer and the flesh of the believer.

The Lord taught these disciples that they may, with their spirit, say all kinds of things. I'll die with you, I'll never deny you, I can go to the very end with you - but when it comes to the doing, the flesh is weak.

Our application from this is that we must use our failure and even the failure of those close to us as opportunities to learn of the greatness of God's grace and power and our own weakness.

Not a time to offend, to rebuke but a time to learn how to be strong in Christ when we are so weak in the flesh

Mark 14:39

Having patiently taught the disciples Jesus goes again to the Father in prayer.

And again He went away and prayed, saying the same words.

Only to come to the disciples a second time -

Mark 14:40

And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

Again he goes away alone to pray -

Mark 14:41

And He came the third time, and said to them, Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

This time he rouses them from their sleep, and tells them the hour has come.

Jesus knows that Judas is leading the Temple guard to this place of prayer and rest

Mark 14:42

Arise, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!

The verb ARISE is imperative, a command.

But the verb LET US GO is very interesting. AGWMEN and is in the subjunctive mood.

Let us go, if we can, if it is the will of God, if this is part of the divine plan.

Even in the timing of His betrayal and arrest, Jesus put His life in the hand of the Father.

Do what Jesus is showing us as His word reaches down through the centuries to us, sitting here today?

He is demonstrating for us, teaching us, that regardless of what you may face in life, the greatest trial, the greatest tragedy, facing these tests alone, that you need not fear, you need not panic -

You can fully depend, with all confidence and hope upon your heavenly Father. And you can depend upon him for everything.

Jesus time alone, in prayer, in the Garden is going to be harshly interrupted in Mark 14:33.

At the last supper He was with His friends, in the Garden, He was alone with His Heavenly Father, and now He will be thrown into the Arena of Antagonism, as he is arrested and endures the mockery of six illegal trials before both the Jews and the Romans and then is put upon the Cross to die.

Mark 14:43-45

And immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now he who was betraying Him had given them a signal, saying, Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him, and lead Him away under guard. And after coming, he immediately went to Him, saying, Rabbi! and kissed Him.

A number of observations can be made from these verses:

Judas had betrayed Jesus to the religious leaders who were able to enlist the aid of the Temple guard in the arrest.

John 18:3 tells us that this multitude was made up of the officers of the chief priests, called the servants of the court, and a band of soldiers who would have been the Temple guard, who would have been Levites.

They came well armed expecting to have to take Jesus by force, but the Scriptures predicted, more than 700 years before this night that the Messiah was -

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth;

Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

The signal that Judas arranged to identify Jesus was a kiss. A common old practice and even in European countries today. A man kissing a man on the cheek as a form of greeting. This was an expression of hospitality, welcome, appreciation, and friendship.

But here, this warm and friendly greeting, was twisted and perverted and made into a covert signal to expose the alleged criminal, Jesus.

Principle: Evil has no boundaries in its working of evil, there is no restraint, no common courtesy, no integrity or valor. Evil will use anything, twist even that which is beautiful, to achieve its sinister ends.

A kiss of greeting becomes a prelude to death.

Judas also calls the Lord RABBI (Mark 14:45), which means *My Master*, a term of respect and yet there is not respect or honor given in this betrayal. There is only gross contempt.

These two last observations demonstrate two principles:

FIRST: In his hardness of heart, with the soul covered over with scar tissue, there was nothing that Judas would not do or use to achieve his evil goal.

When scar tissue takes over the soul, sensitivity is gone, love is perverted, anger becomes the impetus of life - and common values and common courtesy, respect, honor, and orientation to authority is gone.

We are later told by Paul to watch out for the person whose soul is damaged by the scars of sins:

Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those [mark them] who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

SECOND: The actions and words of Judas appeared to be cordial, warm, friendly, but behind them is a sinister plot to betray Christ.

The principle is that attitude, what is going on in the mind, is far more real than the words and works that we may see.

The facade of friendliness, this mask of manner, was there to hide the attitude of anger and hostility that led Judas to betray the Lord Jesus.

Mark 14:46

And they laid hands on Him, and seized Him.

The word LAID HANDS is EPIBALLW a word used for lawful arrest.

The charges would have been drawn up by the Sanhedrin and would have included the indictments they had made against Jesus during His ministry:

1. Blasphemy, first mentioned in Mark 2:7
2. Breaking the Sabbath, Mark 2:24, 3:2-6
3. And The practice of magic or sorcery, Mark 3:22

The arrest itself followed the legal formula required by Rome for the nations under its control. There was probably a written arrest warrant, the correct and legal individuals were there to take Him into custody.

But the next word shows us that all this is a sham, their verdict of guilt had already been determined.

Remember that at the beginning of this chapter we saw the religious leaders plotting to arrest Christ. This is the fulfillment of their evil plan.

The word SEIZED is KRATEW and means to arrest with the intention of putting to death.

The aorist tense looks at a completed action. These religious bullies thought that they had completed their plan of doing away with this Jesus from Nazareth.

But man can never hinder the perfect plan of God.

Mark 14:47

But a certain one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Mark does not give us a great deal of information regarding this incident. Remember that Mark is writing at the direction of Peter and we will see that it was Peter who pulled the sword. I think he may have asked Peter if he should mention him by name and Peter probably responded with a plea to

God if that was really necessary. Ah but Peter, Luke and John give us the rest of the story.

John 18:10-11 Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus. Jesus therefore said to Peter, Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?

Luke adds that Jesus healed the man:

Luke 22:51 But Jesus answered and said, Stop! No more of this. And He touched his ear and healed him.

1. Again we see that it is Peter who goes into action. Somewhere the big fisherman had managed to get a sword and he is not a very good swordsman.

He aims for the head of Malchus, the priests servant, but he missed, and ends up cutting off the man's ear.

2. Jesus' response to this is twofold. First, he tells Peter to put the sword away. And He tells him that what is happening is all part of God's perfect plan.

Secondly, he touches Malchus' ear and heals him. So this man who came out to arrest Jesus is now the recipient of Jesus' compassion and power.

Principles:

Zeal can be misdirected. Peter no doubt thought he was doing the right thing, and was doing it with considerable enthusiasm, but it was wrong. It was misplaced zeal. We must always follow the Lord, not get out ahead.

When we do get out ahead of the plan of God, we end up over our heads and in areas in which we lack capacity.

Like Peter we may end up with a sword and have no idea how to use it. When we start pursuing our own plan or arranging our own agenda, we will find ourselves in over our heads.

For all the humor of this situation, it could have been very disastrous. It could have been the spark that could have ignited a fire fight between the well armed Temple police and guards and the disciples.

Every one there with Jesus could have been killed that night. No more disciples, all because of Peter's misdirected zeal.

Principle: When we get ahead of God in His plan we can do considerable damage to those around us.

And just like Peter, we may have zeal, enthusiasm, we may appear to be very courageous, but we are wrong.

But Jesus our Lord is greater than even our failures, our mistakes, our misdirected enthusiasm that could cause so many problems.

He healed the ear, He made the mistake of Peter work for good in the perfect plan of God.

So often we will mess up, but the Master takes our messes and makes them more than manageable, but magnificent in the magnitude of His perfect plan.

Mark 14:48,49

Jesus expresses his indignation at their manner of arresting Him:

Remember again Mark 14:1-2 They were seeking how to seize Him by stealth, and kill Him; for they were saying, Not during the festival, lest there be a riot of the people.

So in there fear they put together a covert plan to arrest Christ.

And Jesus answered and said to them, Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as against a robber? Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has happened that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

The fulfillment of Scripture Jesus refers to is the prediction given by Isaiah in Isaiah 53:12

Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors.

Jesus notes how well armed they are and then ask if they thought they were coming to arrest a robber.

The word ROBBER is LJS-TJS which was a word used for a zealot or political, revolutionary, criminal.

Now if they coming to arrest a Zealot then such a well armed force may be necessary, but He is a teacher, a Rabbi.

He then reminds them that for the past number of days he was with them daily in the Temple, why did they not arrest Him then.

We could add that every night during His stay in Jerusalem he was a Bethany, just a short distance away. But they had no jurisdiction in Bethany.

So lack of jurisdiction, and fear of a public arrest, resulted in this secret, covert action.

Now I want to draw just a simple principle from this: When you have to start going to great lengths to cover yourself and what you do, just maybe something might be wrong!

Maybe the difficulty you might have in pulling something off is God's way of slowing you down so you can think and think doctrine.

By the Lord Jesus making their evil scheme so apparent He was giving them the truth - something the religious leaders had a hard time swallowing.

But that is what the truth does. It exposes the error, the sin, the evil, and just as the words of Christ did that night of His arrest, they continue to do so today. They expose that which is false.

These two verses give us a very simple principle:

The Word of God will reveal the sin of man.

Mark 14:50

And they all left Him and fled.

Remember what Jesus had said earlier that evening when he quoted Zechariah 13:7

Mark 14:27 You will all fall away, because it is written, I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

The disciples left him, they ran, in fear of their lives, and now Jesus was really - all alone with the Father.

Mark 14:51,52

Mark alone records this somewhat unusual incident.

And a certain young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they seized him. But he left the linen sheet behind, and escaped naked.

The incident is included to show the speed in which the disciples and any other followers of the

Lord fled the scene, abandoning the Lord Jesus to the Temple guard.

But we are left with a number of questions as to who this young man is:

The term CERTAIN YOUNG MAN was used in other the LXX to refer to young men who were strong, valiant, faithful, and wise.

In Amos 2:16 we are told that there is coming a time when: Even the bravest among the warriors will flee naked in that day, declares the Lord.

And the flight of this young man pre-figures that time when many will flee from judgment.

The young man was probably a man of wealth, the linen coat was worn only by men of means while the more common folks wore coats of wool.

The fact that he had nothing under his garment tells us that he decided to come to the garden with the disciples very quickly. The disciples remember, had been dressed for dinner so to speak.

So here is a young man who decided to follow Jesus and now flees in fear.

We live in a world and in a society where justice is held in high regard. That is not unlike the world in which our Lord came to, to minister and die for our sins. The Jewish and Roman systems of jurisprudence were considered the most advanced the world had to offer in their day. However, justice then as today is so often not just.

Six hundred years before the time of our Lord's earthly ministry the prophet Habakkuk stood on the walls of Jerusalem, looking over the city and declared that:

Habakkuk 1:4 That: The law is ignored and justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore, [when justice does go forth] justice comes out perverted.

Never in the history of the human race was that statement more true than when our Lord was dragged before the Jewish and Roman courts and then sentenced to die for crimes of which he was innocent. A facade of justice went forth, but it went forth perverted.

Mark gives us just a brief account of the trials of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we put all four Gospels together we see that Jesus endured a night of six trials, not one but six. Each one was false in every way and nothing more than a facade of justice that had already decided that Jesus had to die.

The first trial was before Annas, the political boss of Jerusalem

The second was before Caiaphas, the High Priest.

The third trial was held at daybreak before the Sanhedrin once they realized a trial at night was invalid

The fourth trial was before Pilate and Pilate found no guilt in this man from Nazareth

The fifth trial was before the Jewish monarch Herod who demanded a miracle and when Jesus would not perform for him has him beat and sent Jesus back to Pilate

The sixth trial was before Pilate again in which he again found no fault in Him but put him before the people to be released, but the people chose Barabbas. But Pilate was pressured by the Jews to carry out the execution.

Here in mark fourteen we have the second trial. The formal trial before the high Jewish council.

Mark 14:53

And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together.

These groups made up the high Jewish council or the Sanhedrin. There was an interesting balance of power in this council. The Chief priest represent religious Israel, many of the scribes were Pharisees representing traditional Israel and the Talmud. The elders were leaders of the aristocracy and would have been aligned with the Sadducees who represented the more progressive Greek and Roman cultures.

Now usually these three groups could not agree on the time of day, but Satan had been at work. Their common animosity towards Jesus, whose message of grace and truth contradicted everything these leaders had built in the energy of the flesh, became a focal point, a point of fixation, and they now joined together to destroy the Lord Jesus.

We must remember also that from the very first verse of Mark 14 we have learned that their

agenda of destruction is set prior to the trials, prior even to the arrest. Everything that is happening is sham, its false, its a cover-up in legal clothing for the evil heart of man.

The decision had already been made - Jesus was to die.

Mark 14:54

And Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers, and warming himself at the fire.

Mark includes this statement about Peter because he is going to come back to him later in the chapter. But by telling this he also shows us something about Peter and about ourselves.

Remember verse 50 And they all left Him and fled. The ALL would have included Peter, but now, after running away to save his own skin, he comes back, to follow after, at a distance. And we know that when he is pressed to the test, he will fail and deny His Lord not once, but actually six times.

I think that little phrase, "And he followed Him at a distance", is a description of many Christians today.

Indeed they follow Christ, their Lord, their Savior, but there is always a distance. Not wanting to get too close, not wanting to identified in such close association with Him.

But their fate is the same fate that would soon meet Peter. He was put to the test and when questioned as to whether or not he knew this Jesus of Nazareth, he denied His Lord.

And what of the child of God today who follows but only at a distant, when the test comes he will run, he will hide, he will deny.

But Mark includes this note regarding Peter's whereabouts to set up a later passage, so we now return to this second trial.

Mark 14:55

Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death; and they were not finding any.

Here is where we begin to see some of the illegal aspects of this show trail.

The council, the Sanhedrin, was like a jury, they were to hear accusations of illegal action. Under Jewish Law the accusers were the prosecutors, the accusers brought the matter to the council, the jury of judges.

The jury, then as now, was to be impartial. They were not the ones who would bring a charge or accusation.

How would you like to walk into a court room where you are the accused and find the jury box filled with the people who have accused you of a crime. Justice goes forth but it goes forth perverted.

The subject of the sentence is very clear. It was the chief priests and the council who were trying to obtain testimony against Him, they were the real accusers behind the witnesses for the prosecution.

Their efforts were proving to be rather vain, they could not find any consistent testimony against Jesus.

Mark 14:56-59

Describes the testimony at this trial.

For many were giving false testimony against Him, and yet their testimony was not consistent. And some stood up and began to give false testimony against Him, saying, We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands. And not even in this respect was their testimony consistent.

When we read in the English text the accusation that Jesus said:

I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.

If this charge could be verified, the penalty would be death. The Romans viewed the desecration or destruction of any religious shrine as a capital offense. If proven the Romans would have allowed the Jews to stone Jesus to death, and Satan would have won.

We might read this as being an accurate description of what Jesus said in Mark 13:2. But there is a vast inconsistency.

The accusation is that Jesus said He would destroy the Temple. The part regarding the rebuilding in

three days is really immaterial. The charge of an intent to destroy the Temple was serious regardless of anything else.

The verb destroyed is KATALUW and the accusers chose to make it a future, active, indicative.

Mark 13:2, And Jesus said to him, Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down.

The same verb, KATALUW is an aorist, passive, subjunctive which indicates a potential future event and with the passive voice removes Jesus as the one who was doing the tearing down. Jesus is stating a prophetic fact, not saying he would tear it down.

But the accusers change the verb tense, voice, and mood and even then they cannot get it straight, they are inconsistent in the parsing of a verb.

Principles:

1. The intent to destroy the Temple would have been a capital crime in both Jewish and Roman Law.
2. If proven the Romans would have allowed the Jews to stone Jesus which was Satan's intent.
3. Satan did not want Christ to be crucified. he knew enough prophecy to know that crucifixion could be the altar for the once and for all atonement for sins.
4. Satan wanted the Jews, Jesus own people, to cast the stones that would bring an end to the ministry of grace and truth.
5. But one Greek word, put in the wrong tense, voice, and mood, foiled his evil plan.

Satan had put together quite a plan up to this point. But God is in control, and all the control that God needed to exercise was over one little verb - And Satan was tearing his hair out because his pawns, the accusers, could not get it right.

Principle: God is in control of even the verbs, the smallest word, the apparent insignificant aspects of our lives. And yet His phenomenal control preserved the plan for His Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Application: What does it take for God to control our circumstances, our destiny, our fate -

sometimes just one little word spoken one little way. No wonder we call Him, Abba, our Father!

A criminal who had often come before the courts was scheduled to appear once more. He was greatly relieved when he heard that a man who had been his lawyer on previous occasions was to be the magistrate. But his attitude changed when his former counsel declared, When I was your attorney, I defended you, but now I am your judge! I will hear the evidence, and then I must deal with you according to the oath I have taken to administer justice.

We have seen the opening round of the second of the six trials of Christ on the night prior to the crucifixion. We noted that Satan had put together a master plan to destroy Christ, the promised Messiah, but God frustrated that plan with one little change on the tense, voice, and mood of a verb.

We saw how God is in control to bring about His perfect plan of redemption for mankind.

Witness after witness appeared in the center of the court of the Sanhedrin but no two agreed as to exactly what it was this Jesus had said. The charge of conspiracy to desecrate the Temple, a capital offense both to the Jews and the Romans which, if proven, would have meant stoning to death, was not proven.

I think the attitude of the one who is behind all this, Satan the master of evil, is seen in the reaction of Caiaphas the High Priest.

Mark 14:60,61a

How did Jesus respond to this [I can only imagine that while the accusers was coming forward and getting the verb tenses all wrong He was saying thank you to His Father]:

And the high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You? But He kept silent, and made no answer.

Mark paints a very dramatic picture of the High Priest, who was Caiaphas, coming from the circle to the center of the ring, to face Jesus, the accused.

Not willing to give up, this man who was given over to Satan, tries to get Jesus to incriminate Himself.

The question he asked is really WHY are you making no answer to the accusations? Why are you not trying to defend or vindicate yourself?

The Lord Jesus Christ kept silent, even at these questions of the high priest, but His silence does not mean there was no reason, as a matter of fact there are two reasons He fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah who said the Lamb of God will open not His mouth . .

The two reasons for silence:

1. There is nothing to respond to. There are no accusations. Jewish law required two consistent testimonies. Consistent down to the very verb tense, voice, and mood. And for all the verbiage, they were left with garbage.
2. In His humanity, it was not His job to vindicate Himself against false testimony. The temptation was there, to shout out, it's all a lie, and it was. But again, he kept silent.

Would our Lord do less than David who prayed:

Psalm 7:8 The Lord judges the peoples; Vindicate me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me.

Psalm 26:1 Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity; And I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.

Psalm 43:1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!

And Jesus had the promise of God:

Deuteronomy 32:36 For the Lord will vindicate His people, And will have compassion on His servants.

In this there is an application to us today. There will be times you will be falsely accused, or wrongly talked about. Your character may be assassinated or others may merely misunderstand your intent.

I have good news for you, the job of vindication is not yours but Gods. He is your heavenly father and you can rest assured, he is in control.

We can waste so much time running around trying to prove our point, defend our position, that we never get around to doing anything.

Furthermore, when we are falsely accused we too often have a mental attitude break down and we

get focused upon who said what, where, when, rather than getting on with the Christ centered life.

The good news is that your heavenly Father will vindicate you -

And that means you can relax, keep silent, and move on in God's plan for your life.

Mark 14:61b

Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?

A direct question as to whether or not Jesus claimed to be the promised Messiah.

1. The title CHRIST is equal to the Old Testament title MESSIAH, known by the Jews as the promised one who would once and for all take away the sins of the world. So that title looks at the relationship of the promised Messiah to mankind as the Redeemer.

2. Son of the Blessed One: Is a title also reserved for the promised Messiah and looks at the relationship of the Messiah to God the Father.

The High Priest knew his theology and the Old Testament He knew that the Messiah would come in human form but that He would also share with God the creator a unique relationship.

The fact that the question is so specific reflects the knowledge this man had and knowledge is a dangerous thing if not obeyed.

He knew - yet he rejected

He had knowledge - but chose ignorance

He had the mandate - but he disobeyed

He could have believed - but instead he attacked

Based upon what he knew of the Scriptures, the Savior, the Son of God, and this man Jesus who was standing before him and His service and sacrifice - Caiaphas should have been on his knees in the presents of Jesus.

But instead he schemed and plotted to accuse and destroy.

To whom much is given, much is required, and this man had much, and is now sealing his fate in the hardness of his heart.

While Jesus is on trial in this earthly court, Caiaphas is on trial in a greater court, the eternal supreme court of heaven and his accusations, in

the face of what he knew and in the face of the one standing before him, is a conviction of eternal spiritual death.

He is judging Jesus, yet he is the one who is being judged:

Matthew 7:2 For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

It is at the asking of this question, that silence is broken, and the Lord speaks:

Mark 14:62

And Jesus said, I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.

Jesus says the same thing to Caiaphas, the High Priest, that He said to Moses nearly 1500 years before -

Exodus 3:6 I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

And once His identity was established Jesus went on to declare His destiny:

Citing Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13 He added:

And you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.

So while Jesus kept silent during the accusations of action, he now gave testimony to His identity and destiny:

Principles:

1. Confidence of actions in the Word require no defense. God will vindicate His servants.
2. We must not be distracted trying to defend ourselves from the critics. To do so shifts our focus from the Lord to people and their opinions.

Jesus was silent during the time of false accusation. His heavenly Father worked His defense.

3. Our identity in God's family, our position, is to be clear. As was the Lord's, He was the Messiah.

The most powerful statement we can make to World is that we know who we are and where we fit in to the grace plan of God. To confidently proclaim that we are in Christ.

4. Our destiny as believers must also be clear before the World.

The second most powerful statements your life can make is that it is a life in which you know where you are going. This is a privilege of the Christian to know there eternal destiny and to know that in time God has a plan for your life.

5. **Application:** Do not get distracted by trying to vindicate what you do in your service to the king, but do not hesitate to declare that you belong to the king and you have, in Him, a destiny.

Mark 14:63

And tearing his clothes, the high priest said, What further need do we have of witnesses?

Caiaphas, the High Priest, concludes that there is no further need of any witnesses.

He tore his clothing to show His contempt for Christ. But the tearing of clothing can also symbolize a contempt for self but it did not in this case.

Mark 14:64

You have heard the blasphemy; how does it seem to you? And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Leviticus 24:16 prescribed death by stoning to those who blasphemed God -

But they were unable to carry out this sentence. This is more a legal opinion than a formal writ of capital punishment.

It is at this point that Satan began to panic. His evil plan was falling apart. He would have wanted the court to continue to press the charge of attempted Temple desecration which would have brought a death penalty under both Jewish and Roman law. But the Sanhedrin is not cooperating with Satan and instead are working a plea bargain. If they can charge Jesus with blasphemy maybe the Romans will take care of Him.

They all wanted Him to die, Satan wanted Him to be stoned, but as we will see, God is in Control and His plan will go forth.

Now the next verse shows us the desperation of the court and the Temple guard:

Mark 14:65

And some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, Prophecy! And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.

The Old Testament teaches that the Messiah will be the greatest prophet. So these members of the court and the guard are putting Jesus to the test. He claims to be the Messiah so they, in their demanding position, demand prophecy.

When their demands are not met they beat the Lord Jesus:

We are told in Isaiah 52:14 that the beating Jesus received during this night and morning of illegal trials were so severe that he became unrecognizable:

Isaiah 52:14 So His appearance was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men.

This is an act of desperation, and act of frustration, they knew they had to take the accused before the Roman authorities and they did not know what would happen. So they spit on and beat the Lord Jesus Christ.

And He stood there and took it!

And He did this for you and me so He could go to His death and pay the price the justice of God demanded for our sins.

Throughout this night the Lord Jesus endured deceit, humiliation, physical abuse, slander, vindictiveness like the world has never witnessed and He did for us.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

The famous physician Dr. James Simpson of Scotland once gave this stirring testimony: "When I was a boy, I saw a sight I shall never forget - a man tied to a cart and dragged through the streets of my hometown. His back was torn and bleeding from the whip. It was a shameful punishment! For many offenses? No, for just one. Did anyone offer to bear some of his lashes? No! He endured them alone. His penalty was determined by a changing human law and was the last instance of its enforcement.

"When I was a student at the university, I saw another sight that lingers in my memory - a man

being led to the gallows. His hands were tied, and his face was pale as death. Thousands of eager eyes were on him as he walked slowly to the place of execution. Did anyone ask to die in his place? No! He underwent the full sentence of the law alone. For many offenses? No! For only one! He had stolen some money, and he paid with his life. It was the penalty of a changing law, for it was the last time capital punishment was inflicted for that crime.

"I saw another sight I shall never forget - myself a sinner, standing on the brink of an eternal Hell. For one sin? No! For many grievous wrongs committed against the unchanging laws of God. I looked again and behold, Jesus Christ became my substitute? He bore in His own body on the tree all the punishment for my sins. He suffered, *the just for the unjust*, that He might bring me to God."

During World War II, a military governor met with General George Patton in Sicily. When he praised Patton highly for his courage and bravery, the general replied, Sir, I am not a brave man, The truth is, I am an utter craven coward. I have never been within the sound of gunshot or in sight of battle in my whole life that I wasn't so scared that I had sweat in the palms of my hands. Years later, when Patton's autobiography was published, it contained this significant statement by the general: I learned very early in my life never to take counsel of my fears.

In our passage we are going to look at fear, we are going to see that fear is very present in our lives. We are going to see that victory is not in the absence of fear but is in the face of fear as we depend upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

We previously anticipated our current passage as we studied Peter during the last supper. At that time the Lord Jesus told His disciples that upon His arrest they would scatter in fear of their own lives. But Peter disagreed, more than just disagreement, he argued with the Lord and strongly proclaimed that he would never leave his Lord, Jesus Christ.

Just turn back with me to verse 29 (vv 29-31):

But Peter said to Him, Even though all may fall away, yet I will not. And Jesus said to him, Truly I say to you, that you yourself this very night, before a cock crows twice, shall three times deny Me. But Peter kept saying

insistently, Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!

Perhaps it was this strong insistence that set Peter up for what was to occur. It was Shakespeare who penned the line, Perhaps you protest too much - referring to one whose protest was there only to hide the fear of failure.

I see these verses as being a communication of crisis:

1. First, there is the crisis of denial. The failure of Peter, the strongest disciple, denying His Lord.
2. Secondly, the crisis of faith. Peter's fear replacing what was once a strong faith that proclaimed it would never deny, and would even die for the Savior.
3. Thirdly, a crisis of conscience. Peter, going from the courtyard, weeping bitterly, knowing that he had denied the one who would never deny Him.
4. Fourthly, it is a crisis of fear. The fear that overwhelmed Peter was not the problem, the problem was that fear lead to failure rather than dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we look at this passage as a communication of crisis we have to consider what was the basis for the crisis.

And what we see as we look below the action to the motivation is fear!

The concept of fear is used three ways in the Bible:

1. There is a fear of an authority which is tantamount to respect and obedience to that authority
2. There are legitimate fears. These come in two categories:
 - 1) A fear of our own actions and decisions that result from stupidity or ignorance:

EXAMPLE: You should be afraid if you have decided to take a nap on the freeway. That is stupid.

EXAMPLE: You should also have a healthy fear of things you are ignorant about. Like electricity, the brakes on your car, a medical problem. Those fears can lead you to action and to caution.

- 2) A second legitimate fear is a fear on not doing what God wants you to do nor taking advantage of all that God has for you.

3. The third type of fear is emotional irrational fear that is a motivation for abnormal function in life.

This type of fear is part of the distraction package of Satan, his will for you as opposed to God's will:

- 1) Fear: Including anxiety and worry
- 2) Guilt: Lack of faith in forgiveness
- 3) Anger and Hostility: Towards others
- 4) Discouragement: Leading to distraction

The more you surrender to fear the more things you will fear.

Fear in the life of the child of God builds in more and more fear and this fear pulls you away from the confidence and courage you can have in Christ. We see this in the events that build up to Peter's denial of his Lord, his friend, Jesus Christ.

Peter's denial of Christ did not occur in a vacuum. It was not the impetus of others' actions but rather the result of something else. When we read of the denials we see that which is on the surface. The overt, verbal sin of denial. But as with all sin there is much that is not seen.

Like the iceberg in which only a minor part is visible above the surface, sin is the visible part of problems in the life of the believer.

Below the surface of Peter's sin we see the motives of sin. A lack of security, a lack of faith in God's plan and the promises of Christ, a lack of dependence upon the Savior who would die for sin - all resulting in FEAR.

Legalism would be content with eliminating the actions of sin without dealing with the attitudes that lie beneath the surface. But controlling or containing action, even eliminating action does not reflect a changed life, only a controlled life. It does not represent a life that has been conformed to the image of Christ but merely a life that conforms to acceptable limits of society and morality.

What God has for us is something far greater.

Mark 14:66-71

Peter's three denials of Christ:

And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, You, too, were with Jesus the Nazarene. But he denied it, saying,

I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.

And he went out onto the porch. And the maid saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, This is one of them! But again he was denying it.

And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too. But he began to curse and swear, I do not know this man you are talking about!

Peter, the big fisherman, who earlier that evening had drawn a sword and was willing to stand before the Temple guard to defend his friend Jesus, now shrinks in fear at the accusations of a servant girl.

We look at this and have to ask, what happened.

Emotional irrational fear becomes a basis for more and more fear and more and more things to fear. Thus, a snowballing effect:

1. The more you surrender to fear the things you will fear. Today you fear one thing, tomorrow two, the next day three. The more you surrender to fear the more you move into a position of weakness. Things you never feared become major sources of fear in your life.

2. Fear eliminates the Christian's spiritual identity.

Unsure of salvation: Fear death, fear God in an emotional irrational abnormal manner

Principle: That is where even legitimate fears of not using all that God has provided can go over the line and become emotional and irrational leading to abnormal behavior.

Illustration: The young man who is learning, thinking, and applying doctrine, doing everything right, but gets involved in emotional irrational fear thinking there is something God has hidden that he is not doing. His fear eventually will wipe him out of the CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Illustration: Be in so much fear of not being a servant of God that you sell everything and become a bum.

3. As spiritual identity erodes you lose sight of the purpose for which you have been left upon the earth. Fear results in the loss of your personal sense of destiny.

To mature in doctrine and thus glorify the Lord.

With that loss you fear your role in life, in your home, in school, on the job.

4. As you surrender more and more to fear, fear become the motivation in your life.

Fear is a the great motivator for many people. These people are losers in time while they may be believers.

Their life style of fear has eliminated the power, love,, and sound mind they are to have as believers (II Timothy 1:7).

5. As fear surrounds you, you can suffer anxiety attacks, tension, ulcers, and physical illnesses that are induced by abnormal thinking.

This life style of fear can easily lead to dependence upon either illegal or prescription drugs. On alcohol, on other people.

Isaiah 28:1 Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim, And to the fading flower of its glorious beauty, Which is at the head of the fertile valley Of those who are overcome with wine!

Some people live in such fear that they can never stand to be alone, inactive, at rest.

This in itself shows us that fear is not on the outside, but on the inside.

6. This emotional irrational fear is totally destructive.

People can spend so much time being afraid of death, of going broke, of starving, and on and on that they can never enjoy life.

Fear destroys capacity for life. Thus when any of the good things of life come your way you are too afraid of losing them to enjoy them.

7. Fear also make you herd-bound. Your fear causes you to follow the crowd. You already lack the spiritual identity God wants you to have and thus you seek identity through dependence on the crowd.

Let's see these seven principles at work in Peter's denial of Christ:

Mark 14:27-31 As Jesus and His disciples walked from the last supper to the Mt. of Olives he warned them of the fact that they would scatter at His arrest.

Peter strongly protests this information (v 29 and 31).

When we begin overly protesting and say we would never do this or that, it is very often that protest that is attempting to hid the fear we have that we will do exactly that of which we are warned.

Have you seen this in your children. My wife and I have seen it in the foster girls we have had in our homes. It is a denial of weakness and an attempt at strength through verbiage rather than doctrine.

Mark 14:50 In the garden, after the incident with the sword, Peter and all the disciples run in fear for their lives.

So fear started as Peter was afraid of self, but now he is afraid of the Temple guard who came to arrest Jesus. And this fear results in abandoning Christ.

Mark 14:54 Between the garden and the courtyard Peter begins to build a little courage and follows after Christ, but at a distance.

But this is not courage and confidence in Christ, it is not following Christ as we should - He follows Him but only at a distance.

Principle: Fear puts a distance between you and your Savior.

And then our passage: Mark 14:67

And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came to him -

And Peter was afraid and out of that emotional and irrational fear he denied his Lord, friend, Jesus Christ.

Dr. Edward Weeks put our attitude regarding fear this way: To live with fear and not be afraid is the final test of maturity.

In our study of the apostle Peter we have observed over the past two weeks a man who let fear bring him to the point of destruction, who allowed his fear to make him afraid.

Where does this emotional irrational increasing more and more fear come from.

When we fear and that fear makes us afraid, where does it come from.

Now we noted that there is a fear that is legitimate based upon that which is unknown. We should have a fear, a healthy fear of the things we know little or nothing about.

Such as electricity, the breaks on your car, walking alone in a dangerous area of town.

But we are talking about the emotional irrational fear that brings on abnormal reactions - such as denying ones friend, as did Peter.

Where does that fear come from:

Turn in your Bible to Genesis, Chapter three -

Gen 3:6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, Where are you?

10 And he said, I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.

Principle: Fear began with the Fall

1. As soon as man fell through sin, fear became a core emotion of life.
2. Prior to the fall, in the presence of Christ, there was no fear. There was no sin, there was no fear. Man was on friendly terms with God. Man knew he was secure in Christ and significant in his environment.
3. After Adam and the woman sinned they quickly adjusted to there new condition and there was still no fear.

But then the Lord came into the garden, and Adam was afraid - he experienced something that was unknown prior to that moment: FEAR

4. This new emotion occurred when Adam, in the presence of the Lord, recognized that he was naked.

But remember, he wasn't physically naked, that would be the Hebrew word AROM (he was

wearing fig leaves) but here we have EROM which refers to a figurative or spiritual nakedness.

5. Man in his sinful condition, is afraid at the presence of the Lord. But here is where it gets interesting - in our saved condition, the presence of the Lord dispels fear.

6. We can only imagine the feeling that attended Adam's emotion of fear. He had broken a promise, he was disloyal, he had rejected God's provision, he was going die, he was embarrassed, he was shamed, his security was shattered, he was sure God would be angry, and yet he did not even know anger - he was sure the Lord would reject him.

7. And it is those same feeling that overwhelm us whenever we are afraid. And that fear comes when we as believers are not in the presence of the Lord.

That is why is Genesis 26:24, Deuteronomy 31:6, I Chronicles 28:20, Isaiah 43:5, and Jeremiah 46:28 the Lord repeatedly tells his people -

Be not afraid, for I am with thee.

But Adam, being our prototype in the flesh, in sin, and the power of the sin nature, which was pretty new to Adam, did not know that he need not fear.

So fear became the core motive of his actions.

1. And we are told what Adam did, he hid himself from the presence of the Lord.
2. He feared rejection so he ran. Ultimately man's greatest fear comes at thought of rejection by God, but we also attach fear to those more tangible who might reject us.
3. Once fear consumes us we will be motivated by fear. Fear is like a cancer cell that that intensifies and multiplies. Soon we are consumed by fear and fear becomes a lifestyle.
3. When we have the core emotion of fear and that is not dispelled, the motive of fear will develop a core strategy to deal with the fear.

There are three basic strategies in dealing with fear:

1. We hide, we lie, we cry.
2. We can just give up and cry, often on the inside, allowing our emotions to run and ruin our lives.

Remember Nehemiah, chapter 8. The wall was built and the people went to Ezra wanting Bible

class. And as he taught of their sins and the sins of their fathers, remember what they did - they wept at the revelation that God had rejected them. But Nehemiah and the elders told them not to wept and mourn their failure, but celebrate the grace of God.

3. Adam hid in fear, so did Elijah, he ran and hid in a cave because he was afraid.

We may be able to run and hide from the people whom we fear but we can never hide from the omnipresence of the Lord

4. And then we lie - like Peter did in the courtyard of the high priest when a servant girl asked if he knew this Jesus who was on trial.

Read Matt. 14:22-31

Immediately after the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus sent the crowds away, told the disciple to get in there boat and go to the other side of the sea of Galilee, and He went up into a mountain to pray.

But a storm raged on the sea and the disciples were getting nowhere, and their master had left them, no one dared speak it but they were afraid.

And at the proper time, at just the right moment, when they finally gave up in their own power, Jesus came to them walking on the surface of the sea.

Matt 14:27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.

28 And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.

29 And He said, Come! And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

30 But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me!

31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt?

I wonder, if in the courtyard that night, having denied his Savior, his Lord, his fiend, Peter thought about that other night on the sea of Galilee.

When he learned that if you keep you eyes fixed upon Jesus there is nothing to fear. That as fear

might arise it can be dispelled, that it need not be the core emotion, the core motivation, nor lead to the core strategies of fallen man.

You see, for fallen Adam it was the presence of the Lord that brought fear, but for you, and me, and Peter, it is the presence of the Lord that dispels fear.

And that is where Peter's fear in the courtyard came from, he thought he lost his Lord.

Peter was in the courtyard, alone. His friend who for three years he had been with had been taken away. His Savior was surrounded by the sinners, His Lord was in the midst of the legalists. He looked up and only heard the angry shouts of Sanhedrin calling for the death of Jesus, Peter's friend.

Then a servant girl asks: You, too, were with Jesus the Nazarene. But he denied it, saying, I neither know nor understand what you are talking about. And he went out onto the porch. And the maid saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, This is one of them! But again he was denying it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too. But he began to curse and swear, I do not know this man you are talking about!

He had the emotion of fear, the motivation of fear, and lies and denial became the strategy of fear.

That Jesus has promised (Matthew 28:20) *I am with you always*, even to the end of the age.

In the presence of the Lord we Christians need never have fear as our core emotion, as our core motivation, nor do we need to engage in the strategies that fallen man uses to deal with fear.

EMOTIONAL AND IRRATIONAL FEAR:

We began our study of FEAR with a promise.

Read 2 Timothy 1:7

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

That spirit of fear is a life-style of fear in which a believer rejects the power, love, and sound mind principle and ends up in the fear/panic ploy.

Fear/panic is the opposite of Faith/rest -

This Spirit or LIFESTYLE OF FEAR is the opposite of what God has provided for us:

When we are in this emotional irrational fear we:

1. Do not have divine power: The F/HS
2. We do not have love: The relaxed mental attitude of love that allows us to deal rationally with others even our enemies
3. We do not have a sound or rational mind: Fear eliminates the ability to think, emotions take over and you go from fear to panic.

The Bible lists many fears that men have and indicates that they are contradictions in the life of the believer who should be trusting God and not in fear and panic:

1. Basically three sources of emotional irrational fear:
 - a. People: Including individuals and systems
 - b. Self: That which you fear that has been fabricated from your own mind or background. Like a fear of the dark, wind, storms, fear of crowds, various phobias
 - c. Satan: The fear he can bring through evil, through demons and demon indwelt and influenced people.
2. Some verses on what we fear and yet need not fear:

Psalm 3:6 10,000 people being against us

Psalm 18:4 Ungodly men

Psalm 91:5 and I Peter 3:14 War, acts of Terrorism, and threats

Isaiah 8:12 and Hebrews 13:6 People and Conspiracies

Psalm 112:7 Evil or bad news (telegrams)

Proverbs 3:24 Night and sleeping

Proverbs 3:25 Sudden fears (reverse concentration)

Ezekiel 2:6 Words or what people say

Daniel 4:5 Dreams

Jeremiah 42:11 and Proverbs 20:2 Rulers and Kings

Matthew 25:25 Your boss or employer

Joel 2:22 Wild beasts (snakes)

Matthew 14:30 Nature, the wind and the sea

Acts 18:9 and Philippians 1:14 Preach the Word of God.

Mark 9:32 Ask questions

Psalm 119:39 Fear of the reproach of your own sins

Mark 5:15 Demon possessed people

Hebrews 2:15 Death, both actual and anticipatory

Fear is a sin of the Emotions:

1. Fear is an abnormal function of emotions. Emotions are to be appreciators of the soul. They are not designed to think, claim promised, apply doctrine, or function in a crisis.
2. There are two ways emotions can function (right or wrong):
 - a. In normal emotions the emotions respond to the authority and thinking in the soul. Thus, you emotionally appreciate that which you understand
 - b. In abnormal emotions the emotions control the soul and blanks out all thinking.

It is abnormal emotions that produce fear, worry, anxiety, anger, hatred which then compound to more and more mental attitude sin

3. Fear can never think under pressure.

Fear is emotional and irrational and cannot apply doctrine nor claim promises. When emotions take over the thinking is short circuited.

Reaction factors set in and instead of thinking through a problem you react irrationally and begin trying to sooth your fears with Human viewpoint, psychology, psychocybernetics, meditation, etc.

The result of a life style of fear is being a loser in the Christian Life.

4. The biblical alternative to fear is courage:

Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Christian courage is thinking and functioning under pressure as if there were no abnormal situations nor crisis circumstances.

Thus, in the midst of crisis you claim promises, use doctrinal principles, and have no emotional irrational fear that leads to abnormal function in life,

Christian courage makes you a winner -

The alternative to fear

For you as a believer, as a Christian, there is an alternative to emotional irrational fear. That alternative is based upon what God has provided for you as one of His children, and the result of that alternative is courage. But courage does not come when you merely psych yourself out or when you deny the existence of the things that you fear. Courage is built in as you grow in Christ.

Three principles of growth:

1. The first principle of dispelling fear is PERSONAL SPIRITUAL IDENTITY:

a. Your spiritual identity begins with knowing that you are saved, that you are a believer. This is not a feeling nor is this based upon what you do or how you act.

Based upon the declaration of the WORD OF GOD. The Bible tells with that:

John 1:12 But as many as received Jesus Christ, to them gave he right to be the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

b. The second part of spiritual identity is knowing that you are functioning in the CHRISTIAN LIFE according to God's plan.

This means that daily you are concentrating on the intake and application of the WORD OF GOD.

You are growing in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as mandated in 2 Peter 3:18

That you have not lost your first love, your love of the Word of God that tells you what God your father wants you to think, to say and do in life..

c. Along with that second part of spiritual identity is knowing that you are in fellowship. that having your sins confessed you F/HS and are empowered not by self but by the Spirit as He uses the doctrine you have in your soul.

d. The final phase of spiritual identity is knowing that God has eternally provided for you. That there is right now a place in heaven with your name on the mail box.

Regardless of what man might do to you, even to the point of death - eternity is secure.

We called citizens of heaven, we are merely sojourners here on earth (Philippians 3:20).

The second weapon against fear is knowing that God has a plan for your life and that a perfect God can come up with nothing less than a perfect plan. This develops a sense of personal destiny.

Within that plan we know that God has promised to provide for us. That while seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, He will add to our lives the things of life (Matthew 6:33).

Also that within that plan we may face those things that might cause men to fear:

a. Testing and trials from God that show us our need for His Word and demonstrate to us that His Word is sufficient:

James 1:2-3 Believers, count it all joy when you fall into various trials. Knowing that when those trials are passed by your faith the result is endurance.

b. Also, God will allow temptation to come your way as a warning and to show you His Power in His word as it is in your soul.

1 Corinthians 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Your understanding and trust in the biblical fact that God has a plan for you leads to a PERSONAL SENSE OF DESTINY.

And that is a weapon against emotional irrational fear.

3. The third weapon in conquering fear is recognizing the greater reality of the Word of God. Claiming specific promises that God has provided regarding situations in life that can bring fear.

Instead of the fear/panic ploy you engage in the faith/rest principle.

Knowing Promises:

Proverbs 3:24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

Psalms 56:3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

Psalms 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no

evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Hebrews 13:6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Then knowing the promise, trusting and resting in the greater reality of the promise.

A self-test for handling fear

Perhaps one of the greatest universal fears of man is death. Yet as a believer we are told we need not fear death.

You attitude towards death, either your own or the death of a fellow believer shows you a lot regarding you handling of fear.

John 14:1-3 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Principle: When you come to the point where you do not fear death you ready to live and not fear life.

Death of the believer is the greatest promotion you will ever experience. Absent from the body you will be face to face with the Lord - forever.

Psalms 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

Chapter 15

Lord Acton of England is credited with the statement: Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Thomas Jefferson said of power that he had never been able to conceive how any rational being could propose happiness to himself from the execution of power over others.

And Eric Fromm said: The lust for power is not rooted in strength but in weakness.

In the first part of chapter 15 we are going to be introduced to a man who wanted power, who

sought power at any price, who abuse the power he had, and used his power to order the execution of the Lord Jesus Christ - Pontius Pilate.

When we put all four Gospels together we see that Jesus endured a night of six trials, not one but six. Each one was false in every way and nothing more than a facade of justice that had already decided that Jesus had to die.

The first trial was before Annas, the political boss of Jerusalem

The second was before Caiaphas, the High Priest.

The third trial was held at daybreak before the Sanhedrin once they realized a trial at night was invalid

The fourth trial was before Pilate and Pilate found no guilt in this man from Nazareth

The fifth trial was before the Jewish monarch Herod who demanded a miracle and when Jesus would not perform for him has him beat and sent Jesus back to Pilate

The sixth trial was before Pilate again in which he again found no fault in Him but put him before the people to be released, but the people chose Barabbas. But Pilate was pressured by the Jews to carry out the execution.

Mark's account selects only two of these six trials. The second trial; before Caiaphas the high priest which we examined in chapter fourteen, and now, in chapter fifteen, the fourth trial which was the first of the two trials before Pilate. The final trial in which Barabbas was set free and Jesus condemned to the Cross is referred to in its results by Mark in Mark 15:6-15.

So here at the beginning of Mark 15 we have Jesus before the Roman authorities.

Mark 15:1

And early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation (the third of the six trials); and binding Jesus, they led Him away, and delivered Him up to Pilate.

The Sanhedrin, realizing the trial recorded in Mark 14 was illegal because it was at night, quickly held a trial at daybreak to add some facade of legality to there plot to do away with Jesus.

Here we are introduced to Pilate, whose name is long remembered in history as the man who gave the order to send Jesus to His death. Along with Judas, the very hearing of the name of Pontius Pilate has brought reaction and revulsion to Christians through the centuries.

WHO IS PONTIUS PILATE?

1. Pilate, whose name is Latin for one skilled with a javelin, was the Roman consul for Judea and Samarian for ten years, from AD 26 to AD 36.

He was the fifth Roman counsel in this region and the name Pontius means fifth and may be more of a title than a name.

2. He was born into the Roman middle class, the Equestrians, and apparently inherited some money that allowed him to qualify for his diplomatic position.

3. Little is known of him prior to coming to Jerusalem but much of his activities there and his subsequent career is recorded by Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, and later Eusebius.

4. The region which he controlled for Rome was considered the most difficult of postings, the combination religious and political differences between the Romans and the Jews made this a volatile region of the Roman Empire.

Under a previous consul, Roman troop marched into Jerusalem carrying the standard of the Emperor which the Jews saw as idolatrous. The riot that followed resulted in a rule that no Roman emblems were to be worn or displayed in Jerusalem.

5. When Pilate governed Judea and Samaria he was a comparatively young man. Historians of the time gage him to be in his late twenties or early thirties.

6. Eusebius recorded that after Judea, Pilate was reduced in position and served in Gaul (France) where he committed suicide.

The Coptic Church saw that as a result of becoming a Christian and they celebrate June 25th as a day to honor Pilate as a Saint.

Many records do indicate that his wife became a Christian following the crucifixion.

As to his character: Here is where it gets interesting:

The Sanhedrin led Him away, and delivered Him up to Pilate. And Pilate questioned Him

Two men, two men of tremendous power, facing each other. One exercising a power of position, a power of self and the other, standing there in the power of God.

There is a great difference in the power held by Pilate and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pilate's power was a power that was achieved at any cost, that was so often abused. A power he had to struggle to keep and would eventually lose.

Jesus power, in His humanity, was a power that was dependant. That was not earned or deserved, that was given to Him as it is given to us by our heavenly Father.

Pilate could lose his power, as he did. The Lord Jesus could never lose the power given Him by God.

How Pilate gained power and used power

Remember the statement: Power tends to corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

That is very true of the power Pilate had. A power that was corrupt:

1. Shortly after Pilate took power in Judea, he ordered the Roman Emblem to again be displayed. The previous counsel had wisely taken it down. Pilate's order resulted in a demonstration by the Jews at which time Pilate had the Roman troops kill a vast number of Jews. This resulted in a riot at which time Pilate gave in.

This incident reveals his poor judgment, stubbornness, and his weakness.

2. Then, Pilate took the CORBAN, the money given to the Temple treasury, and used it to build a 25 mile aqueduct because, it was reported, he did not like the taste of the water in Jerusalem.

3. Agrippa I said of Pilate and the Jews that the Jews exasperated Pilate to the greatest possible degree, as he feared they might go on an embassy to the Emperor, and might impeach him with respect to the particulars of his government--his corruptions, his acts of insolence, his habit of insulting people, his cruelty, and his continual murder of people untried and uncondemned, and his never ending most grievous inhumanity.

4. In his decisions regarding Jesus, we see his weakness, his fear, how unstable the power this very powerful man really was:

Mark 15:15 And wishing to satisfy the multitude, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified.

In Mark 15:19-20 the soldiers, Pilate's soldiers, beat the Lord Jesus whereas one word from Pilate would have ended this unjust and uncalled for humiliation. They beat him after he was condemned to die. Which was also contrary to Roman customs,

In John 19:12-13 we see how Pilate feared the people: As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar - When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat.

And in Matthew 27:24 Pilate tried to disclaim any responsibility in the matter: And when Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the multitude, saying, I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves.

5. For all of his power, Pilate was a man who lived with anger and fear, who was cynical and skeptical, a Roman who really lacked the Roman virtues of honor, justice, and integrity.

The Romans had a saying about their law: *Fiat iustitiam ruat caelum* -- Let justice be done though the heavens fall.

Nothing was to come before justice in the Roman mind, but Pilate was thinking for himself, trying to secure the power he had, and giving in to the pressure of the people.

6. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and sought to release him but only if it would have no adverse effect on him. And when that was not to be he sentenced the Son of God to die.

7. Pilate's desire and demand for power finally caught up with him when a large number of Samaritans gathered at Mt. Gerizim to search for the hidden golden objects of the Tabernacle. Some were armed and Pilate saw this as a threat and had his troops massacre many people.

A formal complaint of this incident was registered with Rome and Pilate was removed from office in disgrace.

Now it is with this understanding of Pilate that we can now examine our passage and see that the brevity of Pilate's questions are not for the sake of seeking justice, but are the questions of a man who is fearing his loss of power, fearing the situation, afraid of the people.

Mark 15:2

And Pilate questioned Him, Are You the King of the Jews? And answering He said to him, It is as you say.

Roman law was very specific regarding this type of trial. It was a referral trial from the local, indigenous rulers who were granted limited powers. This type of trial had to take place in the early part of the day so the Roman authorities could attend to matters of state in the afternoons.

The Sanhedrin would have bound Jesus and lead him to the palace of Herod, where Pilate resided and worked when in Jerusalem.

The trial would have begun with the verbal or written accusation against the accused. This resulted in an interrogation of the accused by the chief magistrate, in this case the only magistrate, Pilate. So he asks -

Are you the king of the Jews -

This rightly assumes that the Sanhedrin charged Jesus before Pilate with treason, claiming to be a king.

But look back to Mark 14:64. What is the charge there? Blasphemy. But the Romans could not have cared less about blasphemy.

So the Sanhedrin came up with a new indictment, treason. This Jesus is claiming to be king.

So Pilate begins with the question: Are you the king of the Jews?

Had Jesus given a direct affirmation of the question, and said YES, the proceedings would have ended, and Pilate would have had the legal right to sentence Him to die.

But Jesus did not really give a affirmative answer, He said - *It is, as you say.*

Now we might expand that to be: You are saying so, so it must be true, at least according to your frame of reference.

Pilate did not accept this as a YES answer, so the next step in the proceeding was to hear from the accusers, in this case the Sanhedrin.

Luke 23:2 and 5 record the accusations: And they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King. But they kept on insisting, saying, He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee, even as far as this place.

Mark tells us that the accusation were very harsh, but still Pilate was not convinced.

Mark 15:3-5

The chief priests began to accuse Him harshly.

And Pilate was questioning Him again, saying, Do You make no answer? See how many charges they bring against You.

But Jesus made no further answer; so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at this point Pilate could have condemned him but the Romans were very sensitive about convicting a person who provided no defense.

On the occasions where this was done, if the condemned decided to speak at any time up to his execution, a mistrial was called and the original verdict set aside.

Well, the religious leaders, the unbeliever, did not want that and their boss, Satan.

And Pilate just wants to get out of this, he sees himself being forced into the middle of a power struggle. And his power could be eroded.

And Pilate does find a way out, at least temporarily:

Remember Luke's record of the accusations of the Sanhedrin, how they said Jesus was (Luke 23:5) stirring up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee, even as far as this place.

Luke goes on to record:

Luke 23:6-7 That when Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod,

who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time.

So Pilate was able to dismiss the matter and turn Jesus over for the fifth trial that was before Herod.

But Herod, even with the chief priests violently accusing Jesus, found no guilt in the man from Nazareth and he sent Jesus back to Pilate.

It is at that point that Mark picks up the story and tells us about Pilate's attempt to set Jesus free.

But before we get to that, I want you to see from John's Gospel, the final interrogation of Jesus by Pilate.

Read John 18:338

Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus, and said to Him, Are You the King of the Jews?

34 Jesus answered, Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?

35 Pilate answered, I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You up to me; what have You done?

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.

37 Pilate therefore said to Him, So You are a king? Jesus answered, You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.

38 Pilate said to Him, What is truth?

Here we see a man in a powerful position, a man of power, and yet a man whose power and position has been achieved through force, manipulation, and human means. A man who must continue to play people against his own agenda - and a man who cannot see truth when it is before his very eyes.

And then we see our Lord - Also a powerful man, but one in whom power resides by the will of God. A power that is dependant on no one else except His heavenly Father.

And then we see ourselves. Will we seek the power that Pilate had, a power that must be achieved, and then a power that must be secured in our own power - or the power that Jesus had, a power not earned or deserved, a power we can have because we have believed in Him and we have a heavenly Father who gives to us His strength, His power.

Lord Avery of England is credited with saying: *Blessed is he that expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.*

Lord Chesterfield heard that and responded: *Blessed in he who expects nothing, for he shall be gloriously surprised.*

Expectation is a very interesting thing. We all have it, we have certain expectations. If those expectations are unrealistic or contradict the truth, there will be disappointment, and even disaster. But if right, according to God's truth, the expectations we have, will be fulfilled by Christ. And then our surprise is more than glorious, it is divine.

We are going to look at some people who are expectations, but they are wrong in what they are expecting.

The story we are going to examine this morning is very well known. Every movie that has been made about the death of Christ includes this episode. But too often the world's media depicts the event and overlooks the reason God has revealed this to us.

In 1 Corinthians 2:10 tells us that God reveals His truth to us:

For to us God revealed them (that which we cannot know by human means of perception) through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

We must recognize that every word of Scripture, every letter, every story, is given to us that we might learn about who our heavenly Father is, who we are, what God has for us, and what we face and what mankind faces as He attempts to see and know God.

It is in that light that we examine this well known story of the people shouting for the release of a criminal and demanding the death of Jesus the Savior.

Mark 15:6-13

Now at the feast he used to release for them any one prisoner whom they requested.

7 And the man named Barabbas had been imprisoned with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the insurrection.

8 And the multitude went up and began asking him to do as he had been accustomed to do for them.

9 And Pilate answered them, saying, Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?

10 For he was aware that the chief priests had delivered Him up because of envy.

11 But the chief priests stirred up the multitude to ask him to release Barabbas for them instead.

12 And answering again, Pilate was saying to them, Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?

13 And they shouted back, Crucify Him!

Our story has five players.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ: Who came to die on the Cross to give life and life more abundantly
2. Barabbas: A criminal, a zealot, who has taken life, a murderer
3. Pilate: Who is into the power game, seeking how he can manipulate this situation to his benefit
4. The Chief Priests: Who want to do away with this troublemaker, this Jesus who presents truth, grace, and love
5. The people: The crowd, the mob, who not only shouts for freedom for a murderer but for the death of the Savior

When we read that this mob called for the release of a criminal over the Christ we are horrified. We wonder how this could have occurred? How could anyone, looking at the Savior, seeing before them the Son of God, chose a criminal, a murderer, to be released?

In order to understand what happened that morning we have to understand something about this Barabbas:

1. Barabbas was a leader of a group of Jewish revolutionaries called Zealots. The Zealots fought against the Roman occupation of Israel. They

were involved in insurrection, planning covert activities intended to drive the Romans out of Israel.

2. They were zealous in their resolve to eliminate, exterminate, and extricate the Romans. Hence, the name Zealots.

3. The Zealots used the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah crushing the enemies of Israel, as a biblical basis for their rebellion.

Isaiah 13:3 and 9 I have commanded My consecrated ones, I have even called My mighty warriors, My proudly exulting ones, To execute My anger - Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, Cruel, with fury and burning anger, To make the land a desolation; And He will exterminate its sinners from it.

Jeremiah 6:4-5 Prepare war against her; Arise, and let us attack at noon. Woe to us, for the day declines, For the shadows of the evening lengthen! Arise, and let us attack by night And destroy her palaces!

4. But while they had biblical prophecy that they applied to their insurrection, they were misapplying the verses.

They failed to see that the Messiah would come first as the lamb of God before coming as the Lion.

That He would at the first advent crush the enemy of sin and then at the Second Advent crush the political and military enemies of Israel.

The Zealots were sincere, were enthusiastic, were dedicated, and yet, were very wrong in what they were doing.

5. Throughout the Gospels we see the people, and even the disciples, wanting Christ to be the Messiah of the Second Advent and lead a rebellion against Roman occupation.

This was all wrapped up in the idea of a literal Kingdom and they wanted that Kingdom right now:

At the feeding of the Five Thousand the people thought they had a formidable force to march on Jerusalem and free it from the Romans. They wanted Jesus to lead them in rebellion. But He refused -

John 6:15 Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him

by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.

Even the disciples sought the Kingdom that spelled freedom from Gentile occupation:

Acts 1:6 And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?

6. When Jesus refused to lead a military rebellion, the people rejected Him.

They had decided what the Messiah was to be like, they selected the Old Testament prophecies they wanted fulfilled by the coming King. When Jesus did not conform to their desires, they rejected Him.

In doing so they ignored the prophecies of the Lamb of God who would destroy the enemy of sin:

Isaiah 53:2-3 and verse 7 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him - He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

7. Barabbas was a revolutionary, he was what the people wanted, a military Savior. But he was also a criminal, a murderer, a violent man.

But he was what the people wanted, he fulfilled the expectations of the people, whereas Jesus did not. Barabbas was more of a Messiah, in the eyes of the people, than was Jesus.

So the people cried out for the release of the criminal they understood and rejected the Christ who has failed, in their eyes, to be the Savior, the Messiah, they expected.

Barabbas was more of a savior to the people, in their estimation, than was the Lord Jesus Christ -

So with that background we perhaps at least can see the distorted reasoning behind the choice that they made.

And then we add to that the influence of the Chief Priests who are working their evil scheme to get rid of Jesus:

Mark 15:11 But the chief priests stirred up the multitude to ask Pilate to release Barabbas for them instead.

So we have the wrong expectations of the people

And the influence of the priests

Both working together and resulting in the release of Barabbas and the demand for the crucifixion of Christ.

And that tells us why that happened then, but would the same thing happen today - and I want you to know that it would, and it happens everyday.

Let me draw an analogy for you.

1. As the people were faced with a choice then, mankind is faced with a choice today. The Christ or some other savior, some religious leader or spiritual master who happens to be what they want?

2. Jesus was there to give life. Barabbas was one who had taken life. Jesus was there to save the crowd from the enemy of sin. Barabbas was there merely trying to save the people from the enemy of Rome.

3. The people were much like the world today. More concerned with what was seen than unseen. More concerned about what they wanted than what God wanted for them. More involved with their own limited expectations than the true, unlimited expectations of a God who loved them.

4. The Chief Priest with their hidden agenda represent then and now Satan. The Priests saw Jesus taking their control over the people away. They knew the Savior spoke the truth and that the truth would set the people free.

And they wanted to control the people just like Satan continues today to want to control mankind. He will work, he will influence mankind to chose the ones who take life rather than give life. To chose the one who false over the one who is true.

Satan is wise, he is ever working his hidden agenda behind the scenes of history.

5. Pilate, who was an apparently powerful man, was being used by the religious leaders. In our analogy, Pilate would parallel religion. Controlled

by Satan, influenced by man. Always trying to protect its power rather than serve God.

More concerned with doing what is expedient and expected than what is right, just, and fair.

Vacillating, giving in, going along with the crowd, ignoring the truth, and doing what is evil.

6. Mankind today is no different. If Christ and a popular criminal were put before the people, the people would chose the criminal.

All he would have to do is meet some of there preconceived expectations. To conform to their image of what a hero, what a Savior should be. They would reject the Christ.

And hundreds of thousands of people today are making that same wrong choice, they reject the true Savior and go for the religion and the religious leaders that fit what they want.

But it doesn't just end with rejection!

Mark 15:14,15

And answering again, Pilate was saying to them, Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews? And they shouted back, Crucify Him! But Pilate was saying to them, Why, what evil has He done? But they shouted all the more, Crucify Him! And wishing to satisfy the multitude, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified.

Who is the victim in all this?

We might think it is Christ, the innocent Lamb of God, but His life is in the Father's care and the Father is in control.

Even Jesus had said earlier in Mark 14:49

But this has happened that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

No, the victim is not Jesus, the victim is the people:

Influenced by Satan, manipulated by religion, seeking what they think is right - they not only reject the Savior but ask, demand that He is destroyed.

You see rejection never stops there, it quickly digresses to antagonism. As the heart is hardened, as scar tissue builds up, as reversionism becomes a part of the soul, hatred soon follows -

And that is where the world is today, digression into antagonism and hatred.

Accepting that which takes life, that which is evil, over the one who is true.

This may be a very well known story of something that happened a long time ago that shakes our senses, but it is a story that has been happening over and over again, for 2,000 years, ever time mankind rejects the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

MOTIVATED by their own expectations of what should be.

INFLUENCED by the hidden agenda of Satan to control.

EMPOWERED by the evil leadership of religion - MAN MAKES HIS CHOICE to reject the Savior.

Most us know the children's story about the Emperor's new clothes. How the tailors convinced the king that they had woven a thread that only the purest of heart could see. The Emperor could not see but would not admit his inability. When the day came for the Emperor to display his new clothes he walked through the streets in his underwear. It was only when a small child, pure in heart, exclaimed that the Emperor wore no robes that he had been tricked and deceived - that he had also deceived himself.

In a very similar way today the world is putting on robes of royalty and power that are not there. Too often even the believer, who is to be pure in heart by way of the grace of God that has cleansed us from our sins, puts on these robes that are not there. God sees us as being nay-ked.

In Revelation 3:16-18 the Lord spoke to the Church of Laodicea and said:

You are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing, and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed -

Now, we will see the false robe of royalty the world tried to put upon our Lord Jesus Christ.

As Jesus walks the pathway that will lead to the Cross, we must see Him alone, the rejected Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world.

His friends, the disciples, have fled. One who very close to him even denied knowing Him. The religious leaders who were the custodians of faith and spiritual life for God's people turned against Him and wanted Him out of the way. The Romans who normally had such a love for justice allowed that justice to go forth perverted and bent to the will of the religious leaders. The crowd who has hailed Jesus as the Messiah less than a week earlier, chose a criminal to be released and cried out, demanding that Jesus was to be crucified.

As we consider our Savior and what was going on that terrible day, the day of the Cross, we have to see that He was very much alone.

The One who created the heavens and the earth, the One who created angels, Who formed man from the dust of the earth, who understood enough about the need for companionship to pull a rib out of Adam and make woman, a fiend for man, a help mate, the one who sat in the heavens and heard millions of prayers of the saints and prayed for those saints, was now alone -

And if being alone was not enough, Our Lord also became the object of senseless brutality.

Verses 16-20 tell us of this humiliation and brutality:

Mark 15:16-20

The soldiers took Him away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium), and they called together the whole Roman cohort.

17 They dressed Him up in purple, and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him;

18 and they began to acclaim Him, Hail, King of the Jews!

19 They kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting on Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him.

20 After they had mocked Him, they took the purple robe off Him and put His own garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him.

We see that immediately after the release of Barabbas and the sentence of death given to Jesus,

that Pilate had Him flogged. This was done in the sight of the people who were calling for the crucifixion.

The whipping that was given to a condemned man was done before his accusers in the Roman Empire. On more than one occasion the accuser, seeing the accused so brutally beaten, would withdraw his accusation. Perhaps Pilate had hoped that the people might recant their desire to see this King of the Jews put to death, but that was not the case.

Jesus, by then battered and bleeding, was then turned over to the Roman soldiers and brought into the courtyard of the governor's residence. The soldiers called together the cohort, normally consisting of 600 men, or one-tenth of a legion, but perhaps an auxiliary unit of 200 to 300 men brought with Pilate from Caesarea.

It is here that we see what we might call senseless humiliation and brutality. The man was sentenced to die and it takes a very twisted and hardened person not to show some compassion on one that is ready to lose their life. But there was no compassion found in these soldiers that day:

And the soldiers took Him away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium), and they called together the whole Roman cohort. And they dressed Him up in purple, and after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on Him; and they began to acclaim Him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting at Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him. And after they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, and put His garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him.

These soldiers did FIVE things:

1. Dressed Jesus in a purple robe
2. They put a crown of thorns on His head
3. They mocked Him and acclaimed Him as King of the Jews
4. They beat His head with a reed
5. They were spitting at Him

Much of what they did they did out of the evil, the anger, the darkness of their own souls. Senseless, without purpose or reason, just to taunt, to be mean.

But two of the five have a significance that was unknown to the soldiers. A significance that looks back to the fall and curse upon man and a significance that looks ahead to what we have as Christians because of all that Christ endured that day.

I. THE CROWN OF THORNS:

1. The Crown of Thorns was not removed from Jesus when He went to the Cross. It was there as He suffered and died for our sins.

2. The thrones that inhabit the earth, are a direct result of the curse on fallen man:

Genesis 3:17-18 God said to Adam: Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you -

3. Every time you get a thorn in your finger you should be reminded that we live in a world that is under a curse.

4. As Paul talks about the work of Christ on the Cross and the very present power of the Lord's victory in Romans 8, he also talks about this fallen world:

Romans 8:20-22 For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

5. These soldiers took a piece of this fallen world and put it on Jesus' head. Jesus took a piece of this fallen world with Him on the Cross.

And it was on the Cross that Jesus Christ provided not only for our salvation from sin, but also the salvation of the fallen world.

6. So without even knowing it these soldiers in their mocking and humiliation of Christ, went back to the fall of man and gave to Jesus that which would proclaim a victory and a future redemption of fallen earth.

Revelation 22:3 And there shall no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His bond-servants shall serve Him.

II. THE PURPLE ROBE:

CHRIST'S CLOTHING:

1. The Roman soldiers put a tattered purple robe on Christ and mocked him, beat him, shoved a crown of thorns on his head, and bowed down to him.

This tattered robe was an old faded robe of the Roman military. These robes were red but after wear and washing they faded and took on a faded purple appearance.

2. But before he went to the Cross they took that purple robe off him and put on his own tunic or garments.

Mark 15:20 And after they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, and put His garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him.

3. He went to the Cross, the greatest test of His humanity, clothed in his own clothes.

By way of analogy, these are the clothes of power that he had from His Father. They were his and he used them to endure the Cross.

4. When he was striped and nailed to the Cross, the soldiers could not divide his clothes among themselves. They were not theirs to have. Cast lots for them.

John 19:24 The soldiers said therefore to one another, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be; that the Scripture (Psalm 22:18) might be fulfilled, They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.

NOTE: This garment was not a robe but a tunic. Forget the movie The Robe.

5. After the Resurrection, he promised his disciples that they would be clothed with divine power, just as he was so clothed when he walked the way of the Cross.

Luke 24:49 I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be clothed with power from on high.

6. In Revelation 18:11-19 we are told that the world lusts after purple or scarlet robes of human power. But on Christ they were a target of mockery.

Revelation 18:16 and 19 The Merchants were: Saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls - And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!

But the believers have a different response:

Revelation 18:20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.

The world lusts after the tattered robes of human power. In the same way, if the world put on you these robes of human power, you look ridiculous. You will be mocked as Christ was mocked.

7. But if you put on you own clothing (cannot be someone else's clothing) that is from God, you can endure the greatest of tests with power from on high that is yours

Jesus Christ endured the greatest test of history, the Cross, wearing His own clothing, an inner reality that came from God.

8. And then, the Father called Christ to be seated at His right hand and clothed Him in an eternal royal robe:

Revelation 1:12-16 And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

9. Colossians 3:10-14 describe the clothing Christ wore to the Cross: And this is the same clothing we can now put on.

And have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him --a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

And we can wear the same clothing he wore!

Prerequisites: Correct Motive, Influence and Power which is the same for us as it was for Christ.

Social Scientists describe three types of loneliness:

1. First there is the loneliness of isolation:

This is the loneliness of solitary confinement, being alone, separated from other human beings.

2. Secondly there is the loneliness of separation and rejection. This a loneliness that comes from the being separated from specific people who you care for or love. Knowing that there are others who were once close to you that by your choice or there's, are no longer there.

3. Third, there is an existential loneliness that can come deep from within man when he senses he is not in touch with God.

Now we are going to see Jesus alone. But not alone, separated or alienated from God. But alone, separated from friends and those he loved.

We have already noted in our study of Jesus' approach to the Cross that His friends have abandoned Him, that the ones He came to save have now turned against Him, that the legal system that was to support justice was unjust in condemning Jesus, and that the Roman soldiers vented hostility and anger against Jesus.

We have noted that perhaps never before in the history of mankind had one who came to give so much was left so alone as our Lord when He was taken into the courtyard to face the anger of the soldiers.

He was alone - but the God of grace, love, and peace was with Him. He was abandoned by man, but not by His heavenly Father.

And all this happened for us:

Hebrews 12:3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

By this promise, this challenge, we are told that Jesus, alone, humiliated, condemned, did not lose heart.

When Jesus would go to the cross a mere few hours from these events we are reading of, He would experience a unique loneliness as God the Father had to turn His back on His only begotten Son to judge Him for the sins of the Word.

That is a loneliness of divine proportions that could only be experienced by one who never, throughout all history, knew the loneliness of separation from God. And Jesus experienced that, went through the shame of the Cross for us -

But prior to the Cross there was a loneliness of human proportions. Jesus, alone and abandoned and in the courtyard with the anger of the adversaries.

How easy it would have been for the one who created heaven and earth to end everything right then and there. To call down the fire of judgment upon these persecutors, upon Pilate, upon the people, upon the priests. But the plan of God was more important, our salvation was more important.

We were His priority, He wanted to provide for us the salvation that could come only through the Cross and if that meant being alone, being abused, being alienated from friends and those He loved, then so be it -

And he did that for us -

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

But having endure the courtyard of the enemy, and having endured it alone, Jesus is now being brought to the pit of death where He will die for the sins of the human race.

On the Cross He will be separated from the Father. His loneliness will be one of divine proportions.

And perhaps because of that unique loneliness He is about to face, the Father provides for Him a few, a precious few, who will be there with Him - one such person was Simon.

Mark 15:21

And they pressed into service a passer-by coming from the country, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), to bear His cross.

It was a common practice in Roman executions for the condemned to carry their cross to the place of death. These crosses were heavy and since the condemned had already experienced the brutal beatings, they would often buckle under the weight of the Cross.

Perhaps it was after Jesus had fallen a few times that the soldiers decided to quicken the pace by having someone else carry the Cross.

So they pressed into service a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene:

The story of Simon of Cyrene:

1. The crucifixion procession was led by a centurion, followed by two soldiers, then Christ then the others including the two thieves, then two more soldiers, and last the skilled executioners.
2. This procession was heading out of the city as Simon was coming into the city.
3. The soldiers compelled or pressed into service: the word is AGGAREVW, which was used for soldiers who were stationed a mile apart on major trade routes to press into service passersby who could carry official messages. Not a command but a strong request. He could have said NO, but he did not.

He was pressed into service to carry the Cross which became God's official message of hope, glory, and eternal salvation.

4. In order that he might bear the cross.

This is a subjunctive verb, he had a choice. And this reminds us that everyone who meets Christ has a choice.

5. He was a Cyrenian, from an area outside of Alexandria, Egypt.

He had not been in Judea and had not heard what the religious leaders had said about Christ. Thus he was objective.

6. So here is a businessman, in town for the holidays, and all of a sudden he is being strongly asked to carry the cross of a convicted felon.

Why did he do it? Because he watched, he reasoned, he was objective, he chose, he believed.

7. The passage mentions his sons, Alexander and Rufus, because by the time Mark writes the Gospel they were well known Christians.

Romans 16:31 refers to Rufus and Simon's wives being in Rome and known to the Churches.

Here is an amazing man. He believed, he returned to North Africa, witnessed to his family who also believed.

WHY: Because he was objective.

I cannot read this passage without thinking of something Jesus said to His disciples while they were still in Galilee:

Mark 8:34 And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Principle: Jesus never calls us to do what He has not already done. He carried His Cross - but here is where we see the amazing grace of God.

He carried His Cross to a point, to a point when He could no longer bear up under the burden and then, at the precise right moment, God provided help in His time of need.

Principles:

1. Each one of us must carry our own cross. Sometimes we carry it in the company of many others, sometimes all alone.
2. When God calls us to go it alone, separated from friends, family, fellow believers, we must remember that God is always there - we may be alone in human terms but never in our relationship with God.
3. The test, the trials that God puts us through are designed to strengthen us, to bring us into closer friendship and fellowship with Him.
4. When Jesus carried His Cross it was to bring Him to a place where He could accomplish the

goal the Father had for Him and bring Him to the place of victory, His death.

5. When we are under the burden of carrying our own Cross that is not the goal, the destiny the Father has for us but the means to get us to that goal, that victory we can have in Him.

6. Any burden we struggle under is designed by God and comes either directly from God or is indirectly allowed by God, for our benefit, our advance, to strengthen us, to get us to where He wants us to be for maximum blessing.

Isaiah 30:18 The Lord longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him.

EXPANDED: God is tapping his foot, waiting to pour grace out upon you.

7. And we can be assured that as with Jesus, when that burden brings us down, when we begin to break under the load, the Father will provide help in a time of need. A friend to help us shoulder the load, to get us to where God wants us to be.

The Apostle Paul gives us the mechanics of this:

Gal. 6:2, Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

Gal. 6:5, For each one shall bear his own load.

These two apparently contradictory statements tell us how we are to help one another.

1. In Gal. 6:22 the word BURDEN is BAROS, the weight that is ready to break us, to bring us down.
2. In Gal. 6:33 the word LOAD is FORTION and looks at the normal burdens of life that we bear with a result of productivity or beneficial results.
3. We must be there to help shoulder the load that is about to break a fellow believer. But we must let others carry their normal burdens in life so we do not take from them the blessing of carrying their own cross.

We see that God provided the humanity of Jesus with someone to help shoulder the load, to help Him get to the place of victory.

But in the courtyard our Lord was alone. The Father did not provide someone else to take the beating, to endure the mockery and humiliation.

The Lord was very alone but He would not be alone for much longer.

Simon of Cyrene was already being prepared to meet the Lord on the way to the Golgotha, to be there at the precise right moment to help our Savior fulfill the destiny God had for Him.

Application:

There are times when we will be under the burdens of life alone. Times when it will seem that there is no one else around. But God is never far from us. He is always there. And in His grace and love for us He will provide help, encouragement, another to help us shoulder the load that is about to break us, at the precise right time.

There is a reminder for all of us in this story of Simon:

Nothing ever stays the same -

As I talk with believers under the burdens of life, believers who are carrying their own crosses to the place of destiny fulfilled, I remind them that nothing ever stays the same.

There can be no doubt that our Lord Jesus Christ did not deserve the suffering He endured on His way to the Cross - we did.

Mark 15:22

And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull.

The place that Jesus died shares three names, which each in their own language, mean the same thing, The Place of the Skull. Golgotha is the Greek transliteration of an Aramaic word. Calvary is from the Latin, calvaria, meaning skull. We would understand it as the place of the skull.

It was the British General Gordon who, in the 19th century, was sitting on the North wall of the old quarter of Jerusalem and looked out and saw a rock formation that resembled a skull.

Tradition of both hymns and paintings often depict the place of the crucifixion as on a hill top. But that would be contrary to Roman thinking. The Romans put temples, homes, places of honor on the tops of hills, not people condemned to die.

The place of the skull or Gordon's Calvary, is north of the city, but it is a pit surrounded on three sides by a natural rock wall and in the face of the

north precipice is a rock formation that resembles a skull.

Most historians and archeologists now see this pit as the place where Jesus died for the sins of the human race.

Crucifixion:

There is perhaps no more excruciating death that death by crucifixion.

Josephus wrote as one who witness this form of capital punishment and said it was - the most wretched of all ways of dying.

Cicero, a Roman himself, calls crucifixion the grossest, cruelest, most hideous manner of execution.

William Lane in his commentary of Mark states:

Death by crucifixion was one of the cruelest and most degrading forms of punishment ever conceived by human perversity, even in the eyes of the pagan world.

Now we will examine what crucifixion was like as we progress through this chapter but for today I want to concentrate on the person of Jesus Christ and His attitude, His endurance, His courage at the Cross.

An a glimpse into that attitude is seen in the next verse.

Mark 15:23

And they tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh; but He did not take it.

Crucifixion was such a horrible manner of death that the Romans allowed the women of Jerusalem to administer a strong anesthetic prior to the execution. This was intended to dull the senses of the condemned so that the piercing of the wrists by the nails and the pain of cross bar upon which the condemned was nailed as it was hoisted to the up right would be bearable.

Matthew 27:34 gives us additional information:

They gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink.

1. The anesthetic was a mixture of wine and gall or myrrh. Now both are capable of deadening pain.

2. Myrrh was a plant sap that was a very strong natural anesthetic that would have eliminated much of the pain.

3. The verse in Matthew focuses us upon the humanity of Jesus, He tasted the mixture, His throat was parched, He was thirsty.

4. But recognizing what it was He refused it. He would go to the Cross, endure the pain in what was provided by God and not by man.

5. His senses would be sharp, He would be able to think about the doctrine He had as He died for our sins.

Now when we consider the death of Christ we have to really look at the two deaths that our Lord suffered on our behalf.

The death for our sins was a spiritual death that satisfied the righteous demands of a Holy and Just God.

We have spiritual life because Jesus endured a spiritual death, a separation from the Father as the sins of the human race were poured out upon Christ.

Such passages as:

Galatians 1:4, The Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

1 John 4:10, In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:3, For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

Look at this death that only Christ could die to bring us to God, insuring forgiveness and sanctification.

But there is also the physical death and the physical suffering that Jesus endured because of us, because of sin.

Hebrews 12:2,3, Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners

against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

We rejoice in that fact that Jesus died for our sins but we must never forget that Jesus also suffered greatly at the hand of men because of the sins of the human race.

The hostility of the Jewish religious leaders, the injustice of Rome, the vacillation of the people, the anger of the Roman guard, the cruelty of the executioners.

These all cause our Lord to endure the physical pain that was all a part of the death of the Cross.

In the Psalms David spoke of the death of the Messiah in both spiritual and physical terms:

Psalm 22

1 My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

14 I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And Thou dost lay me in the dust of death.

16 For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me;

18 They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.

When we put together the deaths Christ died, the entire picture of His suffering and shame, we have a principle:

Principle: Christ died spiritually on behalf of our sins and He suffered physically because of our sins.

God poured the sins of the human race upon Christ at the Cross - and prior to the Cross, man vented the darkness of sin against the Lord Jesus.

Isaiah 52:14 His appearance was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men.

It is this physical suffering that I want to examine first. suffering that was so intense and yet a

suffering Christ endured, refusing to drink the wine and myrrh to deaden the pain:

Four scars:

1. Jesus carried to the Cross the scars on His back from the beating he received after He was sentenced to die.

The English word scourging comes from a Latin compound of two words meaning to take off the skin.

Isaiah 50:6, I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

Our souls are scared by sins, but Jesus' body was scared because of our sins.

Who can bear to watch an innocent man beaten, bloodied, the skin ripped off his back by the sin that lies in us, in the sin nature.

The English minister R. Moffat Gantrey said of this that only when man becomes callous and so accustomed to inhumanity and hardened to the pain of others will we no longer be awed by the pain and sorrow of the lamb of God.

He went on to say that at the scourging of the Lamb of God:

If angels had hearts to break they would have broken when they saw what man had done to God's well beloved son. If they had tears to shed they would have shed tears so great as the blood that dripped from the Savior's back. Angels would have hid their faces with their wings against the sight, unable to bear the tragic evidence of man's sin.

He turned His back to be scourged as a result of man's sin and then carried those scars to the Cross.

2. The second scars were the scars of the crown of thorns:

The thorns that were a curse upon the earth as a result of man's sin and disobedience now scars the head of Christ as the tormentors pushed the crown upon his head. These thorns were a reminder to man of his sin. A curse from God upon fallen man and fallen earth.

Yet man takes that curse and scars the head of Christ. The head that bore the glory of eternity was forced to wear a symbol of sin and shame.

When we think of the crown of thorns and the scars caused by it we are to be reminded of the nature of man. Thrusting, forcing upon God that which man alone cause.

The crown of thorns demonstrate the tendency in man to blame God, to want to pass the buck, to say it is all God's fault, and refuse the culpability of our crimes.

The thorns God gave to remind us of our sin became a reminder that we must never put upon God the blame for our own decisions to sin, to rebel, to disobey.

The crown of thorns remind us of our denial of our sin. That we deserve the thorns.

Jesus did not deserve the crown of thorns, we did. He was the innocent lamb of God - yet he chose to wear the crown of thorns to the Cross.

3. The third scars of the suffering of the Savior are the scars of the nails, made by the executioner as nailed to the Cross.

David observed in Psalm 22:16, They pierced my hands and feet.

Consider the hands of Jesus, that shaped the earth out of nothing, that formed man from the dust, that took from man's side a rib and built woman.

These hands did not deserve the scars of our sin.

Psalm 31:15, My times are in Thy hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.

1 Chronicles 21:13, And David said to Gad, I am in great distress; please let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are very great. But do not let me fall into the hand of man.

Isaiah 59:1, Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short That it cannot save; Neither is His ear so dull That it cannot hear.

Ezra 8:31 The hand of our God was over us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the ambushes by the way.

The hands of Christ are the hands of assurance and security. In His hands we rest, we know safety and promise, it is in His hands we put our lives.

And those hands are forever scared by the nails of the Cross.

4. There is one last scar, the scar in His side that came after He gave up His spirit to the Father.

Crucifixion could take two to three days but the next day was the Passover and in respect to the Jews no condemned man would hang of the tree of death during that important holyday. To speed up the process the Roman soldiers would break the legs of the condemned and then, later, thrust the sword through the side and into the heart.

When they came to break Jesus legs, He had already expired, giving up His own spirit. To insure His death the soldier took a sword and pierced His side, to the very heart. But He was already dead.

That scar that remains in the side of the Savior is testimony to His death and thus a testimony to His resurrection.

To Thomas who had such doubts, Jesus said:

John 20:27, Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing.

Four scars that remind us of the suffering of our Savior

1. The scared back: The callousness of sin, the indifference as insensitivity that is a part of everyone of us.

2. The scars of the crown of thorns: Our denial that we deserve our fallen state, that its God's fault, not ours.

3. The nail pierced hands: Reminding us that in these hands we can put our lives, our hopes and dreams, our future.

4. And the scared side: A reminder that death cannot end what we have in the one who died for us and is risen for us, as our Savior, our friend.

While Peter wrote about Christ taking away our sins I cannot help but think he also had in mind, as should we, what Jesus went through in His physical sufferings to get to the Cross -

1 Peter 2:21-24 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no

threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were made whole.

The story is told that Frederick the Great once rode through the streets of Berlin and noticed a crowd looking intently at a wall. On it was hanging a vile caricature of himself. Someone had put it up high so it wouldn't be torn down. The citizens expected a terrific outburst of temper from their monarch. He looked at the picture for a moment, noted the scurrilous slander, and then quietly said to his servant, Place it lower so that all may read it. As he calmly rode away, he had won a victory over the evil intentions of his enemies, and the bystanders had gained a new admiration for their leader.

There is not one of us who has not in some measure been maligned, slandered, ridiculed, mocked, laughed at. When these things are directed at us we face a test, how will we react.

It has wisely been said that what happens to you in life does not matter nearly as much as how you respond to it.

We are going to see Jesus, on the Cross, enduring the shame of humiliation and ridicule and we are going to see how our Savior, our Lord, our hero and our friend, responded.

Mark 15:24

And they crucified Him, and divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take.

There is no act of inhumanity that man can inflict upon another member of the human race that Jesus Christ did not endure as He approached the hour when He would do what only He could do, pay the price, once and for all, for the sins of human race.

The very sin that was directed at Him as He approached the Cross and in the initial hours of the Cross were sins that Jesus took upon Himself and paid the highest price to satisfy the justice and righteous demands of the Father. LAST WEEK WE EXAMINED THE PHYSICAL pain, the scars that Jesus carried with Him to the Cross that remind us of why we so desperately need a Savior. We are,

as Paul would later say, men most miserable (I Corinthians 15:19).

We are going to look at another kind of abuse, another type of pain inflicted upon Christ. The insults, the mockery, the verbal humiliation He endured. And this pain also carried with it scars. Physical pain wounds the body, this type of pain goes deeper and wounds the very soul.

In very simple and straight forward statement, Mark tells us that Jesus was crucified.

As he begins the progression of events of the Cross he starts out by telling us that Jesus went to the Cross with very little from this life and soon lost event that.

It was customary for the four man squad of soldiers who crucified condemned criminals to divide the possessions of the condemned between them.

Long before the Romans controlled Palestine, a 1000years before the crucifixion, David prophetic wrote of this occurrence.

Psalm 22:18 They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.

JESUS CHRIST WENT TO THE CROSS with nothing from this world. He would endure because of what He carried with Him in His soul. Doctrine, the power of the Spirit, the priority He had set from eternity past to die for our sins.

Mark 15:25,26

And it was the third hour (9:00 AM) when they crucified Him. And the inscription of the charge against Him read, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

It was customary to place a sign over the condemned man to indicate his crime. Each of the gospel writer record that the sign on the Cross of Jesus read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Matthew and John add His name, Jesus, and John adds that the sign stated that He was from Nazareth.

The statement of the crime was probably written in Latin (the legal language of Rome), Greek (the common language of Rome), and in Hebrew (the language of the people). The complete sign was intended as an indictment:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS

Each gospel writer includes part of the entire statement with John, the only disciple who was an eyewitness, giving the full version.

The Romans intended this to be an indictment, a humiliation, a statement of the crime for which Jesus was being put to death - but it was true - This was the King of the Jews.

Rejected, scorned, condemned to die. The object of hatred and antagonism. But that is who He was and continues to be. The King of kings and Lord of lords.

We see in this passage every possible group attacking the Lord Jesus Christ.

That sign was the official verdict of Rome, a true statement and yet turned and twisted as a reason to put this innocent man to death.

Rome, who prided itself on having a fair and just legal system, condemned an innocent man to die.

We as American's also take pride in our fair and just legal system. But what happens when we see the legal system fail, when the ones who are to support the law of the land fail and that law is turned against us?

JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS could find no comfort or help in the legal system.

Mark 15:27,28

And they crucified two robbers with Him, one on His right and one on His left.

And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, And He was numbered with transgressors (Isaiah 53:12).

There is a false idea that there is some kind of honor among thieves. That is not case here nor has it ever been the case. There is no honor, camaraderie, or respect among those who live outside of the law.

Luke tells us the whole story about these two robbers. Matthew and later Mark both tell us that at the beginning, both mocked and ridiculed the Lord Jesus.

Look on to the last statement in verse 32:

And those who were crucified with Him were casting the same insult at Him.

But we also learn that as one continued to ridicule, the other recognized Jesus as the Messiah and that

He was innocent and he was saved in those closing hours of his life.

The legal system was against Jesus and even those outside the legal system, the others condemned to die, held out no help for the Son of God. Both the law givers and the law breakers slandered the Lord Jesus Christ.

But in this the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled:

Isaiah 53:12 Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

Mark 15:29,30

And those passing by were hurling abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ha! You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross!

This is the crowd, the mob, the mass of people who are passing by this place of death.

Some of those who that morning called to Pilate to crucify the Christ. Some of those who a few days earlier welcomed Jesus into the city, hailing Him as their king, as the Messiah.

The statement that they WAGED THEIR HEADS expresses a common form of derision in the Hebrew world. A physical sign of contempt.

Added to this is their statement of ridicule:

ABUSE is the imperfect of BLASFEIMEW,

And their insults were a blasphemy of the Lord who would die for their sins.

You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross!

Principles:

1. Their insults included the statement Jesus made regarding the Temple which was the accusation made against Him during the second trial.
2. Now, as then, the statement was inaccurate. A misunderstanding of what Jesus had said regarding the Temple.
3. He had told His disciples that the Temple would be torn down and that He would rebuild it in three days.

4. John in John, chapter 2 provides a clear understanding of what Jesus said:

John 2:19-21 Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews therefore said, It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days? But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 5. Those who now insulted Christ did so based upon misunderstanding and their refusal to listen to or know the truth.

6. They would rather stick with the lie than learn the truth because the lie gave them a basis for their insults.

7. PRINCIPLE: They justify themselves and they were saying by their own lack of understanding and refusal to learn the truth.

Peter would later write of such people and say that they are like:

2 Peter 2:12, Unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed.

Application: Have you ever been misunderstood and then criticized based upon that misunderstanding. Say one thing and have it taken to mean something else?

That is what is happening here and that is part of the essence of the mob. They go with false information, misinformation, ignorance, to justify their actions.

The people who had hailed Christ as King, now turned on Him with insults. There was no comfort to be found with people.

Mark 15:31,32

In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes, were mocking Him among themselves and saying, He saved others; He cannot save Himself. Let this Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, so that we may see and believe!

These religious leaders could not deny the fact that Jesus had saved others in His miracles of healing. That He had preformed great and compassionate deeds for others.

But now they use what He did for others as a form of mockery towards Him.

A number of things of evident in their slander.

1. They failed to see that to truly save others He could not save Himself.

2. To save Himself, which He could have done with a mere thought, would have eternally condemned the world and all that was in it to be lost, forever.

3. As with the mob, their ignorance became the basis for their insults.

This is a very stupid statement: He saved others yet He cannot save Himself

It was because He so much wanted to save others that He refused to save Himself.

But their ignorance closed their eyes and their minds to reason, truth, and grace.

4. They called Him the Christ, the Messiah, the King of Israel but do so as a form of insult. They had the information but refused the truth of the information at hand.

5. They established a precondition to their faith. If He comes down from the Cross, we will see, we will believe.

And that is exactly what He did. He died, and yet He lived. He went through the battlefield of the Cross and He lived - but they did not believe.

Principle: Ignorance and preconditions to faith will cancel out faith. Man will take one of those two paths, either remaining in ignorance or setting up some expectation he demands God to meet.

So the religious leaders, the custodians of the truth of God reject the truth and turned against Christ.

Jesus would find no comfort in religion -

Now how did Jesus respond to all this, how would you and I respond to the insults, the slander, the maligning?

It is Luke who records for us the response of the Savior:

Luke 23:34, But Jesus was saying, Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

SAYING is the imperfect tense of LEGW "• He kept on saying this. As they insulted Him He prayed for them. Not merely requesting forgiveness but demanding it, imperfect tense,

forgive them! Because of what He is about to do. He is about to die for this sin and all other sins of every member of the human race.

You see, the priority of our salvation was more important to the insults and the slander.

Jesus could have taught them, He could have said No you have it wrong, that is not what I said. He could have explained the error and enlightened the ignorance - But He had something more important to do.

He had to face the hours of darkness, the hours of separation from the Father and pay the price that only He could pay for the sins of the human race. He had to endure to when He could proclaim the victory - It is finished. THAT WAS HOW JESUS RESPONDED, how would we respond?

What would we do if all turned against us. The military, the legal system, the people who were once our friends, the social and religious leaders, even the criminal element of society? All turning against Christ. All turning against us.

Peter makes it very clear what we should do:

I Peter 3:9, Not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

And how do we do that? The same way Jesus returned the blessing of forgiveness to those who insulted Him.

Four mechanics of proper response to insults and slander:

1. Realize that we have a more important task then to be distracted by the insults. When you set your priorities and the plan of God, His purpose for you, you will not be distracted by what others say.

2. To realize that God is the one who will bless us regardless of what man does or says:

Matthew 5:11, Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.

3. By realizing that there is little that can be done to correct the slander of the ignorant and the ill-informed:

Proverbs 9:7, He who corrects a scoffer gets dishonor for himself, And he who reproves a wicked man gets insults for himself.

That proverb is telling us not to sink to their level.

4. And then to realize that God will give us the strength to endure even the insults, even the wounds that go so deeply into the soul:

2 Corinthians 12:10, Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

James talked about the tongue and what words can do in His epistle as a warning that we not fall into the sins of the tongue:

James 3:5-8 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed by the human race. But no one can tame the tongue; it is restless evil and full of deadly poison.

And when you are the recipient of the fire, the iniquity, the defiling, the restless evil and deadly poison of the tongue - insulted, slandered, misunderstood, falsely accused, mocked, and humiliated -

Our attitude of grace and forgiveness is far more important than the insults of ignorance, the slander of the stupid, the mockery of the mob, the accusations of the arrogant.

Our attitude can be the attitude of christ Mark 15:33 In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul talked about our relationships with our enemies.

Romans 12:20-21, But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Earlier, Paul identified those who were the enemies of Christ and the Cross -

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

Jesus Christ was not overcome by evil but overcame the evil of His enemies, you and me as unbelievers, by doing that which was the greatest good that anyone could ever do us, He died on the Cross for our sins.

Romans 5:6-8 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Mark 15:33

And when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour.

As a supernatural darkness fell over Golgotha, the suffering that Christ had to endure at the hands of men was fulfilled. Now and for the next three hours of the Cross, Jesus would suffer at the hands of a righteous God, His Father, who would make Him, the Son, to be sin for us.

In the hours prior to the beginning of the Spiritual death of Christ for sins, man brutalized, humiliated, mocked, and tormented Jesus Christ the innocent lamb of God.

We have seen in response to all this Jesus did not react with the same kind of evil. Instead, He required forgiveness for them of the Father.

Jesus' response to his tormentors can be summed up with one statement, He loved them:

He loved them even though His enemies:

1. Betrayed Him: Mark 14:44
2. Arrested Him: Mark 14:53
3. Lied against Him: Mark 14:56
4. Spit on Him: Mark 14:65 and Mark 15:19
5. Hit Him with their fists: Mark 14:65
6. Falsely accused Him before the law: Mark 15:1
7. Called for Him to die: Mark 15:13 and 14
8. Whipped Him: Mark 15:15

9. Pressed a crown of thorns on His head: Mark 15:17

10. Beat Him at the head with a stick: Mark 15:19

11. Took from Him everything He had: Mark 15:24

12. Insulted Him: Mark 15:29

13. Mocked Him and laughed at Him: Mark 15:32

14. And nailed Him to a Cross to die: Mark 15:24

And Jesus loved them -

Perhaps it was not so surprising to those who had walked with Jesus to see Him respond to hatred with such love and grace.

They had heard the Lord tell His disciples that they were to love their enemies.

In Luke 6:27 through 38 Jesus taught about unconditional love and the response we are to have to those who hate us.

Jesus Christ has presented the rule of righteousness that is so much a part of His character to His disciples during the sermon on the mount. He then turns to seven aspects of unconditional love:

Luke 6:27-30. But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.

Seven aspects of unconditional love: These verses are filled with imperative mood verbs making these characteristics of unconditional love commands, and not mere suggestions:

1. Love your enemies: Unconditional love towards your enemies is built on the basis of an impersonal love for all mankind.

If you view mankind accurately, with Divine viewpoint, you will recognize that all are sinners, that all have a sin nature, that no one is perfect, and that there will be those who just do not like you.

A study recently showed that 20% of the people you meet will not like you. This dislike will be for

no reason other than a conflict of appearance or personality. This statistic is true of those you know and who know you and those who have very little knowledge of you.

If you let your enemies throw you, if let them get you down, if you allow them to change you attitude and actions you will live a very miserable and uptight life.

Impersonal love, leading to unconditional love eliminates the power your enemies might have over you.

When someone doesn't like you, chalk it up to the 20% and love them.

2. Do good to those who hate you: Paul uses the comparative word for GOOD, KALOS, .

In comparison to what they may do to you, do good to them.

They may deprive you of food and drink, leaving you hunger and thirsty. Give them food, give them drink.

When they do that which is evil towards you, do good towards them.

3. Bless those who curse you: How easy it is to think that because someone has spoken ill of you that you have the right to speak ill of them.

The Lord says that must not be the case. Instead of cursing the ones who curse you, bless them.

The word BLESS is EULOGOS, as an imperative command. It means to speak good words. We get the English word EULOGY from this Greek word.

Others may say thing against you, things true and things false, things real, and things imagined.

Do not use that as an excuse to curse them.

4. Pray about the ones insulting you: A woman in my first church, seventeen years ago, told me one that it is always better to talk to God about men than to talk to men about men.

No one likes to be insulted, degraded, maligned, but it will occur, you will be the object of the vilification of another.

When that happens pray ABOUT them. We have PERI, preposition that tells us we are to pray about them, not for them.

If they are to be quieted, it will be God who will quiet them, not you.

We can get very involved and very distracted doing anything other than praying about the enemies we may have and their verbal attacks and insults.

5. Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also: This is better know as turning the other check. And looks at the principle of not retaliating.

Retaliation is getting back, getting even, returning evil for evil.

Retaliation is "not• taking legitimate forms of recourse, turning away, defending yourself, protecting yourself.

Turning the other cheek puts you in the position of being helpless, but never hopeless. Your hope is in the Father.

Retaliation is reaction, lack of retaliation is response.

Even in professional contact sports it is the player who reacts by striking back who is penalized. A rough sport such as NFL football will see tempers flare and a player push, shove, even struck another. But if the other player retaliates and strikes back it is that player who is penalized or ejected from the field of play.

In turning the other cheek you recognize that your protection and dependence is upon God.

6. Give freely to others: And whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.

The word WITHHOLD is a neg + APAITEW, which is used only here and in Luke 12:20 and means to demand.

The situation sees someone demanding something from you and you demanding that they not have it.

Unconditional love says: Give it to them - if they demand this of you, what is more important, your mental attitude of love or the temporal demands for some temporal object?

7. The last characteristic of unconditional love is:

Luke 6:31 And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way.

Often called the Golden Rule this principle gives us the Law of Volitional Responsibility or as Paul states in:

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

If we sow anger, and return hate for hate, insult for insult, retaliate against others - what will we receive in return?

Anger, hate, insult, retaliating.

But if we love our enemies, do good even to those who hate us, bless the ones who curse us, pray concerning others, not retaliate, and freely give to others then it is that which will be returned to us -

Your enemies may continue to hate you, insult you, take from you but it is God who loves you, will bless you, will promote you, and will give you victory.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was not asking us to do anything He was not willing to do Himself.

As He taught about unconditional love in Luke 6 He demonstrates that unconditional love in Mark 14 and 15. It is in our recent study of the suffering and death of Christ that we have seen Jesus live what He had taught.

Turn back to Mark 14:

Examine with me these seven characteristics of unconditional love in light of the suffering of Christ:

1. Did He love His enemies? Enough to die for their sins.
2. Did He do good to those who hated Him? He took that very hate and paid the price for it.
3. Did He bless those who cursed Him? To the thief who curse Him and then believed in Him He promised eternal life.
4. Did He pray for the ones who insulted Him? Father forgive them for they know not what they do.
5. Did He retaliate? He could have thought a thought and destroyed them all, but he was silent as a lamb to the slaughter. Did he not turn the other cheek.
6. Did He give freely? They took his coat, and all He had at the Cross, and He gave more, His very life.
7. Did He treat others the way He would have wished to be treated and yet endured so much mistreatment at the hands of sinful man?

Though this all He demonstrated His love for His enemies. And He did this not out of His deity but out of His humanity that is motivated, influenced, and empowered by the same motive, influence, and power that is not given to us.

His motive was grace, His influence was the doctrine He taught in Luke 6:27-32, and the power by which this love was given was the power of the Holy Spirit.

An interesting and convicting thought struck me as I study this passage:

Jesus Christ treated His enemies better than most Christians treat their friends.

Do we treat those who are fellow member of the family God with the high standards of unconditional love both taught by Christ and demonstrated by Christ? Or do we treat our friends worse than Jesus treated His enemies, with less love, less prayer, less giving, less compassion?

In his book *The Great Boer War*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle recounts the story of a small detachment of British troops who were surprised by an overwhelming enemy force. The British fell back under heavy fire. Their wounded lay in a perilous position where they faced certain death. One of them, a corporal in the Ceylon Mounted Infantry, later told that they all realized they had to come immediately under the protection of a Red Cross flag if they wanted to survive. All they had was a piece of white cloth, but no red paint. So they used the blood from their wounds to make a large cross on that white cloth. Their attackers respected that grim flag as it was held aloft, and the British wounded were brought to safety. They were secure under the blood of the Cross.

Mark 15:33 (additional notes)

And when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour.

All the physical suffering, the pain, the insults the mockery that caused wounds on His body and deep to His soul were endured for the three hours on the Cross when Jesus would die for our sins.

We have already noted that He did this, that He suffered because He had a priority, and that priority was you and me.

Philippians 2:8, And being found in appearance as a man, He (our Lord Jesus)

humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Last week we also saw that these hours of hostility exhibited the perfect unconditional love that he had taught His disciples about. That here was one who not only taught what was right but lived it. In His humanity demonstration to us what it means to love your enemies.

And because He both taught and lived the righteousness of God in His humanity, we know we have a Savior who understands the hurt, the pain, the tests, the temptations we endure. And Has given us His power to go through our times struggle:

1 Corinthians 13:4, For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we shall live with Him because of the power of God directed toward you.

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

Everything we have studied thus far makes it impossible for you as a Christian to ever say, "No one understands."

Regardless of what you may go through, regardless of what may be in you, what may be there in the soul from the past, regardless of what others may do to you or what you may face, there is One who understands perfectly, not as God but as Man, who is seated at the right hand of God.

Don't ever say No one understands, no one knows what I am facing, nobody knows the trouble I have seen -

He does, and He is your Savior and your friend.

But after three hours of suffering at the hands of men, Jesus is about to suffer in a way no one has ever suffered. He is going to suffer as the innocent lamb of God who will take away once and for all the sins of the human race.

Many have been crucified, many have died horrible painful deaths, many have been humiliated and degraded and then put to death in evil ways.

But no one except Christ died the death he died during the hours of darkness on the Cross.

What man had done to crucify Jesus was now to be taken out of the hands of man, and put into the hands of a righteous and just God.

Man had directed sin towards Christ --- now Christ would take that sin and pay the price - and to do that He would die, not in His physical death which would come after the work was completed, but by dying spiritually on the Cross.

The spiritual death of Christ:

The Spiritual Death of Christ began with a supernatural darkness falling over the whole land.

What had happened to this point was done by man but now God would judge His uniquely born Son.

The darkness that covered the land shows us that what Jesus did for us was something only He could do with no help from us.

The judgment was for us, on our behalf, but was private, before the justice of God.

Man's vision could not penetrate the darkness, and that was God's design to say to man you have no part in what my Son is doing for you - it is grace. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST sums up the dramatic deaths of Christ upon the Cross:

Col. R.B. Thieme states: Since the symbolism of the blood is death, two categories of death experienced by Christ on the cross will be examined in this doctrine. His somatic death refers to what happened to His literal blood; His spiritual death refers to what happened to His figurative blood. The somatic death of Christ looks forward to the resurrection, whereas the spiritual death of Christ looks back to our sins and spiritual death. It is His figurative blood that has to do with salvation.

Dr. D.A. Carson of Trinity Evangelical Seminary in speaking of the literal use of blood rather than its figurative use on the cross, states in his book, "Exegetical Fallacies", p.33-34: A third level of the same problem was painfully exemplified in three recent articles about the blood of Christ in "Christianity Today". The author did an admirable job of explaining the wonderful things that science has discovered that the blood can do. What a wonderful picture, we are told, of how the blood of Jesus purifies every sin. In fact, it is nothing of the kind! Worse, it is irresponsible, mystical, and theologically misleading. The phrase the blood of

Jesus refers to our Lord's violent, sacrificial death. In general, the blessings that the Scripture shows to be accomplished or achieved by the blood of Jesus are equally said to be accomplished or achieved by the death on the cross.

Hence when we study the term Blood of Christ as it relates to the payment of sin, these hours of darkness on the Cross, we are examining the Spiritual death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The term Blood of Christ, is used literally and figuratively in the Scriptures to describe the entire matter of the Death of Christ on the Cross.
2. The word blood is used as a METONYMY, a figure of speech in which a noun is used to describe a larger event or whole.
3. The use of the word blood then should remind the reader of the total violence of the Cross.
4. Jesus Christ died twice on the Cross. Spiritually when our sins separated Him from the Father and then physically when He dismissed His spirit into the hands of the father.

Isaiah 53:9, Intensive plural of Deaths.

**His grave was assigned with wicked men,
Yet He was with a rich man in His death(s),
Because He had done no violence, Nor was
there any deceit in His mouth.**

5. His physical death was not at the hands of men but rather by his volition once His work was completed.

John 19:30, It is finished

**Luke 23:46, Father, into thy hands I
commend my spirit.**

6. His Spiritual death occurred during a three hour period of darkness during which He cried out (Psalm 22:1, Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34), My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me.

The greatest sacrifice that could ever be offered was offered at that time, the spiritual separation of the Father and the Son who for all eternity did not know Spiritual death.

That was the price paid for our so great salvation.

7. His spiritual death means that we do not have to be spiritually dead. He died spiritually that we may forever have spiritual life.

Christ died twice that we might only die once. It is a true saying that if you are born once you die

twice and if you are born twice you die only once. We never have to face the second death, eternal separation from God, because Christ was separated in Spiritual death on the Cross.

Revelation 20:14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

8. His physical death was accomplished because His task was complete and to guarantee us what occurred to Him. The resurrection out from the dead.

He died physically, so shall we, he was raised from the dead, so shall we be so raise.

Summary: The term blood of Christ, looks at the entire grace work of Christ on our behalf at the Cross.

The Blood of Christ can be applied to the Life of the Believer in, ways:

1. The assurance of Salvation and confidence in service:

Hebrews 9:12-14, And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 10:19-21, Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever.

Principle: The very fact of such a sacrifice by our Savior on our behalf was made gives us assurance and confidence as we look back to salvation and ahead to service.

2. The second application is to our sins. We continue to make decisions to sin after salvation

and often those decisions will defeat us. That is when we must apply the principle of the blood of Christ:

1 John 1:6-9, If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

3. A third application is to our fellowship with our Lord, our Friend Jesus Christ:

As we noted in I John 1:6-7 we cannot have fellowship with Christ and at the same time walk in darkness and that it is the blood of Christ that removes the darkness of sin when confession is made.

But we also see this application to fellowship in the Lord's Supper:

I Corinthians 11:25 In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

The cup represented the saving work of Christ on the cross. As used in the Passover, it contained unfermented grape juice. The cup represents the sins of the world. Jesus Christ drank the cup, as it were, on the cross. He received these sins and their judgment in our place. This is the saving work of Christ on the cross. Eating and drinking are both non-meritorious functions in life which all kinds of people can do. So eating the bread and drinking from the cup represent faith in Jesus Christ. Faith apart from works, apart from merit. Taking what He has provided.

The application to fellowship in the Lord's Supper is to remember Christ, to focus your attention on Him, to concentrate on His person and His work accomplished on your behalf.

Mark 15:34

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sa-bach-thani?

which is translated, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

Christ was forsaken by the Father so that the omnipotence of God could pour out the sins of the human race upon Him and so that the justice of God could judge Him, in Spiritual Death, for our sins.

Why was He forsaken of God - because of you, because of me, because of our sins, and for our salvation.

Mark 15:35,36

And when some of the bystanders heard it, they began saying, Behold, He is calling for Elijah. And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down.

The death that Christ died on the Cross does not make God love us. Rather, it is the outcome and the measure of His love for us.

John 3:16, For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

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

Those who gathered around the Cross were witness to the greatest event that has ever occurred on the face the earth. The grace of God working salvation through the once and for all sacrifice of the uniquely born Son of God, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

They were witnesses yet they did not understand. They heard the cries of the Savior as the Father turned His back upon the one, the only one who could die for the sins of the human race. They were there, yet they did not understand. And today their lack of understanding continues. Man is faced with the Cross, and yet he does not understand.

It has occasionally been said that: Ignorance is bliss - but ignorance of the Cross, the work of the Cross that Jesus accomplished on our behalf is not bliss, but eternal damnation and torment, separate from the love of God.

There was a barrier between man and God that only God could remove.

When Adam sinned he volitionally chose to disobey God. That decision put into motion a situation in which mankind, born in the image of Adam, was separated from God:

Genesis 5:1-3, This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created. When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.

As the human race descended from Adam all the way down to us, here now in 1992, we are in Adam, we are in sin, we are separated from God. We are born physically alive and spiritually dead in rebellion against God:

While theologically we see this rebellion rooted in Adam at the fall, it is not difficult to imagine that we all rebel against God personally and individually. Our condemnation is found, however, in the father of our race.

Our spiritual separation from God and God's very character establish a barrier between God and man.

Man cannot bridge the gap and God cannot ignore his own essence and excuse man.

And that is the reason we need a Savior.

The study of this barrier between man and God and its removal is a study of Salvation, the doctrine of Soteriology.

This morning we are going to examine the barrier and the removal of the barrier by the work of Christ.

Man cannot remove the barrier, but Christ did through his work on the Cross. Thus, the only issue is "What think ye of Christ."

The barrier consist of six factors

1. Sin

Romans 3:10, As it is written (Psalm 14:1-3 and 53:1-4) There is none righteous, not even one.

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

Man is a sinner in three ways:

- a. Inherent Sin - The sin nature received from your father
- b. Imputed Sin - From Adam, we are born into sin
- c. Personal Acts of Sin - Volitional, include MAS, Sins of the Tongue and Overt sins.

2. The penalty of sin

Romans 6:23, For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The penalty for sin is death, spiritual death and eternal separation from God. Necessary because of God's Justice.

3. Physical birth

Ephesians 2:1, And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.

We are born physically alive but spiritually dead. At birth we are hit with the breath of lives but the presents of the sin nature cancels out spiritual life.

4. The righteous character of God

Leviticus 19:2, Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

1 Samuel 2:2, There is no one holy like the Lord, Indeed, there is no one besides Thee, Nor is there any rock like our God.

Psalms 22:3, Yet Thou art holy, O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

We have studied how God is perfect Righteousness while the best man can come up with is relative righteousness.

5. The character of man is relative righteousness

Isaiah 64:6, For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

We can never achieve God's standard of perfect righteousness.

6. Position or life in Adam

1 Corinthians 15:22, For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.

We are part of Adam's family, and in that family all die. We must get into a new family by being born again.

How the Barrier is Removed

By redemption and unlimited atonement

1 Corinthians 1:29-30, That no man should boast before God. 1CO 1:30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.

Colossians 1:14, In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Redemption: Three Greek Words meaning to be redeemed or purchased out of the slave market of sin:

AGORAZO - To purchase a slave

EXAGORAZO - To purchase a slave and remove from the slave market

LUTROO - To purchase a slave, remove, and set free. The word used in Colossians 1:14 and Ephesians 1:7

Unlimited atonement: Christ died for the whole human race.

1 John 2:2, And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

2 Peter 2:1, But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

The penalty of sin is removed by expiation.

Definition: Expiation is Christ making the satisfaction for the offense of sin and thus canceling out the necessity for guilt and punishment.

Colossians 2:14, Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

The manward side of Propitiation. Expiation tells us right here, right now that there is no need for the guilt of sin. That guilt and the punishment for sins was nailed to the Cross.

Physical birth is taken care of by regeneration

We are born again spiritually.

John 3:3, Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

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

God's righteousness was satisfied by Christ's work on the cross (Propitiation)

1 John 2:2, And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

Man's relative righteousness was taken care of by the imputation of perfect righteousness.

Justification: Being declared righteous by God

Romans 3:24, Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Imputation: We share in Christ's Righteousness

Romans 3:22, Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction.

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

Our position in Adam is replaced by a new position in Christ (Positional Truth).

1 John 5:11-12, And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Positional truth in three categories

Retroactive Positional Truth - We are in position with Christ in his death on the Cross.

We are dead to the sin nature.

We can confess and be forgiven of current sins

Current positional truth - We are currently in Christ, and thus share all he is and all that he possesses.

Experiential positional truth - As we live in fellowship and filling of the Holy Spirit. Requires Bible truth in the soul.

In going to the Cross and removing the barrier that stood between man and God, Jesus Christ did for man what man could not do for himself and He did that which only He, no one else, could do.

Romans 5:6-11

6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

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

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

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

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

Now here is the application to us today.

If God did the greatest thing for us when we were separated from Him, opposing Him, His enemies - How much more will He do for us now that we are His children, saved by faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the doctrine of The Most, plus Much More Than the Most.

We have a wonderful Savior, we have a wonderful Father.

Chapter 16

The pyramids of Egypt are famous because they contained the mummified bodies of ancient Pharaohs. London's Westminster Abbey is renowned because it is the final resting place of British Kings and nobles. Arlington Cemetery in Washington, D.C. is famous because it is the location of the graves of American heroes. But the Tomb of Jesus is empty - there is no epitaph

inscribed in stone that begins with the words Here lies - Rather, our Lord's epitaph was spoken by an angel: He is not here, he is risen.

In MARK 16 we find the story of the women who came on the first day of the week to anoint the body of Christ their Lord and Savior.

In John 19:25 we find that these three women were present at the Cross along with John, the youngest disciple.

Now they came to the tomb with the idea of anointing the body of the Lord.

Mark 16:1

And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

Old Testament Law prohibited the handling of the dead on the Sabbath. That weekend was extended because of the Passover Sabbath and the regular Sabbath. So now, three days later they have their first opportunity to further preserve the body of their Lord.

Mark 16:2

And very early on the first day of the week (Sunday) they came to the tomb as the sun was rising.

We see three things in the early morning actions of these devote women:

1. Sacrifice: Their home was Bethany, some miles away. They had to awake early in the morning and walk to the garden tomb.

They brought with them spices, expensive herbs and scents to anoint the body of the Lord.

Anointed a dead body is not a pleasant task. Yet their love for the Savior saw them setting aside this unpleasantness in their expression of deep appreciation and sorrow.

Principle: Love does not seek the easy or the pleasant but is willing to sacrifice. Their personal relationship, personal love, and personal friendship for the Savior sparked an attitude of service and sacrifice.

2. Planning: This was not a haphazard journey. They carefully planned the time of their leaving so as to not defile the Sabbath. They collected the expensive spices and scents to anoint the body.

Principle: An attitude of service and sacrifice is good but it must bring about careful planning. Emotion and enthusiasm are great but we must then lay careful plans on reaching our goals.

3. But then we also see Human viewpoint: As they walked from Bethany to the garden tomb, they began to talk and as they talked they realized they left something out of the planning stage:

Mark 16:3

And they said among themselves, Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?

They forgot something very important. There is a huge carved stone that is sealed with an imperial Roman seal, guarded by Roman guards, enclosing the cave tomb of Jesus.

When they made the statement of verse 3 they were not insight of the tomb. Although this statement shows that their careful planning lacked any plan for the removal of the stone we more importantly see that at this moment this problem could have had two results.

The problem of the stone, in their thinking, could have been an insurmountable problem. They could have turned around and headed back home.

We will see in the very next verse that the problem with the stone is an imagined problem.

But how often do we allow imagined problems to defeat us, to turn us away, to rob us of the joy of service and ministry?

Some of the greatest problems you will ever face are all in your head, imagined problems that rob you of anticipated joy.

Principle: Just as God had already taken care of the problem of the stone, he has already taken care of the greatest problem you will ever have, the problem that without Christ you were dead in you sins - But he took care of that problem.

That becomes our starting point for every other problem of life. If he took care of the greatest problem we have, then will he not also take care of the lesser problems of life? Of course he will- God will roll away the stone of our own lives.

And as we see here, he often solves the problem before we even get onto the scene. One thing these ladies did not do, they did not worry about the stone, they pressed on.

And that is the second and right result that we see: They kept on going to the tomb.

From the moment that one of these women thought about the stone and then voiced her concern to the others, they were walking by faith.

So far they had done everything right. They had made a decision to serve, to minister, to anoint the Lord's body. They had assembled the necessary spices and herbs. They had planned their journey - but now they add the most important part was added: FAITH.

At this point and from this point on, every step they took was a step of faith.

The Christian Life is built upon the truth of God. Salvation is in the work of Christ. The Christ centered life is centered on Christ. We learn promises, principles, and precepts of God's Word but in the final analysis it all boils down to one essential ingredient - FAITH.

What would we have done if we were on our way to the tomb and suddenly Remembered the stone that would bar us from performing our desired service?

Three Possibilities:

1. Give up: We would allow an imagined problem to rob us of anticipated joy of service. Some problem that was not even a problem or some problem that is no problem to the Lord. We would give up, turn aside, go home.
2. Press on: But not in faith, but in stubbornness. Like those of us who refuse to go south to go north. Some of us are just real stubborn and we stick with something in spite of problems and circumstances - but is that really faith?

Illustration: If you are half way between home and work and remember you left your office keys at home, what do you do - press on. I do. Just on the hope that someone is there. But that is too often not the case.

3. Third and best possibility: Press on by Faith: They had left no key at home to unlock the stone so there was no reason to go home for a solution. They could have given up but instead they pressed on in faith.

Mark 16:4

The reward of faith:

And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

They questioned in v 3: Who will roll away the stone

But in v 4 it states: The stone was rolled away

While the phrase rolled away in the English looks the same, they are different terms in the Greek text.

They asked: APO + KULIW " • roll away

But here is how God did it: ANA + KULIW,

Which means to do more than just roll it away, but also to roll it up, completely out of the way, out of its track or guide.

The significance of this is that this large stone could not be replaced by anything less than an army of men. If it had been merely rolled aside, the Roman guards could have quickly rolled it back in its track and had the imperial seal replaced and kept quite about what had occur. But the stone was moved away from the front of the tomb, and the guards took off.

Principle: God's grace goes beyond our expectations. His actions always superceded our expectations. Divine viewpoint always goes beyond Human viewpoint. So when the women came into the garden the stone was away from the tomb, and the tomb was empty and unguarded - except for two angels.

Mark 16:5

And entering into the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right [hand side of the tomb], having been clothed in a white robe and they were greatly astonished.

Mark mentions only the one angel, which fits the brevity of his account, but Luke (Luke 24:4) in his very specific account mentions the presence of two angels. John in John20:12 also mentions two angels.

These two angels had a very important assignment. They were there to proclaim the truth of what had occurred.

The body of Christ was not stolen by other disciples. Nor was it removed by the authorities as became the common lie a few centuries later.

THE TRUTH: He is not here, he is risen -

Who were these two angels: In Exodus 37 we have the account of Bezaleel the craftsman who constructed the ark. He had to build a the chest, the mercy seat, and fashion the two angels, cherubim, who stood on either side of the mercy seat.

Question: How do you fashion a angel if you have never seen one? God gave him help, two angels, one representing the Justice of God and the other the perfect righteousness of God to use as models. These real angels were the ones who guard these attributes of God.

The angels were there as a testimony of the presence of God with His people -

In Mark 16 these two angels, who had hovered over the Cross as they had hovered over the ark, were now there to testify to the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ:

He is not here, he is risen -

Mark 16:6

But he said to them, be not greatly astonished, ye seek Jesus the Nazarene, the one having been crucified, he was raised, he is not here, behold the place where they put him.

Then we have instructions given to these women:

Mark 16:7

But: This is the strong contrast ALLA, indicating that instead of fear there is opportunity.

By believing the message fear was eliminated and now opportunity for ministry was at hand.

Go ye and tell his disciples and Peter, that he goes before you to Galilee, there you will see him as he told you.

The message of the angels can be summarized under four points:

1. Do not be afraid: Fear of God and His mighty works can be a hindrance to the relationship you are to have with Christ and to your service to the Savior.

Every soul has a need that is greater than self and you must go to the one who is greater than self to find fulfillment of that need. God has come to us in the person of Jesus Christ, the God man and now we come to Him with our fear.

2. Do not be mislead: Many stories would soon surface as to what happened to the Lord's body. But the angels proclaim the truth - He is risen.

They were looking for Jesus among the dead, but he lives.

Today there is more false doctrine available than sound doctrine. If you do not want to be mislead you must seek Jesus Christ among the living and the Bible is the mind of Christ, the living Word of God.

3. Do not be discouraged: The angels encouraged them, Jesus is not here, He is risen, He goes before you to Galilee.

With the empty tomb they found their entire plan of service foiled - they had so carefully planned their journey, collected the spices, rise nearly that morning for this long walk to the tomb.

And now all their planning came to nought. They could have been discouraged but the message of the angels became more real, more true, more important than their plans.

Isaiah 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

4. Go and tell others: Far greater than the anointing of the dead body of the Lord would be the ministry they would on behalf of the living Savior.

As they were willing to serve, to do the unpleasant task of anointing the Lord's body the Lord now blessed them with an even greater task, ministry of telling others about him.

Mark 16:8

And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulcher; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

This statement appears to contradict the instructions they received from the angels. But closer examination and comparison with passages in Luke 24:9, John 20:2, and Matthew 28:8 indicates that while they did tell the disciples and Peter, they did not tell anyone else.

The verb telling us that they were afraid is in the imperfect tense and thus, a temporary fear that ceased once they were with the other believers.

This fear is middle voice and thus, beneficial for them whereas their earlier astonishment was passive and of no benefit to them.

The benefit of this fear was that they feared the Roman authorities and the Temple Police who could have detained them, questioned them, even accused them of wrong doing.

So what did they do with an empty tomb?

1. These women who came to anoint the body of the Lord left the open tomb, and as stated in Luke 24:9 they told the eleven disciples and others who were present with them that Jesus was not in the tomb.

2. What did the disciples do with the empty tomb: They doubted. We so often pick on Thomas who doubted the resurrection but all the disciples at first doubted that the tomb was empty.

Luke 24:11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

More than 26 times the Lord had predicted that while he would die on the Cross, he would be risen on the third day. He was - yet the empty tomb was doubted except by Peter.

3. Peter had to see for himself and took young John with him, he doubted what he heard but was not satisfied to just sit around and mourn with the others.

John 20:4 So they (Peter and John) ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher.

4. While Peter and John ran to the tomb, earlier the Roman Guard had ran away from the tomb. What did they do with an empty tomb - they ran away from it.

5. And when they reported to the chief priests what had happened they were paid off to and told to fabricate a story about the disciples coming against an entire Roman Guard who were armed with pikes, daggers, and the Roman short sword, defeating them and stealing the body.

What did the authorities do with an empty tomb, they were afraid of it, and made of a lie to explain it.

6. The Roman Emperor Tiberius even reacted to the empty tomb. As word of the resurrection reached imperial headquarters in Rome he sought to prevent an recurrence by issuing an imperial

decree which became known as the Nazareth Inscription. It was an invective prohibiting meddling with tombs or graves and was backed by the heaviest sanctions.

What did Tiberius do with an empty tomb?
Passed a law so it would never happen again.

7. But now we come to ourselves, reading this today. What do we do with an empty tomb?

Some Christians today doubt it, some fear it, others even fabricate lies against it. Like Peter, some believers seek the emptiness of the tomb while forgetting that the empty tomb is not what matters.

The greater issue is: Why was it empty -

The emptiness of the tomb should drive us to fullness of the risen Savior who is now seated at God's right hand.

The first community of Christians in Jerusalem spoken of in the book of Acts made no special mention of the tomb, it did not become a place of worship or a special shrine - for our Savior is not there -

The Cross is empty, the tomb is empty, our Savior, our Lord, our friend Jesus Christ lives

Father we thank you for the empty tomb, not for its emptiness but for what it means. That our Savior is risen and that we now serve a living Savior.

Now friends, our message today was a message of challenge and hope. But for someone here, the greatest challenge in life will be faced in the next few moments.

You may be seated here today, without Christ, without hope, and without eternal life. You may not be able to say with all confidence that you are a Christian and that you are saved and that if you died today, you would be with the Lord forever. If you do not have that confidence you need to make a very important decision.

You need to decide, right now what you are going to do with Jesus Christ who died to save you from your sins.

Every word of the Bible that was taught today was written for a purpose:

John 20:31 - that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Mark 16:9-20

[Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.

10 She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping.

11 When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.

12 After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country.

13 They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either.

14 Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.

15 And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

16 He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

17 These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues;

18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.

19 So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

20 And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.] [And they promptly reported all these instructions to Peter and his companions. And after that, Jesus Himself sent out through them from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]

[Dr. Hill's notes for Mark 16:9-20 have not been preserved. wd]

