

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Preparing the Way      Mark 1:1–13**

*“The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God”* Mark 1:1

**Day 1: Read Mark 1:1–4.**

1. The word “gospel” evolved from Old English “godspel,” or “good news,” which translates the Greek. The word “Christ” is from the Greek “Christos,” a translation of the Hebrew for “Messiah.” With these word substitutions, restate verse 1 and see if you catch a flavor for the upcoming chapters.
2. Mark immediately jumps into the Old Testament in verses 2 and 3. What does that suggest to you about the importance of these older Scriptures as a backdrop for understanding New Testament teachings about Jesus?
3. Passages from two separate Old Testament prophets (Malachi and Isaiah) are combined in Mark 1:2–3. What does this creative mixing of Old Testament references suggest about the extent of the Old Testament’s testimony to Christ? (See Luke 24:27, 44–46.)

**Day 2: Read Malachi 3:1–5; 4; Isaiah 40:1–5.**

4. These Old Testament passages give an amplified picture of Mark’s quotations in verses 2 and 3, and a feel for the spiritual contexts of these prophecies. Where do you see both solemn warning and joyous hope?
5. You know something the ancient Hebrews didn’t. To whose coming is the prophet referring in Isaiah 40:3–5?
6. “Make straight paths for him” (vs. 3b) is a picture of clearing obstacles out of the road to prepare a processional highway for the visit of a monarch. Why is John’s announcement appropriate for the coming of Christ? (Mark 15:2)

**Day 3: Read Mark 1:4–8.**

7. There was some confusion during Jesus’ time as to whether John the Baptist was really Elijah returned. (Mark 9:11–13) For one thing, the two had the same tailor. (1:6; 2 Kings 1:8) Also, Elijah had never died. (2 Kings 2:11) In what sense can the Baptist be identified with Elijah? (Malachi 4:5–6; Luke 1:16–17)

8. If you were a space alien reading chapter 1 with no previous knowledge of mankind or of the Old Testament, what would be the first hints in this passage that there is a problem with the human race? Pick out telltale words.
9. How does John tell men of the ancient Middle East to approach God? (vs.4) Is that still the way we come to Him 2,000 years later in America? Why? What hasn't changed about man? About God?

**Day 4: Read Mark 1:9–12.**

10. Mark's gospel doesn't mention John's little misunderstanding regarding the necessity for Jesus' baptism. (See Matt.3:13–15) What was John's problem? What do you understand by Jesus' answer about why he insists on undergoing the baptism of sinners? (See also Hebrews 2:14–17.)
11. How is each person of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, seen as participating in Jesus' mission for our salvation? (verses 10 and 11)
12. Apparently, even no less than the Son of God benefited from hearing confirming and encouraging words of love from the Father as he embarked on his life's work. (vss.10–11) What does this suggest about our own needs, both with respect to God and to one another?

**Day 5: Read Mark 1:9–13.**

13. What is the first thing the Spirit leads Jesus to after his baptism? (vss.12–13) Why do you think he does that? Has God ever led you into that place? What is the same about your experience with temptation? What is different? (Hebrews 2:18)
14. Mark does not go into detail about Jesus' 40 days of vanquishing temptation in the wilderness. Why does Jesus need to undergo this trial? Whose botched 40 years must he atone for in this way? (Hebrews 3:16–17)
15. The first Adam (Genesis 1–3) was tested by God in a beautiful botanical garden filled with placid animals. Into what kind of world is the "second Adam" (1 Cor.15:45) born for his testing? (1:12–13)
16. Read Matthew 4:1–11. What did Jesus use to resist temptation? How is this an encouragement to you as you start your study of Mark? (Eph. 6:17)

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****The Kingdom Is Near****Mark 1:14–45**

*“The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”* Mark 1:15

**Day 1: Read Mark 1:14–15.**

1. Where does Jesus start his ministry? What is the significance of this? (Look back at verse 9.)
2. Compare Jesus’ message with John’s in Mark 1:4, 7–8. What similarities and differences are there?
3. What is the “good news”? (See John 3:16.)
4. Jesus’ message demands a response. What is it? How have you responded?
5. How would your life look different if you really believed that the “kingdom of God is near”—that the King of the universe is present with you?

**Day 2: Read Mark 1:16–20.**

6. In this simple, stark account of the call of four disciples, Mark distills the essence of what it means to follow Jesus. Explain what Jesus’ call means for these men.
  - a. What do we know about these men? (See also Acts 4:13.)
  - b. Why didn’t Jesus call his disciples from among the wealthy or the religious leaders?
7. What does following Jesus mean for you? What excuses do you make for not following Jesus wholeheartedly? (Are there things in your life that have priority over obedience to him?)

**Day 3: Read Mark 1:21–35.**

8. Sketch a timeline of Jesus’ activities for this 24 hour period.
  - a. On a scale of 1 to 10 give Jesus a “busyness” rating (10 being exhausting).
  - b. How could Jesus be so busy and not be frantic? (vs. 35)

9. Jesus preached an entire sermon at the synagogue and yet Mark does not record what Jesus said. What do you think Mark wants us to pay attention to in this passage—what Jesus said, or how he said it?
  
10. The religious leaders of Jesus' day were experts in the development, teaching and application of Old Testament law—they taught with authority that stemmed from tradition. To the casual synagogue attendee in this passage how is Jesus different from these leaders?
  
11. Today, how should God's word be taught? (See 1 Peter 4:11.)

**Day 4: Read Mark 1:21–45.**

12. Consider the interactions between the demons and Jesus in verses 23–26 and 34:
  - a. What name does the demon call Jesus?
  
  - b. Why does Jesus silence them?
  
  - c. Is it possible for someone to recognize Jesus as the Son of God and still not be saved? Explain.
  
13. How are the miracles of healing in this chapter (Simon's mother-in-law and the leper) a picture of Christ's saving work in us?
  
14. In Jesus' activities, how does he demonstrate the truth of his message in verse 15, "The kingdom of God is near"?

**Day 5: Read Mark 1:35–39.**

15. Why does Jesus make prayer a priority? (See John 5:19.)
  
16. What might Jesus pray about? Recall Satan's temptation of Jesus earlier in this chapter. Identify other sources of temptation for Jesus in his daily life.
  
17. Evaluate your prayer life. Ask God to teach you how to share Jesus' sense of needing communion with him.

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****The Authority of the Son of Man****Mark 2**

*"And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins." Mark 2:22*

**Day 1: Read Mark 2:1–12.**

1. How much “head knowledge” do you think the men bringing the paralytic had about Jesus? How is their faith nevertheless apparent? (Compare James 2:18)
2. What reactions do you think people in the crowd might have had to what these men were doing? What do you think your reaction would have been?
3. How does Jesus respond? Do you think this is what the men were expecting? Explain.

**Day 2: Read Mark 2:1–12.**

4. According to the Law, a priest could pronounce forgiveness only after very specific sacrifices and rituals (e.g., Lev. 5:5–10; 17:11). To the teachers of the law, there was no basis for Jesus’ declaration of forgiveness. But what does Jesus know that they do not? (Mark 10:45; Heb. 10:1, 5–7, 10)
5. “The Son of Man” (vs. 10) was probably not a title that meant much to Jesus’ listeners. Yet what does Dan. 7:13–14 suggest Jesus is saying about himself?
6. If Jesus does what might seem to be the harder thing (the physical healing of the paralytic), what does that show about his declaration of forgiveness? (Compare Deut. 18:22; Jn. 9:31–33)
7. What does this passage show us is our deepest need? How has Jesus met that need? (Col. 1:19–22)

**Day 3: Read Mark 2:13–17.**

8. What can you deduce about tax collectors in ancient Palestine? (vss. 15–16)
9. Why are the Pharisees critical of Jesus in this passage? Why do you think they feel this way?
10. At first glance, it might sound like Jesus is saying in verse 17 that the Pharisees are indeed “righteous” and that they consequently have no need of him. What do you think Jesus really means?

11. In some ways, this meal foreshadows the wedding supper in heaven (Rev. 19:6–9). Who will be at the table? Who will not? Why? (Mt. 8:10–12; Lk. 14:15–24; Rev. 3:20)
12. What group or person do you tend to view as “beyond saving”? How do you think Jesus views the same group or person?

**Day 4: Read Mark 2:18–22.**

13. Jesus is using wedding imagery here. Why are the Pharisees missing out on the joy of the bridegroom’s arrival?
14. Jesus’ listeners probably did not attach much significance to his use of the term “bridegroom” for himself, but what claim can we see that Jesus was making, since we have the big picture from the Bible? (Is. 62:4–5; Hos. 2:16, 19–20; Rev. 19:6–7; 21:2–3)
15. Jesus’ examples of the cloth and wineskins contrast the old and the new. What is the “old” thing? What is the “new”? (Consider Mark 2 first; then glance at Gal. 3:23–25; Col. 2:16–17.)
16. How do you find yourself trying to patch Jesus onto your ideas, your plans, your rules? What does he offer you instead? (2 Cor. 5:17)

**Day 5: Read Mark 2:23–27.**

17. In answering the Pharisees’ criticism, Jesus implies a comparison between himself and the great King David. What does such a comparison suggest about Jesus? (Is. 11:1–5, 10 [note that Jesse is David’s father]; Jer. 23:5–6)
18. Look at the following passages about the Sabbath: Gen. 2:2–3; Ex. 20:8–11; 31:13–17.
  - a. Who established the Sabbath?
  - b. How important was the keeping of the Sabbath?
19. Given this background, what claim is Jesus making when he declares that “the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (vs. 28)?
20. As you have gone through your week and done this lesson, how have you seen a need for “newness” in your own heart? Take a moment to pray that God’s Spirit would work in your heart.

***LIFE OF A SERVANT***

**Jesus’ Chosen Family      Mark 3**

*“For whoever does the will of God is my brother and my sister and mother.”* Mark 3:35

**Day 1: Read Mark 3:1–6.**

1. Why were the Pharisees scrutinizing Jesus’ actions toward the man with the shriveled hand? To what ironic end does their scrutiny ultimately lead? (vs. 6)
  
2. How is the healing of the man a picture of salvation through Jesus? (Ephesians 2:8–9; James 2:5) What did Jesus do? What did the man do?
  
3. While Jesus is not minimizing the importance of keeping the Sabbath, what does he emphasize is the purpose of the Sabbath? (vs. 4)
  
4. What is Jesus’ response to the Pharisees, and why is his reaction so intense? (vs. 5; Isaiah 29:13; and another Sabbath healing that annoyed the Pharisees—Luke 13:14–16)
  
5. Before we easily dismiss the Pharisees’ rigid “righteousness”, can you think of a time when you were so invested in being right(eous) that you failed to show love to someone?

**Day 2: Read Mark 3:7– 30.**

6. Read about and write down the different responses by people to the person of Jesus.

| Passage     | Group               | Who did they think Jesus was? | What is their response to Jesus? |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| vss. 7–10   | The crowd           |                               |                                  |
| vs. 11      | Evil spirits        |                               |                                  |
| vs. 21      | Jesus’ family       |                               |                                  |
| vss. 22, 30 | Teachers of the law |                               |                                  |

7. Are there sometimes ways that your response to Jesus is like one of the responses listed above? We cannot be indifferent about Jesus. He is either mad, bad, or truly Divine, as the gospels proclaim. From this chapter of Mark, write down some divine truths about Jesus.

**Day 3: Read Mark 3:13–19.**

8. What were the three purposes for which Jesus chose the twelve apostles?
  - vs. 14 (see Acts 4:13 ):
  - vs. 14:
  - vs. 15:

9. Was there a significance to the number 12? (Matthew 19:28) What do his choices of them (and us) tell us about Jesus' grace? Are there any surprises on the list?
10. The twelve listed in this passage were designated "apostles" with special authority. Although we are not apostles, we are called to be disciples of Christ. How is our election and purpose similar to the apostles? (vs.13; Ephesians 1:4–5; 2:10)

**Day 4: Read Mark 3:22–30.**

11. The teachers of the law no longer veil their disdain for Jesus in questions; now they pronounce a harsh judgment, claiming that the source of Jesus' power is Satan. What does Jesus say to dispel the absurdity of this accusation? (vss. 23–26)
12. Who comes into the strong man's (Satan) house to bind him and take possession of the goods? What does this parable illustrate? (Isaiah 49:24–26; 1 John 3:8)
13. In light of the Pharisees' accusation, Jesus brings up the concept of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit or the "unpardonable sin". What is that sin? (vss. 28–30. See also Numbers 15:30; Hebrews 6:4–6; 10:26.)
14. What is the assurance that is given? (vs. 28; John 6:37; 1 Timothy 1:13–14) What should this prompt us to do? (1 John 1:9; Hebrews 3:12–13)

**Day 5: Read Mark 3:20–21; 31–35.**

15. Is Jesus being insensitive or harsh to his family? What do Jesus' response towards his own family in John 19:26–27 and the Pharisees in Mark 7:9–12 reveal about his view of family ties?
16. How is this well-meaning demand by Jesus' family just as dangerous as the Beelzebub accusation by the teachers of the law? How might you be trying subtly, as Jesus' family did, to "take charge of him"? (vs. 21; Mark 8:33)
17. In this passage, Jesus redefines the concept of family. What is the only requirement to be in God's family? (vs.35) Is this concept comforting to you? Why or why not?
18. In Mark 3 we catch some glimpses of Jesus' family photo album, and the snapshots are not all birthday and wedding photo-ops. What's the cost of being in those 5x7 glossies, both to the apostles, as well as you and me? (Romans 8:17)

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Parables About the Kingdom      Mark 4:1–25**

*“Consider carefully what you hear”* Mark 4:24a

**Day 1: Read Mark 4:1–25.**

1. The cluster of parables in this week’s passage begins and ends with a call to “listen!” (vs. 3) and “hear” (vss. 23–24). How does that affect you as you set out to study this passage?
2. In chapter 3, Jesus’ actions divided the crowd between insiders and outsiders to the kingdom. In chapter 4, how do Jesus’ parables divide the crowd?

**Day 2: Read Mark 4:1–20.**

3. To whom does Jesus tell the parable at first? (vss.1–2)
4. How many people do you think go away understanding the meaning of the parable? (vss.10, 13; Matt.13:10–11)
5. What is different about the people who end up understanding the parable? (vss.10, 13; James 1:5–8)
6. Is there more at stake here than just understanding a little story? What is at stake? (vs.12)
7. Consider the separations going on in the parable, and the separations going on simultaneously in the crowd listening to the parable. How is the incident related in chapter 4 a case of a parable acting itself out?

**Day 3: Read Mark 4:1–20.**

8. In the parable, what is the seed? (vss.3, 14; Matt.13:18–19)
9. Describe the four kinds of soil (heart) conditions. (vss.14–20)

10. Do you think these soil conditions are hard and fast categories, or have you seen in your life any movement from one condition to another?
  
11. What is the evidence that the kingdom of God has taken root in a person's life—i.e., what is the "crop"? (vs. 20)
  
12. Name at least three things Satan uses to render your heart impenetrable, and your hearing of Jesus' words ineffective. (vss.15–19)
  
13. Eerily, how is one strategy of Satan already working in the very first response of the crowd to the parable?

**Day 4: Read Mark 4:21–25**

14. The Greek in verse 21 reads "Does the lamp come in order that it might be placed under the bowl or under the bed?" In the Old Testament, the lamp is often a metaphor for God (2 Samuel 22:29). Who is "the lamp"? (John 12:46)
  
15. Though the kingdom seems to have small and inauspicious beginnings, with many seeking to hide the "lamp," and many wasting the "seed", what is God's sure purpose for the lamp's light (John 1:5, 9) and for the progress and harvest of the sown seed (vs. 20)?
  
16. In the Greek the verb tense in verse 24 suddenly changes from past to present, with the word "hear" meaning a continual, ongoing hearing, as opposed to a careless or inattentive hearing. What is the evidence of your own "hearing" of God's word? (James 1:22)
  
17. How does the adage "the poor get poorer and the rich get richer" hold true for the spiritual life? What happens to those who do not "hear" carefully? What happens to those who do?

**Day 5: Read Mark 4:1–25.**

18. Jesus' parables force us to wrestle personally with the question of who Christ is and how we respond to his authoritative call. Where do you see yourself in this week's parables?

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****The Kingdom and the King      Mark 4:26–41**

*“Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”* Mark 4:41b

**Before you read:**

In Mark 1:15 Jesus proclaimed, “The time has come. . . . The kingdom of God is near.” What do you think of when you hear the phrase “the kingdom of God”?

**Day 1: Read Mark 4:26–29.**

1. What does the seed that is sown represent? (see 4:14; Matt. 13:19))
2. The sowing of the seed and the process of germination began with Jesus’ earthly ministry. What does the harvest represent?
3. In the passage, after sowing the seed, what does the farmer contribute to its growth? Can he even see the seed germinate?
4. The farmer confidently expects a harvest, and his confidence is justified.
  - a. As believers, what confidence do we have about the kingdom of God?
  - b. How can this encourage us as we see war on the nightly news or read about corruption in the newspaper?

**Day 2: Read Mark 4:30–32.**

5. How does the world tend to assess things—people, houses, neighborhoods, cars, schools, companies, countries?
6. What might the appearance of the mustard seed lead you to expect? Yet what happens to this seed?
7. How does our perspective need to change so that we can perceive the kingdom? (You might consider the following: Is. 53:1–4, 10–12; Mt. 11:25; 18:2–4; 20:25–28; Lk. 1:46–53; 1 Cor. 1:18–29.) What are the consequences of overlooking it?
8. In what ways have worldly values distorted the way you look at people, the church, and even God? How can these parables of seeds help realign our thinking?

**Day 3: Read Mark 4:33–34.**

9. Hebrews 4:12 says that “the word of God is living and active,” and that it “judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” How do you think parables fit this description? What do parables require of listeners (or readers)?
  
10. Everyone in the crowd hears Jesus’ parables, but only the disciples get his explanations. What do these undistinguished people have in common, that they should receive this special instruction? (Mk. 4:10) How is this relevant for us today?

**Day 4: Read Mark 4:35–41.**

11. Who initiates the trip across the Sea of Galilee? What time of day is it?
  
12. How do the disciples react to the “furious squall”? What does this reaction show about them?
  
13. What is Jesus doing as the storm rages? How do the disciples interpret this? What does it in fact show about Jesus? (Ps. 4:8; Prov. 3:23–26)
  
14. Like the disciples, we sometimes doubt whether God cares about us.
  - a. What circumstances bring out this question in your heart?
  
  - b. Read Mt. 6:25–34 and Joshua 1:9. Write specific ways you have seen God’s care for you in the past week. Ask God to help you place your trust in his care for you.

**Day 5: Read Mark 4:35–41.**

15. Jesus rebukes the storm, and it ceases. How do the disciples react to this miracle? Why do you think they react this way?
  
16. Who alone has mastery over the sea? (Ps. 89:8-9; 104:5-9)
  
17. What does Mark want his readers to conclude about Jesus? (Mk. 1:1)
  
18. Mark’s original readers were probably experiencing persecution.
  - a. How would this story encourage them?
  
  - b. How does it encourage you?

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****The Healing of a Demon-Possessed Man****Mark 5:1–20**

*“Tell...how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”* Mark 5:19

**Day 1: Read Mark 5:1–20.**

1. From this week’s passage what do we learn about the people who live to the east of the Sea of Galilee? Hint: What does their choice of livestock tell us about their religion/nationality and, thus, about how they are viewed by the Jews? (see Deut. 14:8)
2. Describe the man’s condition before he meets Christ. (vss. 3–5)
3. Describe your condition before you came to Christ. Do you see any parallels between your condition then, and this man’s condition?

**Day 2: Read Mark 5:1–20.**

4. According to verse 8 who is speaking in verse 7?
5. How does Legion react to Jesus and what does he call him? (vss. 6–10) What’s the significance of this?
6. What changes take place in the man healed by Christ?
7. Read Ephesians 2:1–10 and Romans 8:6–11. Describe how the healing of the demon-possessed man illustrates the spiritual healing that God brings to his people.

**Day 3: Read Mark 5:1–20.**

8. Reread how Jesus calmed the storm in Mark 4:35–41. What parallels do you see between this miracle and the one in 5:1–20?

9. What most frightens the observers of these two miracles? Explain your choice.
  - a. Being in a rowboat in a furious storm at night on the open sea.
  - b. Facing the ravings of an uncontrollable demoniac.
  - c. The power of Jesus.
10. How have you reacted to the power of Jesus?

**Day 4: Read Mark 5:1–20.**

11. Why do the Gerasenes seem content to live with Legion all those years but are so quick to beg Christ to leave town?
12. What sins in your life do you tolerate? What does Jesus want to do for you?
13. After being healed, what does the man beg of Jesus?
14. What is Jesus' response?

**Day 5: Read Mark 5:18–20.**

15. Why do you think that Jesus tells this healed man to spread his story but tells others he has healed not to? (Recall 1:44–45.)
16. How does the man respond to Jesus' directive? What is the result?
17. Consider what the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you. With whom has God called you to share your story? Pray that you would have boldness to be obedient to that calling.

**LIFE OF A SERVANT**

**Faith Transforms Fear**

**Mark 5:21–43**

*“Don’t be afraid; just believe”* Mark 5:36b

**Day 1: Read Mark 5:21–43.**

1. Let’s get a split screen view of both of the persons in this passage. Compare and contrast Jairus and the unnamed woman economically, socially, and religiously.

|           | Jairus | Unnamed Woman |
|-----------|--------|---------------|
| Economic  |        |               |
| Social    |        |               |
| Religious |        |               |

2. It’s all in the details isn’t it? Do you think the fact that Mark records the length of the woman’s illness and the age of Jairus’ daughter is of significance? (vss. 25, 42) Explain.

**Day 2: Read Mark 5:21–25.**

3. What could lead someone to consider the needs of Jairus first over the problems of the unnamed woman? (vss. 22, 25, also see Leviticus 15:25–27.) When have you been tempted to consider the needs of one person over another, shall we say, less clean person?
4. What did Jairus believe Jesus could do? vs. 23
5. How did Jairus and the leper in Mark 1:40 approach Jesus? (vs. 22) How is this similar or different to the way you ask God for something, how do you approach Him?

**Day 3: Read Mark 5:25–34.**

6. On the way to Jairus’ house Jesus stops because he senses something has happened to him. What did He sense? (vs.30) What is the cause of the woman’s fear? (vs. 33; Mk. 4:41; Luke 5:8) Is this kind of fear a good thing? (Psalm 25:12, 14)
7. What is the disciples’ reaction, and what might have been going on in their minds? (vs. 31)
8. Why is it so important for Jesus to identify these particular fingerprints on his cloak? (vs. 32; Luke 19:10) What did Jesus say is the actual cause of the woman’s healing? (vs.34)

9. What is the “whole truth” that the woman tells to Jesus and that the crowd overhears? (vss. 26–29) How did she come to believe? (vs. 27, Romans 10:14–15)
10. The unnamed woman is given a new name by Jesus (vs. 34) What is it? Reflect back on Mark 3:35 and sum up what Jesus is saying through this salutation. What larger work of God is this woman a part of? (Ephesians 3:14–15)
11. Jesus doesn’t leave the woman with a simple, “Okay, see you, bye” — but rather “Go in peace,” three small words which carry with them the force of a benediction. Reflect on what Jesus is saying. (vs. 34; I Samuel 1:17–18)

**Day 4: Read Mark 5:35–39.**

12. There are only a few grains of sand left in the hourglass of Jairus’ daughter’s life, and yet Jesus stops midstream in his journey towards her to tend to someone else. How might the waiting have been beneficial to Jairus? Recall a time when you thought God’s timetable was chronologically challenged, but you see the blessing now.
13. When Jesus says to Jairus in verse 36, “Don’t be afraid; just believe,” what steps of faith is he encouraging Jairus to take, just as Abraham did? Romans 4:18–21.
14. What are the circumstances in your own life, where you need to have God’s word massage your heart and soul with the encouragement, “Don’t be afraid, just believe”?

**Day 5: Read Mark 5:40–43.**

15. When the news comes that Jairus’ daughter is dead, what are the two responses to Jesus from the unbelieving crowds? (vss. 35, 40) What is the challenge for Jairus, the disciples, and us at points like these? (Luke 9:18–20)
16. When Jesus says that the little girl is not dead but sleeping, he gives his followers a glimpse into the future. What do his words begin to teach us about death and resurrection, and ultimately about his mission? (John 11:25–26; 1Corinthians 15:20–22)
17. Even if we have faith, we will not be healed of all disease and we will all die. Though a large part of this passage emphasizes God’s power over death and his authority over the impossible, what is the other part of the faith picture that hovers over this passage? (Hint: Daniel 3:17–18)
18. This week let’s pray for one another, that we would cling to Jesus in faith. Remember as you pray that Jesus is so compassionate and knows us so intimately that he cares that a formerly dead little girl might have the munchies. (vs. 43)

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Prophets Without Honor    Mark 6:1–29**

*“And he was amazed at their lack of faith.”* Mark 6:6

**Day 1: Read Mark 6:1–6.**

1. In this strange incident, Jesus is rejected in his hometown. Discuss the difference between being “amazed” by Jesus and having saving faith in him.
2. Why was it that Jesus, though all powerful, “could not do many miracles there”? How does this affect you as you reflect on your own manner of praying for Jesus’ help? (You may consider Hebrews 11:6 and James 1:6–7)
3. The townspeople are not able to figure out who Jesus is. Do you suppose that their problem is a fault of reasoning or some other fault? (Consider 2 Corinthians 10:7; Matthew 22:29; John 15:25)

**Day 2: Read Mark 6b–13.**

4. We see the beginnings of the Church in verses 6b and 7. How are you and I, two thousand years later, the arms and legs and tongue of Jesus, and the continuation of his ministry “from village to village”? (Matthew 28:19–20)
5. Why do you suppose Jesus sends out the Twelve with minimal supplies on this first evangelism trip? What does he want them to learn? (Consider Matthew 6:11; James 1:17)
6. Why do you think the disciples are to stay put in one house? What if they get offered more comfortable lodgings?
7. The disciples will be at the mercy of the hospitality of others. Would that be hard for you?

**Day 3: Read Mark 6:9–13.**

8. Think about verse 11. Are you responsible for changing people’s hearts, or for telling them the good news?

9. What is the message the apostles bring? (vs. 12)

**Day 4: Read Mark 6:14–29.**

10. Do a “psychological profile” on Herod. What are the things that control him? (Think about verses 16, 20, 22, 26).

11. Do a “psychological profile” on John the Baptist. What controls him? (Think about verses 18, 20 )

12. Examine yourself: what controls *you*?

13. What does Herod’s paranoia in verse 16 show about the work of guilt and unconfessed sin in the human heart? (Psalm 32:3–4) How do you get free of guilt and fear that controls you? (John 8:36; Psalm 32:5)

**Day 5: Read Mark 6:14–29.**

14. What did John the Baptist have the courage to say to the king? (vs. 18) Do you think any other people were doing that for Herod? What does flattery do to people? (Prov.29:5)

15. Jesus (vs. 4), the apostles (vs. 12), and John (vs. 18) all were unusual in their generation in that they spoke hard truths to people. What gave them the courage? (Consider John 5:44)

16. What is the right way to approach the unpleasant task of speaking a hard truth to someone? (Ephesians 4:15) Have you ever done it? Do you appreciate it when someone does it to you?

17. John was in prison and Herod was king. After reading their stories, which one do you think was the free man? Why?

18. As you examine your own soul, are you more like Herod or John? How can you live a life without fear starting today?

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Jesus the Perfect Shepherd****Mark 6:30–56**

*"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd." Mark 6:34a*

**Day 1: Read Mark 6:30–44.**

1. After their “missions trip” (6:7–13), the disciples are probably tired, and there are so many people about, “they [do] not even have a chance to eat”. (vs. 31)
  - a. How does Jesus care for them?
  - b. What happens to their attempt to get some rest?
2. How does Jesus’ heart respond to the crowds that await him on the shore?
3. How does your heart respond when it seems like everybody wants something from you? How can your response become more like Jesus’? (Gal. 5:16, 22–23)
4. Mark writes that the people were “like sheep without a shepherd”. (vs. 34)
  - a. Look at Ezek. 34:1–6, 10. How are the “shepherds” of Israel we have seen so far in Mark like the bad shepherds described in Ezekiel? (Consider Mk. 2:15–17; 3:4–6.)
  - b. Now look at Ezek. 34:11–16, 23–24. How does today’s passage show Jesus to be the promised good shepherd? (See also Luke 9:11.)

**Day 2: Read Mark 6:35–44.**

5. Jesus knows what he is going to do to feed the crowd. Why then does he tell his disciples, “You give them something to eat”? (vs. 37a; Jn. 6:5–6)
6. How do the disciples respond? What would a response of faith have looked like?
7. When faced with a difficult situation, what things do you tend to rely on to solve the problem? Are these things truly reliable?

**Day 3: Read Mark 6:35–44.**

8. There are several parallels between Jesus' feeding of the five thousand (plus women and children) and the Old Testament account of God's deliverance of the Israelites. Note some of the parallels:
  - a. vs. 37 and Num. 11:13–14, 21–23:
  - b. vss. 41–42 and Ex. 16:3–4, 11–15:
  - c. vs. 40 and Ex. 18:24–25:
9. What do such parallels suggest about Jesus? (Heb. 3:3, 5–6a)
10. Compare vs. 41 with 14:22 in Mark's account of the Last Supper. What similarities do you see?
11. This feeding is the only miracle (besides the resurrection) that appears in all four Gospels. It looks back to God's provision for the Israelites in the desert, and ahead to the Last Supper. Clearly, this miracle is about more than the amazing multiplication of loaves and fish. What does it ultimately point to? (Jn. 6:26–27, 47–51)

**Day 4: Read Mark 6:45–56.**

12. Look again at vs. 45, and note the tone of urgency. How does Jn. 6:14–15 explain this urgency?
13. Mark mentions Jesus' praying only three times: 1:35 (after a busy Sabbath, and before his departure to minister in other villages in Galilee); 6:46; and 14:32–42 (in Gethsemane, before his betrayal and arrest). Why do you think specific mention is made of Jesus' praying at these times?

**Day 5: Read Mark 6:45–56.**

14. How does Job 9:8 shed light on Jesus' extraordinary feat of walking on the water?
15. Jesus' statement, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid," carries more weight than a mere, "Don't worry—it's just me!" What does Jesus' reassurance echo? (Ex. 3:14; Is. 41:4, 10, 13–14; Jn. 8:58)
16. What had the disciples "not understood about the loaves" (vs. 52) that would have helped them on the lake? (Jn. 6:35)

17. Hebrews 1:3 states explicitly that “[t]he Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being”. Look back over this week’s passage. What do we learn about God through the actions of his Son? How does this picture of God reassure and encourage you?

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Lip Service or Heart Service****Mark 7:1–23**

*“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”* Mark 7:6b

**Day 1: Read Mark 7:1–5.**

1. Review Mark 2:6–7, 16–17, 24, and Mark 3:2, 5–6, and 22.
  - a. Based on what has already transpired in Mark, describe the attitude of the Pharisees and teachers of the law toward Jesus.
  - b. Why do you think they have made this special trip from Jerusalem?
2. What sparks the discussion that begins in verse 5?

**Day 2: Read Mark 7:1–13.**

During the centuries between the Old and New Testaments, the Jewish rabbis began to make detailed rules and regulations that governed daily life. These were interpretations and applications of the Law of Moses, handed down from one generation to the next. In Jesus’ day this “tradition of the elders” was in oral form. (from NIV note on Matthew 15:2)

3. Do the Pharisees complain because the disciples violate God’s law or because they violate the “tradition of the elders”?
4. Why are the Pharisees and teachers of the law so concerned with upholding the tradition of the elders?
5. What standards, based on tradition, do you use to classify people as acceptable or not acceptable? In this chapter we see what Jesus thinks of the tradition of the elders. What would he think of your traditions?

**Day 3: Read Mark 7:6–13.**

6. What are the implications of the Pharisees’ attitude toward uncleanness? (See verses 6 and 7.)

7. How does Jesus illustrate the point he makes in verses 6–8?
8. What phrases does Jesus use in verses 8, 9, and 13 to describe what the Pharisees have done to God’s word?
9. Contrast this with the Pharisees’ view of themselves.

**Day 4: Read Mark 7:14–23.**

10. In verse 14, to whom does Jesus turn his attention? What two imperatives does he use to stress the importance of what he is about to say?
11. What effect has the hypocrisy of the Pharisees had on this group? (Mt. 9:36; Lk. 11:46)
12. Until very recently the disciples were themselves part of the “crowd.” How has the hypocrisy of the Pharisees affected them? (vss. 17–18)

**Day 5: Read Mark 7:14–23.**

13. Review verses 1–5. What do the religious leaders teach is the cause of uncleanness? And, according to the “tradition of the elders” how can someone be made clean?
14. According to Jesus, what is the root cause of uncleanness? (See Jer. 17:9.)
15. What kinds of things does Jesus say come out of people that make them unclean?
16. What is the remedy for uncleanness? (Ps. 51:7, 10; 1 Cor. 6:9–11)

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Eyes that See, Ears that Hear****Mark 7:24–37**

*“People were overwhelmed with amazement. “He has done everything well,” they said.  
“He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” Mark 7:37*

**Day 1: Read Mark 7:24–37.**

1. After reading through the passage, write down some things that appear surprising or inappropriate to you.
  
2. What characteristics do the woman and the deaf and dumb man share in these two incidents?
  
3. As you ponder these two miracles, jot down some things that cause you to be “overwhelmed with amazement”. (vs. 37)

**Day 2: Read Mark 7:24–30.**

4. Who was the last person to fall at Jesus’ feet begging for healing of his daughter? (Mk. 5:23) What are the differences between him and the woman in this passage?
  
5. Why is Jesus’ response to the woman so harsh? (Acts 13:45–46)

**Day 3: Read Mark 7:27–30.**

6. She gets it—she really gets it! In last week’s passage the disciples are dull in their total lack of understanding, yet here this woman seems to understand the mystery of the Kingdom. What was God’s plan all along? (Eph. 3:4–6; Isaiah 49:6)
  
7. Why does her reply receive such an affirmative response from Jesus? (Matthew 15:28) How is she like Jacob? (Gen. 32:28)

8. In the previous controversy in Mark 7:1–23 Jesus shatters the traditional division of clean and unclean. What division is he starting to nudge together in this segment? (Galatians 3:26–29)

**Day 4: Read Mark 7:31–35.**

9. Elaborate in as many ways as you can how Jesus radically and uniquely ministers to this hurting man. How might this challenge your notions of how we are to share the “good news”?
10. The word *mogilalos* used to depict the man’s speech impediment is used only one other place in Scripture, in Isaiah 35:5–6, “and the tongue of the dumb (*mogilalos*) shout for joy”. Why does Mark make this link between these two texts?
11. How does Jesus’ healing of this man in this particular region of Sidon and the woman from Tyre reflect more than just individual healings but the beginning of the fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan? (Consider Isaiah 35:1–10. Historical note: The areas of Tyre and Sidon are part of the desert wastelands of Lebanon.)
12. What might be the reason(s) for Jesus’ “deep sigh” and his glance up to heaven? (vs. 34)
13. Relay a situation in your life when God has needed to unplug your ears so that you might hear clearly and speak plainly, in a way that would glorify him.

**Day 5: Read Mark 7:36–37.**

14. Jesus commands the healed man and the intimate circle of onlookers not to tell anyone about the incident. What do they do, and why?
15. How does what they say give a glimpse into the divinity of Jesus? (Gen. 1:31; Ex. 4:11)
16. What is the only thing that can cause true hearing and seeing? (1 Cor. 2:9–10) Spend some time praying for yourself and others who may have clouded vision or self-centered, stuttering speech.

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Good Food and Bad Yeast****Mark 8:1–21***“I have compassion for these people....”* Mark 8:2**Day 1: Read Mark 8:1–3.**

1. Someone else might have faulted the people’s lack of foresight in not bringing enough food for their journey. What are Jesus’ feelings for the crowd? (vs. 2)
2. How would you define compassion? Does compassion concern itself with matters of just deserts and consequences, or is it of a different order? How is it different from justice? From mercy?
3. Share a time when you showed compassion. Share a time when you were the recipient of compassion—from God or from another person.
4. How does God describe himself in 2 Corinthians 1:3? Do you always think of him that way?

**Day 2: Read Mark 8:1–8.**

5. The people listening to Jesus are so enthralled with him, and with his word, that they forget to eat (Recall Jesus’ own experience in John 4:31–34). How do you feel about God’s word?
6. How is Jesus’ feeding of the four thousand a vivid illustration and fulfillment of God’s promise in Matthew 6:31–33?
7. If your idea of God’s love for you has been one of purely spiritual and nonmaterial love, how does the incident related in this chapter change your view?

**Day 3: Read Mark 8:1–10.**

8. Are you surprised that the disciples seem to have forgotten about the time when Jesus lately fed 5,000 people? (Mark 6:30ff) Share an occasion when you yourself have been a slow learner.
9. What does the Son of God and Creator of the Universe do before partaking of a morsel of bread and fish? (vss. 6–7) How does his example speak to you? (Phil.2:5; Matt.10:24)

10. What role do the disciples play in the miraculous food distribution? How is Jesus an effective teacher in the way that he involves them?

11. Why the leftovers? (vs. 8) Is it sloppy calculation on Jesus' part? What might be his purpose in leaving behind tangible, visible evidence of the miracle? What else might Jesus want to illustrate in making too much bread and fish that day, and an excess of superior wine at the feast of Cana? (John 2:1–11. Consider Psalm 23:5–6; 1 John 3:1; Luke 6:38)

**Day 4: Read Mark 8:11–21.**

12. Right on the heels of this miraculous sign, the Pharisees ask Jesus for a sign and are refused one. (vs. 12) Why does Jesus give the crowd a sign but not the Pharisees?

13. And yet, this “generation” (vs. 12) is not left totally without a sign after all. What sign does Jesus leave them? (Matt. 12:39–40)

14. Verse 12 shares with us that Jesus “sighed deeply.” Discuss this detail in the light of Jesus' true humanity.

**Day 5: Mark 8:14–21.**

15. What do the disciples have on their minds in the boat? (vss. 14, 16–17) What does Jesus have on his mind? (vs. 15)

16. Read the amplified version of this boat incident in Matthew 16:5–12, and find what Jesus means by the “yeast” of the Pharisees and Saducees.

17. What does yeast do to dough? What can bad teaching do to you once it has done its insidious work? What can it do to the Church?

18. Jesus says to the disciples, “Do you still not understand?” What is it that he wants them to understand?

19. Jesus helps the disciples to think through what they have seen of him and his deeds in order to spur them to understanding and a life of faith. Where do you see a need for this in your own life?

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****The Messiah****Mark 8:22—9:1***“He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things. . . .”* Mark 8:31**Day 1: Read Mark 8:22–26.**

1. Note all the touching in this miracle. What do you think this conveys to the blind man?
2. List some of the similarities between this miracle and the healing of the deaf man in 7:32–36. What is unique about the healing in chapter 8?
3. Look back at 8:17–21. How do these two miracles show hope for the “blind and deaf” disciples?

**Day 2: Read Mark 8:27–30.**

4. What do others say about Jesus? Is their opinion of him favorable or unfavorable? How do their guesses fall short?
5. Learning what the crowds think is interesting, but what is Jesus really after here? (vs. 29)
6. Flip through earlier chapters of Mark. What are some of the things the disciples have seen Jesus do and heard him say that bear witness to his identity?
7. The disciples have experienced all these things, and have even received special instruction (e.g., 4:11, 34), but until now they have not understood who Jesus is. (8:17–21) How is Peter able to come up with the right answer now? (Mt. 16:17)

**Day 3: Read Mark 8:30—9:1.**

8. What expectations did many Israelites have for the Christ, that is, the prophesied Messiah or “Anointed One”? (Jer. 23:5–6; 30:8–9; Mic. 5:2–5a; cf. Jn. 6:15)
9. What did they fail to understand about the Messiah's mission? (Isa. 53:2–12)
10. Jesus has often felt a need for secrecy about his identity (7:36; 8:26, 30). How does the fact that Jesus’ mission is so different from what anyone expected help us understand this need for secrecy? (compare the crowd’s desire in Jn. 6:15 to the necessity Jesus speaks of in vs. 31: “the Son of Man must suffer...;” cf. Lk. 24:44–46)

11. Mark makes a point of saying that Jesus “spoke plainly” (vs. 32) about his suffering. How does this contrast with his earlier speech? (4:11–12; 33–34) Why do you think Jesus’ manner of speech is different here?
12. Jesus’ suffering is prominent in this passage, but what signs of hope are embedded in it?

**Day 4: Read Mark 8:31—9:1.**

13. Why is Jesus’ response to Peter’s rebuke so unexpectedly vehement? What was so bad about what Peter said?
14. The sharpness of Jesus’ rebuke shows how seriously Jesus viewed the danger of having in mind “the things of men” rather than “the things of God” (vs. 33). What strains of this kind of thinking can you detect in your own mind? How can such thinking be dangerous?
15. Peter really messes up in this passage. Later, he denies all knowledge of Jesus (14:66–72). And we learn that even after the resurrection and Pentecost, Paul has to confront him, because he is again in error (Gal. 2:11–14). Nevertheless, Jesus calls Peter to be the rock on which he will build his church (Mt. 16:18–19). How does this encourage you?

**Day 5: Read Mark 8:31—9:1.**

16. What three demands does Jesus make of those who would be his disciples? (vs. 34)
17. Jesus’ listeners know that if you’re carrying a cross, then you’re marching to your death.
  - a. As followers of Jesus, what effect should our figurative cross-bearing have on the way we view our lives?
  - b. What does this look like for you?
  - c. This sounds difficult and scary, but what comfort do we have? (Mt. 11:28–30; Rom. 8:17–18; 2 Cor. 4:8–11; Rev. 7:9–10, 13–17)
18. Paraphrase vs. 35 to tease out its meaning. (Consider it together with the verses that surround it.)
19. Why does Jesus’ statement about being ashamed of him follow those about saving one’s life or losing it and gaining the world but losing one’s soul? How are these ideas connected?
20. When have you found yourself ashamed of Jesus or embarrassed because of him? What was in your heart that caused you to feel this way? Pray that God would strengthen your spirit and give you boldness.

21. Read Peter's bold proclamation of Jesus in Acts 2:22–39, and praise God for the magnitude, effectiveness, and grace of his plan of salvation.

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****The Transfiguration      Mark 9:2–32**

*“I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief.”* Mark 9:24

**Day 1: Read Mark 9:2–8.**

1. a. Who accompanies Jesus up the mountain?
  - b. On what other occasions does Jesus choose only these three disciples to accompany him? (See Mark 5:35ff and 14:32ff.)
2. What is Jesus doing when he is transfigured? (See Luke 9:29.)
3. What are the disciples probably doing when Jesus is transfigured? (See Luke 9:32.) What might this reveal about the disciples' attitude toward prayer?
4. Be honest—how do you view prayer? Ask God to teach you how to pray.

**Day 2: Read Mark 9:2–8.**

5. Who appeared with Jesus? What is the significance of that?
6. What attitude lies behind Peter's suggestion in verse 5? Review Mark 8:31—9:1.
7. What do the disciples hear God say in verse 7? Why are his words singularly appropriate for the occasion? (Hint: What does Peter's suggestion show about how well he does this?)
8. Think about yourself—what do your actions and attitudes reveal about how well you listen to Jesus?

**Day 3: Read Mark 9:2–13.**

9. After this revelation of Christ's glory, to what does the conversation turn during the walk back down the mountain?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What detail does Matthew include in his account (Mt. 17:13) that sheds light on the discussion about the prophecy concerning Elijah?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. What do you think Jesus wants his disciples to take away from this experience?

**Day 4: Read Mark 9:14–32.**

12. Describe the scene that Mark depicts in verse 14.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. What's the answer to Jesus' question in verse 16?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. From Jesus' words to the disciples in verses 19 and 29, what might have been the cause of their inability to cast out the evil spirit?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
15. Ask God to show you how your view of prayer needs to be changed to accord with his view.

**Day 5: Read Mark 9:14–32.**

16. "Everything is possible for him who believes." What limits do you put on what God can do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
17. Describe a time when, like the father in verse 24, you experienced mixed belief and unbelief.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
18. Look at Matthew 17:19–20 for the rest of the conversation about the boy's healing that leaves off at Mark 9:29. What do we learn about faith here?



***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Status, Service, Surgery and the Salt Talks****Mark 9:33–50***“If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.” Mark 9:35***Day 1: Read Mark 9:33–41.**

1. After reading this passage, go back through and reread every statement of Jesus; and then write out what Jesus says a disciple of his should look like.
2. What are the disciples arguing about? Why is this ironic, especially in light of what has just happened in vss. 30–32? What does this reveal about their understanding of servanthood? What might their silence in response to Jesus’ question mean?
3. Just as Jesus knows what the disciples are arguing about, he knows what you argue about. Think back over the last few weeks and relay an argument in which you found yourself defending your position or rights. If you haven’t already brought peace to that situation, pray now for God’s empowerment to do so.

**Day 2: Read Mark 9:33–37.**

4. In the midst of the disciples’ jockeying “for first place position”, what paradoxical statement does Jesus make to highlight what is actually the most prestigious position in His kingdom? (vs. 35)
5. To reinforce the lesson of true greatness, Jesus brings a child into their midst and announces: “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me.” What is Jesus endeavoring to teach his disciples? (Hint: think of the position and rights of children in Jesus’ day)
6. Conversely, what are we doing when we are indifferent or dismiss that same ‘child’? Allow God to examine your heart to expose which “children” you are not welcoming in Jesus’ name.
7. How did Jesus envision that the servant-driven structure of the Christian community would work? (1 Corinthians 12:12–26)

**Day 3: Read Mark 9:38–41.**

8. In this incident, what is John most interested in preserving? How might John’s attitude (“he was not one of us”) emerge and cause damage in the church today? (Romans 15:7)

9. Explore a little more deeply what Jesus meant when he stopped John in his tracks with his reproof. (vs. 40) Since this isn't a watering down of the gospel, what is Jesus' implication? (Matthew 12:30)
  
10. In verse 41 Jesus implies that a small act of compassion can take on cosmic proportions. Why? As you think of relationships that you are in, write down a particular "cup of water" that you need to bring in Jesus' name.

**Day 4: Read Mark 9:42–48.**

11. List the "it would better" and "it is better" phrases in these verses.
  
12. Let the horror of these phrases wash over you, and then express in your own words the seriousness of allowing sin to fester untreated, in your life.
  
13. Jesus is not calling his disciples to physically mutilate their bodies to prevent them from sinning. How are Jesus' injunctions meant to challenge believers, in thought and practice? (Romans 6:13, 19; 12:1–2) How have they challenged you?

**Day 5: Read Mark 9:33-50.**

14. What are some of the uses of salt, and how might this tie into Jesus' teaching on discipleship? (Leviticus 2:13; Ezekiel 43:23–24)
  
15. The phrase, "Everyone will be salted with fire," appears only in the Gospel of Mark. How will disciples of Christ be "salted with fire"? (1 Peter 1:6–7; 4:12)
  
16. What is salt good for if it has lost its saltiness? How does this relate to disciples of Christ? (Matthew 5:13)
  
17. From this passage, list some of the things that cause our salt factor to ebb.
  
18. This section begins with believers arguing among themselves and now culminates with the encouragement to "be at peace with each other" (vs. 50). Why do you think this is how Jesus chooses to end this teaching on the cost of discipleship? (Galatians 5:13b–15)
  
19. "Have salt in yourselves..." (vs. 50). What do salty relationships look like? (Philippians 2:3–7)



***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Three Matters of the Heart      Mark 10:1-31**

*“All things are possible with God”* Mark 10:27

**Day 1: Read Mark 10:1–12.**

1. What is Jesus’ custom whenever he meets a crowd? (vs. 1) What do you think he teaches them? (Mark 1:14f)
2. Consider the scenario the Pharisees have crafted to test Jesus. What are they trying to get him to say, and why?
3. Rather than the “yes or no” response the Pharisees seek to extract from Jesus, what is the amazing answer he gives?
4. How would you say Jesus’ way of looking at the divorce issue is different from the Pharisees’ way? What does Jesus look at that has escaped their attention?

**Day 2: Read Mark 10:1–12.**

5. Considering Jesus’ statement in verse 5, comment on the proposition that “whatever is legal is moral.” Would you agree or not? Discuss whether there are some things that are technically permissible for you but that may nevertheless be displeasing to God.
6. What does Jesus include in the category of adultery? (vss.11–12)
7. What exception does Jesus allow? (See the account of the same incident in Matthew 19:3–9)
8. What other exception does the apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, give to us? (1 Corinthians 7:15)

**Day 3: Read Mark 10:13–16.**

9. Why do you suppose the disciples rebuke people for bringing their children to Jesus? How is their attitude a worldly one?

10. What do you think it is about little children that Jesus loves so, such that he commands us to be like a child if we want to enter the kingdom?

**Day 4: Read Mark 10:17–31.**

11. A man asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. You and I know that nothing we “do” is good enough to merit eternal life. (Galatians 2:15–16, 21; 3:10–11) So why does Jesus direct this man to the commandments?
12. Jesus adds one more commandment to the young man’s list—and it breaks the camel’s back. What do you think Jesus is trying to get the man to see?
13. Jesus knows this man is mistaken about God, about the law, and even about himself. And yet, what are Jesus’ feelings for the man? (vs. 21) How do you think God feels about you, his child, even when you are caught in error?
14. The man goes away sad, evidently not prepared to give over this particular area of his life. What area of your life are you trying to keep off limits to God?

**Day 5: Read Mark 10:17–31.**

15. Jesus laments how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom, but he doesn’t say why. Why do you think it’s so? Discuss how Jesus’ caution applies to you.
16. What is the good news about rich people, poor people, and every kind of people with respect to salvation? (vs. 27)
17. What is the wonderful promise to those who willingly give over every area of their lives to God’s lordship, and in particular to those who leave everything for the gospel? (vss. 29–30)
18. Why will “many who are first...be last, and the last first”? Think about this in the context of the passage.

19. In the light of the three little incidents in this week's readings, examine your heart and to look upon the condition of your inner life rather than just your outer life.

**LIFE OF A SERVANT****True Discipleship****Mark 10:32–52**

*“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* Mark 10:43–45

**Day 1: Read Mark 10:32–52.**

- Note briefly what is said and done in each of the following passages. Do you detect a pattern?
 

|          |          |               |
|----------|----------|---------------|
| 8:31:    | 9:31:    | 10:33-34:     |
| 8:32-33: | 9:33-34: | 10:35-37, 41: |
| 8:34-36: | 9:35:    | 10:42-45:     |
- The three predictions of Jesus’ passion are framed by two healings of blind men (8:22–26 and 10:46–52). What do you think is the significance of this?
- Verses 33 and 34 contain Jesus’ most detailed description of what awaits him. What details are new to this prediction? (Compare with 8:31 and 9:31.)

**Day 2: Read Mark 10:35–45.**

- What do James and John want? What do they think the granting of their request would mean for them?
- What does their request say about what they think Jesus’ mission is? How well have they been listening since chapter 8?
- How do the other disciples react? What does this reveal about their hearts?

**Day 3: Read Mark 10:35–45.**

- What does Jesus have in view here when he speaks of his “cup” and “baptism” (vs. 38)? (cf. vss. 33–34; 14:36; Lk. 12:50)
- What Old Testament imagery lies behind his use of “cup”? (Is. 51:17–20; Jer. 25:15–18) Why is this image an appropriate way to describe Jesus’ death? (Is. 53:5, 8–10; Gal. 3:13)
- Mark writes in one other place of positions at Jesus’ right and his left. In what context does this wording appear? (15:27)

10. James and John wanted a shortcut to glory, as we all do. But what is the prerequisite for sharing in Christ's glory? (Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 4:13)

**Day 4: Read Mark 10:42–45.**

11. How do the “Gentiles” Jesus speaks of in vs. 42 define greatness? How does our society define greatness? How does Jesus define greatness?

12. Describe the status and existence of a slave.

13. Jesus himself sets the example for the humility he preaches. What two verbs does Jesus use to describe his mission?

14. From what kind of position does a person need to be ransomed? Why did we need Christ to ransom us? (Jn. 8:34–36; Gal. 4:3–7; cf. Mk. 8:37)

15. What is the consequence for us of having been ransomed by Christ's death? (1 Cor. 6:19b–20a) How does this affect the way believers live? (Rom. 15:2–3; Phil. 2:3–8; Jn. 13:12–17; 1 Jn. 3:16–18) How does this affect your life?

**Day 5: Read Mark 10:46–52.**

16. What is Bartimaeus' position in society? How did the crowds respond to him? Why? How do you respond to people like Bartimaeus?

17. Compare Bartimaeus (vss. 47–48) with some others that Jesus helped (2:3–5; 5:22–23; 7:25–30). What do these people have in common?

18. What does Bartimaeus call Jesus? What might have been in his mind when he used this title? (Jer. 23:5–6; cf. Mt. 21:8–11)

19. How did James and John answer the question, “What do you want me to do for you?” (vs. 36)? How does Bartimaeus answer the same question (vs. 51)? How do you answer it?

20. What does Bartimaeus do once he is healed?

21. How does Bartimaeus exemplify discipleship?

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****The Messiah      Mark 11:1–33**

*“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”* Mark 11:9

**Day 1: Read Mark 11:1–10.**

1. Jesus had been to Jerusalem before. What unusual plan does he have for his entry on this spring Sunday?
2. By his method of entry, what is Jesus deliberately saying about himself? (See 1 Kings 1:32–35; 2 Kings 9:13; and Zechariah 9:9.)
3. How do the people of the city show they get the message? What does verse 10 tell us about how well the people understand Christ’s mission?
4. Jesus has often silenced people who called him the Messiah. Why not today?

**Day 2: Read Mark 11:11–19.**

5. Suggest a couple of reasons why Jesus would spend his nights two miles outside Jerusalem in Bethany. (John 11:57; 12:1–3)
6. Describe what Jesus did during his visit to the temple that starts in verse 15. (See also John 2:13–17.)
7. Note: the “temple area” is the court of the Gentiles—the only part of the temple where godly non-Jews could come to worship. What has provoked Christ’s anger? (Look at the contexts of the verses quoted by Jesus [Is. 56:6–7 and Jer. 7:11]).
8. What makes Jesus’ expression of anger appropriate? Contrast it with your own experience with expressing anger.

**Day 3: Read Mark 11:12–21.**

9. What is the effect of Christ’s tirade at the temple on the religious leaders? On the people?
10. What continues to amaze the people about Christ’s teaching? (Recall Mark 1:22.)

11. An account of a fig tree serves as bookends for the temple cleansing. Why does Jesus curse the fig tree? What is the result of the curse?
12. What connection do you see between the cursing of the fig tree and the temple cleansing?

**Day 4: Read Mark 11:20–25.**

13. What connection between faith and prayer does Jesus emphasize?
14. Do Jesus' words in these verses contradict his reply to James and John's request in the last chapter? (Review 10:35–40.) Explain your answer.
15. According to verse 25, what other element is essential to effective prayer?
16. Does God's requirement that we forgive others apply only after we have received an apology? Why then do we forgive people who have hurt us? (Read the parable that Jesus tells in Mt. 18:21–35.)
17. Who does God want you to forgive? Will you obey him?

**Day 5: Read Mark 11:27–33.**

18. What questions do the religious leaders fire at Jesus in the crowded temple courts?
19. What not-so-hidden motive do they have for interrogating Jesus? (Recall verse 18.)
20. Why does Jesus reply as he does?
21. Why do the religious leaders balk at answering Jesus' question? (Look at John 1:19–34 to see what John announced about Jesus.) How are their designs against Jesus thwarted?
22. What blocks their ability to receive and respond to Christ's message? (Mk. 2:17; 1 Jn. 1:8–10)

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Some Things Are More Certain than Death or Taxes!****Mark 12**

*“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.’ ”* Mark 12:17

**Day 1: Read Mark 12:1–12.**

1. What is represented in the parable by:
  - a. The Owner:
  - b. The Vineyard: (Is. 5:1-7)
  - c. The Tenants:
  - d. The Servants:
  - e. The Son:
2. What is germinating in the tenant’s hearts that causes them to treat the servants as they do? (vs. 7)
3. Examine your own heart and give an example of something that you have tried to keep for yourself that rightfully belongs to God.
4. The culmination of the parable is a question; “What then will the owner of the vineyard do?” Expand on what the answer means. (See Matt. 21:43; Romans 11:13–14; 19–21.)
5. Jesus uses Psalm 118:22–23 to reinforce the parable he had just told. How do these verses apply to Jesus? (Acts 4:11)

**Day 2: Read Mark 12:13–17; 28–31.**

6. Why does that dastardly duo (the Pharisees and Herodians) once more put aside their differences and join forces? (vs.13; Mark 3:6) How and why do they attempt to butter Jesus up in order to make him more susceptible to their plotting?
7. The question, “Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” seems to allow only a yes or no answer. What is the danger to Jesus in answering in either of these ways? How does Jesus show that he is on to them? (vs. 15)
8. Jesus focuses the religious leaders’ attention on a Roman coin. What are the questions he asks? (vs. 16) What should our response as Christians be to the demands of government? (Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Tim. 2:1–6; 1 Pet. 2:13–17)

9. Because God's image is stamped on us rather than a coin, what do we owe him? (vss. 29–30)

**Day 3: Read Mark 12:18–27.**

10. How does Mark describe the Sadducees? (vs. 18) What happens to our faith if there is no resurrection? (1 Cor. 15:12–19)

11. What were the Sadducees trying to prove with their ridiculous marital puzzle?

12. According to Jesus, what was the Sadducees' problem? (vs. 24) How do you allow the Sadducees' errors to creep into your own life?

13. By using the "account of the bush" (vs. 26) how does Jesus point up another basic flaw in the Sadducees' thinking?

**Day 4: Read Mark 12:28–34.**

14. What does the teacher of the law ask Jesus?

15. What is Jesus' answer? Why are these two commands inextricably linked? (1 John 4:7–12, 20–22)

16. Jesus reflects that the man is "not far from the kingdom of God." In what ways is he near the kingdom, and what is the step that he still needs to take? (Romans 10:8–10) What are some ways that you are far from Jesus and what steps do you need to take to draw near? (Meditate on Psalm 145:18; Ephesians 2:17–18; James 4:8)

**Day 5: Read Mark 12:35–44.**

17. In pointing to Psalm 110, what is the question that Jesus poses? Is this simply a trick question or does this have a deeper significance? (Rom 1:2–4)

18. List the three charges Jesus makes against these false teachers. What is the heart attitude behind them? Read over the list and allow God's Spirit to cause you to repent of ways that your heart's attitude mirrors any of these.

19. What does Jesus mean when he says, "this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others"? (2 Cor. 8:2; 9:6–7; Mark 8:35) What changes do you need to make in your life to imitate this woman?

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****Signs of the End of the Age****Mark 13**

*“So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.”* Mark 13:23

**Day 1: Read Mark 13:1–2.**

1. What are the disciples thinking about as they look at the Temple? What is Jesus thinking about?
2. The historical event Jesus foresees (vs. 2) is the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Though the Roman Emperor Titus will have his own political reasons for this military act, what is God’s reason for this event in history? (Luke 19:41–44)
3. The destruction of Jerusalem by Rome is the particular fulfillment of Jesus’ words in verse 2, but in the typical manner of prophets, Jesus in this discourse blends prophecy of the near future with that of the long-term future. What is the destiny of all great buildings and of the whole created universe? (1 Peter 1:24–25)
4. What would be the benefit to you of seeing all the world and its glory through Jesus’ eyes? (1 Cor. 7:29–31)

**Day 2: Read Mark 13:3–37.**

5. When the disciples ask Jesus, “when will these things happen?”(vs. 4), what curiosity-satisfying information does Jesus not supply? (vs. 32; Acts 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:1)
6. Why do you suppose God does not divulge specific calendar dates? Discuss whether you would be as spiritually vigilant or watchful of your life if you knew the exact timing of God’s plan.
7. What does Jesus emphasize as far more important than knowing exactly in what year or month the end will come? (vss.5, 9, 23, 33, 35, 37)

**Day 3: Read Mark 13:3–37.**

8. List some phenomena that will continue throughout history to the end. (vss. 6–8)

9. By what are we liable to be deceived if we are not careful? (vss. 6, 21–23)
10. Many a wide-eyed optimist today, puffed up with faith in the perfectibility of man, believes that eventually we'll see an age of peace in this world, the eradication of poverty, and the triumph of technology over all human misery. What is Jesus' forecast? (vss.6–8)

**Day 4: Read Mark 13:3–37.**

11. What is the lot of Christians of all time before Jesus' return? (vss. 9–13) Have you yourself experienced persecution "on account of [Jesus]" (vs. 9)?
12. What is Jesus' promise regarding the spread of the gospel? (vs. 10)
13. Whom has God left in the world after Jesus' ascension to help believers as they undergo persecution? (vs. 11)
14. Under such temptation and trial, who is the person who will be saved? (vs. 13)
15. For whose sake will God shorten the terrors to come? (vs. 20)

**Day 5: Read Mark 13:3–37.**

16. In verse 14, the language about "the abomination that causes desolation" is taken from prophetic visions of the future in Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11. Bible scholars think Daniel's words were first fulfilled in 168 B.C. when Antiochus Epiphanes erected a statue of Zeus in the Temple, and secondly when the Temple was profaned in A.D. 70. Considering Jesus' concern in this chapter for final things, what other reference might this phrase have? (2 Thessalonians 2:1–4)
17. What will be the climax of history? (vss. 26–27; Revelation 19:11–16)
18. What will happen on that day when Jesus returns "in the clouds with great power and glory"? (vs. 27; 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10)
19. How ought you to live in the meantime? (vss. 32–37)

20. Considering the dire prophecies of this chapter, what comfort does Jesus' promise in verse 31 give?

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****The Shepherd Is Struck, and the Sheep Scatter****Mark 14***“Then everyone deserted him and fled.”* Mark 14:50**Day 1: Read Mark 14:1–11.**

1. What do you think the woman’s lavish anointing of Jesus shows about her heart?
2. What objection do the disciples (Mt. 26:8–9) raise?
3. Taking care of the poor is a theme that pervades the Bible, falling under the broader commandment to love one’s neighbor as oneself—yet Jesus affirms that the woman’s priorities are right. Look back at Mark 12:28–31. How does the order of the commandments show the appropriateness of the woman’s actions (and the inappropriateness of the disciples’ objection)?
4. What actions frame the narrative of the woman’s anointing of Jesus? (vss. 1–2, 10–11) What purpose do you think this framing serves?

**Day 2: Read Mark 14:12–26.**

5. The Lord’s Supper, or the Last Supper, is Jesus’ celebration with his disciples of the Passover meal. What event does the Passover commemorate? (Ex. 12:1–8, 21–30) Why is it fitting that Jesus is celebrating this particular feast on the eve of his suffering and death? (1 Cor. 5:7)
6. As they celebrated the Passover, faithful Jews looked both back to their deliverance at the time of Moses, and ahead to their deliverance at the coming of the Messiah. Similarly, our celebration of the Lord’s Supper today looks both backward and forward. What event does it commemorate? What event does it anticipate? (1 Cor. 11:23–26; cf. Mk. 14:25; Rev. 19:6–9)
7. Jesus speaks of the “blood of the covenant” (vs. 24). What does this phrase echo? (Ex. 24:3–8) How is the “new covenant” (Lk. 22:20) ushered in by Jesus better than the old covenant mediated by Moses? (Heb. 10:1–18)

**Day 3: Read Mark 14:27–42.**

8. What words does Jesus use to describe his anguish?

9. How does Jesus prepare for the suffering he knows is imminent?
10. What are the last words of the last section of teaching in Mark? (13:35–37) What instructions does Jesus give Peter, James, and John? (vss. 34, 38) What do they do instead?
11. Jesus is not merely seeking company during his time of trial; he is concerned for his disciples. Why is it so important for them to keep vigil? What is the temptation Jesus speaks of? (vss. 27, 30; cf. Lk. 22:31–32)
12. How do you sometimes find yourself “sleeping and resting” (vs. 41) like the disciples? Why is it imperative that we “watch and pray” (vs. 38) instead? (cf. Heb. 6:11–12; 1 Pet. 5:8)

**Day 4: Read Mark 14:18–21, 43–65**

13. How is Judas described in vss. 20 and 43? How does this highlight his treachery? (Ps. 41:9)
14. What light do Mt. 26:14–16 and Jn. 12:4–6 shed on Judas’ decision to betray Jesus?
15. How does Jesus’ trial before the Sanhedrin fulfill Old Testament prophecy? (Is. 50:6; 53:7)
16. What is the only thing Jesus says during his trial? Why do those listening interpret his statement as blasphemous? (cf. Ps. 110:1; Dan. 7:13–14) Why isn’t it? (Mk. 1:1; Heb. 1:3)

**Day 5: Read Mark 14:66–72.**

17. Where is Peter while Jesus’ trial is going on? (vss. 54, 66)
18. In what ways does Peter’s “trial” contrast with Jesus’?
19. Look at later accounts of Peter on trial in Acts 4:5–13, 18–20 and 5:25–32. What has brought about this dramatic difference in Peter? (Mk. 13:11; Acts 4:8)
20. All through this chapter, Jesus is abandoned in different ways, for different reasons. List the ways in which Jesus is abandoned by his disciples and followers. Then list some of their motives for abandoning him.

21. Who is more surprised by Peter's sin—Peter or Jesus? (vss. 27–31) Does our sin take God by surprise? How has God anticipated and dealt with every sin that we will ever commit?

***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****What's Good about Good Friday?      Mark 15**

*“When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, ‘Surely this man was the Son of God!’ ”* Mark 15:39

**Day 1: Read Mark 15.**

1. Read this chapter through from start to finish. In his narrative, what aspects of Christ’s passion does Mark emphasize? (Hint: Look for repeated words and phrases.)
2. Describe Pilate’s attitude toward Christ.
3. What most influences Pilate’s final decision about Jesus?
4. Describe a time when your own fear of other peoples’ opinions ruled you.

**Day 2: Read Mark 15:6–32.**

5. How is the prisoner exchange of Jesus for Barabbas a picture of the atonement? (Rom. 5:8; 1 Pet. 3:18a)
6. Describe the change in the crowd during the past few days (recall Mk. 11:8–10). What do you think causes this change?
7. Who is responsible for Jesus’ death? What does this tell us about ourselves?
8. Even people in rebellion against God bear witness to him. How is this fact demonstrated by the Roman soldiers in verses 18 and 19 and the onlookers in 29–32?

**Day 3: Read Mark 15:21–37.**

9. What mark of discipleship does the mention of Simon of Cyrene illustrate? (see Mk. 8:34)

10. This week, how has “following Jesus” been more than just a symbolic gesture for you?

11. Read Psalm 22. What echoes of this psalm do you see in Mark 15?

**Day 4: Read Mark 15:33–39.**

12. Jesus cries out asking God why he has forsaken him. In what way was Jesus forsaken by God?

13. There are times in our lives when, even though we are children of God, we will feel forsaken by him. How does Jesus’ experience of forsakenness help us when we feel forsaken by God? (Heb. 2:17–18; 4:15–16)

14. What is the very personal significance to us of the tearing of the temple curtain at Christ’s death? (see Heb. 9:1–8, 24–28; 10:19–22)

**Day 5: Read Mark 15:39–47.**

15. How does the response of the centurion differ from that of the other onlookers? What prompts his declaration? In view of the fact that, in Mark, up until now only God and demons have used this name for Jesus, why do you think this verse has been called the climax of this gospel?

16. a. What does Mark tell us about the women “watching from a distance”?

b. What specific details of Christ’s burial does Mark include?

c. What would be the effect of these historical details on Mark’s readers? (see Acts 26:26)

17. By recording the events of chapter 15, what response do you think Mark wishes to elicit from his readers? What is your response?



***LIFE OF A SERVANT*****The Risen One****Mark 16**

*“ ‘Don’t be alarmed,’ he said. ‘You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.’ ”* Mark 16:6

**Day 1: Read Mark 16:1–8.**

1. As this chapter begins what are the two Marys and Salome planning to do? What might this imply about their understanding regarding Jesus’ promise to rise on the third day?
2. The women, out of love for Jesus, set out to go to the tomb even though a big stone is blocking the way. What impossible things have you attempted out of the love of Jesus?
3. As the women arrive at the entrance of the tomb, what does their first glance reveal? Name a “stone” in your life that you refuse to believe God can move.
4. Describe what the women see as they enter the tomb.

**Day 2: Read Mark 16:1–8.**

5. What is the angel’s message to the women? What does he specifically tell them to do?
6. Look back at Mark 9:9. Why is there no longer need for silence? Let God’s Spirit challenge your heart when you remain hesitant to proclaim the risen Christ.
7. One person is mentioned specifically as someone to tell. Who is it, and what might be the reason for highlighting him? (Reflect on Mark 14:66-72) How does this encourage you?
8. The angel tells the women to remind the disciples of a prior promise that Jesus made. What is it? (vs. 7; see also Mark 14:27–28.) What will happen there?
9. Fleeing the tomb, the women have a two-part emotional response. What is it and how does it impact their carrying out the angel’s command?

*There is question among Biblical scholars as to whether the verses after verse 8 were part of the original manuscript.*

**Day 3: Read Mark 16:9–13.**

10. What do we know of Mary Magdalene and how does it make you feel knowing that Jesus appears to her first? (Mark 15:40; 47; 16:1, 9)
11. What additional details does John provide about Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene? (John 20:11–18)
12. In what condition does Mary Magdalene find the disciples? (vs. 10) How do they respond to what she tells them?
13. What important details about Jesus' interaction with the two disciples (vs. 12) does Luke provide in his gospel? (Luke 24:13–35)
14. How might the reaction of the disciples to these two eyewitness reports have turned into a faith-filled one? (Mark 9:23–24) Relate a situation when you, like the disciples, reacted to the circumstance rather than responding with belief in the risen one.

**Day 4: Read Mark 16:15.**

15. Look back at Mark 1:15 and read the first words of Jesus in this gospel. Jesus is now commanding his disciples to “preach the good news to all creation.” (vs. 15) From your study in Mark, how would you explain this good news?
16. To what great task does Jesus call his disciples?

**Day 5: Read Mark 16:19–20.**

17. What do these few sparse words, “he sat at the right hand of God” (v.19) mean? How does this encourage you? (Hebrews 10:11–12; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:19b–23)
18. In what ways does the phrase, “and the Lord worked with them” (v.20) strengthen your faith and give you courage to step out boldly into the Great Commission? (Philippians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:24)
19. What difference has looking at Jesus through the Gospel of Mark made in your life?