

Study Guide

Mark 1:1-20

September 5 & 6, 2020

Read Mark 1:1-20

1. When someone asks you: "Who do you say Jesus is?", what is your response? Who does Mark say Jesus is in **Mark 1:1**?
2. Matthew and Luke start their Gospels with the *birth* of Jesus, but Mark starts his with the *baptism* of Jesus. Why do you think that Mark starts with his focus on the beginning of Jesus' ministry?
3. How does Jesus' baptism set up the beginning of His ministry?
4. Where are all three persons of the Trinity seen in this passage? Why is that important?
5. What is John the Baptist's response to Jesus? What does that show us about his heart?
6. Sometimes, the Spirit leads us to the wilderness. Why do you think this is? (v. 12-13)

Read Luke 4:1-13

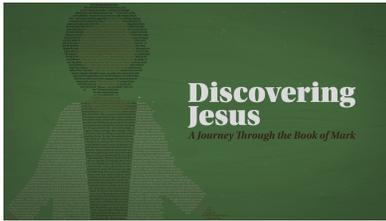
7. What did Satan use to tempt Jesus? And what did Jesus use to refute Satan? Why is this important for you and me?
8. Jesus calls His disciples and they respond immediately (v. 17-18). Has there been a time in your life where God asked you to respond immediately? Is there anything currently that He is asking you to respond to and you're hesitant or having a hard time obeying?
9. Describe a way in which you could grow in becoming a **fisher of people** in your own life? (v. 17)

As you close, spend some time praying for two things:

1. To completely follow Jesus.
2. Ask for who and how you need to fish for people.

For next week:

Read Mark 1:21-45



Study Guide

Mark 1:21-45

September 12 & 13, 2020

Read Mark 1:21-45

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word **“authority”**? Most of us have seen or experienced abuses of authority. This can cause many negative connotations to the idea of authority. How does Jesus show that authority is not the problem?
2. In what ways does Jesus show authority in this passage?
3. In verses 23-24, a man possessed by a demon has an outburst declaring Jesus as the Holy One of God. Why does Jesus silence the demon for telling the truth? How can Jesus’ authority over evil give us encouragement in the current climate we live in?
4. How are we like the leper? Have you ever struggled with the thought that God does not want to be around you? How does Jesus show the heart of God for our desperate state?

Read Matthew 11:28-30

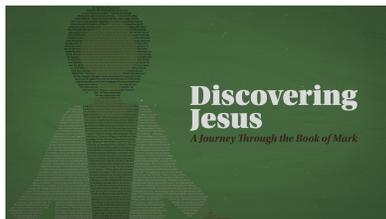
5. What does it mean to come to Jesus? Compare life before Jesus to life after Jesus in this passage.

6. Somehow our pride keeps us from admitting what we most need. How can desperation or struggle be an effective tool in our lives?
7. How do the priorities of Jesus remind us of what we should prioritize as well in **Mark 1:35-37**? How does such a priority prepare us well for facing the busyness of the day?
8. In this passage we see two unclean beings — an unclean spirit and an unclean leper. What is the difference in how Jesus deals with them? How should being recipients of God’s grace impact our lives?
9. Jesus suddenly gets quite a bit of attention from the crowds. What was His reaction to them? Why do you think He did this?
10. How does this example of Jesus show us what your priority should be for evangelism?

To further equip you in sharing the gospel with others, we encourage you to take part in our **Share** class on October 4. Register on the Events page of the church website.



Suggested Reading:
Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers
by Dane Ortlund



Study Guide

Mark 2:1-17

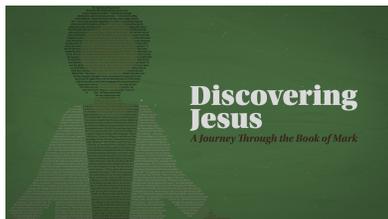
September 19 & 20, 2020

Read Mark 2:1-12

1. The reputation of Jesus was spreading and crowds came to form wherever He was. From what we've read in Mark so far, what are some of the reasons people were drawn to Jesus?
2. The paralyzed man had some good friends who were willing to dig a hole in a roof for him. Who in your life would go to such great lengths for you? Who in your life would you do anything to help them?
3. When Jesus saw the paralyzed man, His first reaction is to forgive him of his sins. Why do you think Jesus started there instead of the noticeable need to heal the man physically?
4. The teachers were upset that Jesus forgave sins. Why was that? By forgiving sins, what was Jesus claiming? How might this be received by the teachers of the law?
5. As people who are called to live like Jesus lived, how do we foster a desire to know the unseen challenges people are facing instead of simply the seen challenges?

Read Mark 2:13-17

6. What do you know about tax collectors during the time of Jesus? Why were they an unpopular group?
7. Put yourself in the shoes of Levi. How would it feel to be invited to be a disciple of Jesus? What might Levi be giving up by following Jesus?
8. The invitation to "follow Me" is still pertinent today. Give examples of when you said "Yes" to Jesus' invitation in your life. What have you given up in order to follow Jesus?
9. The Pharisees were upset that Jesus was hanging out with sinners. What "sin" were the Pharisees guilty of?
10. How close are you to people who need Jesus? What needs to change in your life to get closer to the spiritually "sick"?



Study Guide

Mark 2:18-3:6

September 26 & 27, 2020

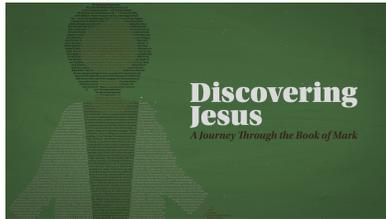
Read Mark 2:18-3:6

1. Do you consider yourself to be a rule-follower? Do you like to challenge the rules? How would you describe Jesus? Was He trying to cause a stir?
2. What is Jesus' point about garments and wineskins in verses 21-22? What is the danger of just treating Jesus as a patch for our lives?
3. The Pharisees take issue with the disciples of Jesus picking grain on the Sabbath. **Read Deuteronomy 23:25**. What did this passage allow for? How did the Pharisees add their own standards to what the Law said?
4. Why do you think Jesus brought up David in verses 25-26?
5. How does this passage show that you can be a rule follower and yet not have your heart right with God? The religious leaders are not neutral in their view of Jesus. How do we see their hearts in 3:1-6?

6. What is the distinction between being stubborn and being committed? What convictions are worth holding to regardless of changing times?
7. We can have standards, convictions, and habits, but all of them should be to help us know and reflect Jesus better. What happens when the means becomes more important than the focus of our faith?
8. Is it possible that holding tightly to a personal viewpoint could keep us from effective ministry? What is an example of that?
9. Jesus was not doing the kinds of things people were expecting. Have you ever seen God move in a way that you were not expecting? How did this impact your faith?

As you close ...

- Pray that we would be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and the needs around us.
- Pray that we would cherish Jesus more than rules/standards/habits.



Study Guide

3:7-35

October 3 & 4, 2020

Read Mark 3:7-35

1. Throughout this passage, Jesus is accused of being “off base” by family and religious leaders. As a Christian, have you every been accused of “getting extreme”?
2. In verses 7-12, Jesus “withdrew” with His disciples. How do you “withdraw” with Jesus? What’s the value in it? What do you do with “the crowd / the distractions” while you withdraw?
3. Bill and Jack talked about the mountainside experiences in our Christian walk. What have been some of your mountainside experiences? What “callings” have you received there?
4. What are the three things that Jesus calls the disciples to in verses 14-15? How does that translate to us today?

5. In verses 21 & 22, what did Jesus’ own family say about Him? What about the teachers of the Law?

What do we know now that they didn’t know then?
How does this help with clarity?

6. How does it feel to know that Jesus views YOU as family as much as His own mother, Mary, according to verses 34 & 35?
7. How do you view family? Does that relate to your Christian family as well?
8. The title of the message for this weekend is “Are You With Me”? What in life shows that you’re “with Jesus”?



Study Guide

Mark 4:1-34

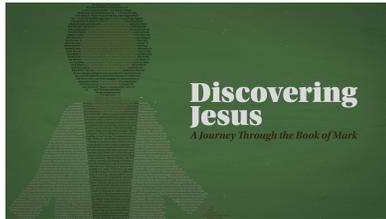
October 10 & 11, 2020

1. What is something that spreads quickly? (Have fun with this) What factors contribute to a quick spread?

Read Mark 4:1-34

2. In the parable of the farmer sowing seed, what are the scenarios Jesus describes that keeps the gospel from taking root in someone's life?
3. Sometimes people place hope in the fact that while someone is not living at all like a Christ-follower, they "prayed the prayer" when they were a kid. How does Jesus' parable show that trusting in the gospel is more than praying a prayer to ask Jesus into our heart?
4. This year may especially remind us that we live in a world of thorns (vs. 18-19). What happens when the worries of this life become greater to us than the power of the gospel?

5. **Read Psalm 139:23-24** and **Philippians 4:6**. How do these verses encourage us in the midst of anxious times? How are the worries of life and the desire for other things connected?
6. As Christ-followers, our desire should be to be fruitful. How can we gauge if our lives are fruitful?
7. What role does the farmer have in this passage? Evangelism is one area of the Christian life that many people admit struggling with. Why do you think that is?
8. Paul describes the different roles in **1 Corinthians 3:5-9**. Where does growth come from? Who have been people in your life that have encouraged your spiritual growth?
9. What is the point of Jesus' parable about the growing seed in vs. 26-29? How can this encourage us when some use scare tactics about the end of Christianity?
10. For those of you into sports, what is the importance of the 2-minute drill? As followers of Jesus, why is it important to keep the eventual harvest (vs. 29) in mind?



Study Guide

Mark 4:35-41

October 17 & 18, 2020

1. What storm are you facing? What is normally your first reaction when you enter a storm?

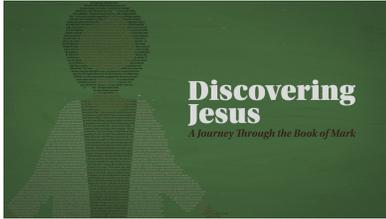
Read Mark 4:35-41

2. What circumstances in life have given you a clearer or changed view of Jesus?
3. Do you ever find it tough to trust God enough though you believe in Him? Why?
4. We see Jesus sleeping through this storm. What does this say about Jesus' feelings toward the storm and His trust in God?

5. **Read Psalm 107:28-29.** How does Jesus' miracle point to the work of God in the Psalms? What key difference exists between the gospel account and what we read in Psalms? What is the proper response to God's work in **Psalm 107:30-32**?
6. How would you answer the disciples' question, "Who is this"? (As you answer, reflect on our first memory verse in Mark 1:1.) How does your answer to that question impact how you live your life?
7. Reread verse 40. Why is it important that our faith go deeper than our circumstances? What is the relationship between faith and fear?
8. Can you share a time in your life where you began to give up hope but God intervened? How would you encourage another believer whose boat is being rocked right now?

OCTOBER MEMORY VERSE

"If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and a servant of all." Mark 9:35



Study Guide

Mark 5:1-20

October 24 & 25, 2020

1. This week’s passage from Mark focuses on the Jesus’ authority over the spiritual realm. What do you know about the “spiritual realm” (angels/demons)? How has your understanding changed over the years?

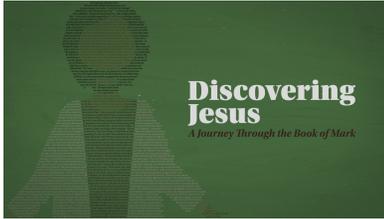
Read Mark 5:1-20

2. What are the key details in this passage that demonstrate Jesus’ authority/power?
3. If a friend with little or no church background read this passage or heard the sermon this weekend, what kind of questions do you think it would raise for them (*this is a helpful exercise for helping us share our faith!*)? How would you answer those questions?
4. The testimony of Scripture is that not only does Jesus have authority over the spiritual realm, but He imparts that authority to His disciples. Read the following passages and jot down your observations: **Luke 10:17-20; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4; James 4:7.**

5. How should knowing that Jesus has authority over the spiritual realm and the fact that you share that authority impact the following areas of life:
 - Sharing your faith
 - Anxiety and other mental health issues
 - Your prayer life
 - Engaging with news and culture
6. The demonized man is a beautiful example of the transformation that can happen because of Jesus’ work in someone’s life. Describe his condition before encountering Jesus and after. How is it different or similar to *your encounter with Jesus*?

<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>

7. The demonized man is a picture of discipleship in Mark. He wants to “be with Jesus” but Jesus sends him to “preach” to his friends and family. What do you think he shared? What impact has Jesus had in your life that you can share?
8. Who is He calling you to share with this week? Write down a name and tell someone so you can be accountable!



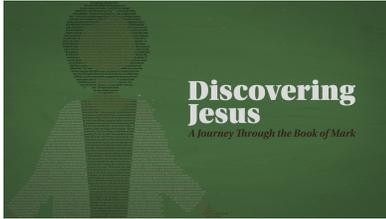
Study Guide

Mark 5:21-43

Oct 31 & Nov 1, 2020

Read Mark 5:21-43

1. Who was Jairus and how did he approach Jesus (v. 22-23)?
2. Is there anything we can learn about going to God in prayer from Jairus' approach?
3. Describe the whole situation of the woman with constant bleeding before going to Jesus.
4. What ultimately healed the woman (v. 34)? Why does Jesus make a point to tell her?
5. What does Jesus tell the man who just heard his daughter is dead and there is no hope (v. 36)?
6. **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14.** How does this relate to Jesus insisting that the girl is sleeping? Also, what does that tell us about how God views those who have gone before us, those who are asleep in Christ?
7. What does Jesus order to be given to the girl that proves she is alive and well (v. 43)? **Read Luke 24:42-43.** Why is this detail about the resurrected Lord important?
8. What do you think this story of Jesus entering into these two seemingly hopeless situations is supposed to convey for us?
9. Spend some time praying and giving God the hopeless and seemingly impossible problems you are facing.



Study Guide

Mark 6:1-29

November 7 & 8, 2020

1. C.S. Lewis once made the argument that Jesus is either a liar, lunatic, or Lord. Do you think these three categories are valid descriptions? How do you think most people identify Jesus?

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. . . . Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God. (Mere Christianity, 55-56)

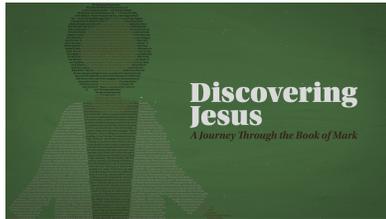
Read Mark 6:1-29

2. What did the people think of Jesus' teaching? What was their reaction to His miracles? What tripped them up about Jesus? What trips people up about Jesus today?
3. Have you ever felt judged because of your background, location of where you grew up, or your family history? Sometimes under your own roof there may be a struggle. Did the viewpoints towards Jesus impact His identity or mission? How can this serve as a good reminder for us as well?

4. In the last couple chapters of Mark we have seen the authority of Jesus. How do we see His authority further in this chapter?
5. Why do you think Jesus did not want them taking anything with them? Are there things that you have felt you "needed", that God stripped away from you to grow your faith?
6. There was one common message that the disciples were sharing in verse 12. What do you notice between that message and the one that we share today? **Read Matthew 28:18-20.** How is this command similar to what Jesus was telling His disciples? Do we regularly live with the awareness of Christ's authority we have been given?
7. On one hand we see the good results the disciples of Jesus had and we may think that if we do the right thing, a pleasant outcome is sure to follow. How does the rest of this passage counter that? What should be our posture and hope when things aren't going how we envisioned?
8. C.S. Lewis made a similar statement to his popular quote listed in Question 1. *"(Jesus) produced mainly three effects — Hatred — Terror — Adoration. There was no trace of people expressing mild approval."* What is your general attitude towards Jesus? How have you seen your attitude towards Jesus change in the last five years? The last year?

MEMORY VERSE for NOVEMBER

"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: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:30-31



Study Guide

Mark 6:30-44

November 14 & 15, 2020

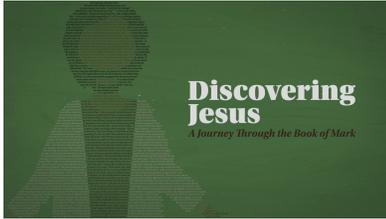
Read Mark 6:30-44

1. **Review Mark 6:31-32.** What do Jesus' words to the disciples after coming back from doing ministry tell us about the rhythms we should place in our lives? Is it wrong to retreat and rest? Why or why not?
2. You just read that Jesus was trying to get away with His disciples for rest when the crowd shows up. How does Jesus respond to their spiritual need (v. 34)? How can we follow Jesus' example when it comes to responding to needs when we actually want to be left alone?
3. **Read Ezekiel 34:11-24.** Spend some time discussing how this relates to Jesus.
4. **Read Psalm 23.** What kind of shepherd is Jesus?
5. What other need does Jesus meet besides the spiritual need (v. 35-42)? What does that tell us about how we should be ministering to those who need Jesus?

6. What is one thing you will do before the end of the year to meet someone's physical and spiritual need in order to minister like Jesus?
7. Why do you think all four gospel writers included the miracle of Jesus feeding the 5,000? What is it supposed to reveal to us about Jesus?
8. Why do you think Mark includes the detail that there were so many left overs? There were in fact twelve baskets.
9. This passage shows us the compassion of Jesus and demonstrates His divinity. How should we be responding to such a King?
10. How can we be representatives of King Jesus and minister to the world around us the way He does?

MEMORY VERSE for NOVEMBER

"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: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:30-31

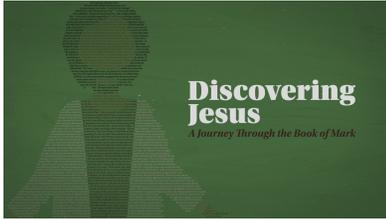


Study Guide

Mark 6:45-56

November 21 & 22, 2020

1. Our passage this week is pretty short! Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you, take some time to **read Mark 6:45-56** and jot down your observations! **What do you discover about Jesus in this passage?**
2. In **Mark 6:46** we learn that Jesus went up on the mountainside to pray. What do you think He was praying about?
3. If Jesus, the Son of God, was depending on God the Father through prayer, we should too! What is something you are depending on God through prayer for right now?
4. In **Mark 6:48** Mark includes a short little phrase that Jesus meant to “pass by them”. Lots of scholars think this is an allusion to **Exodus 33:18-23**, where God shows Moses His glory by passing by Him. If that’s true, what is Mark saying about Jesus in this account?
5. What was the disciples’ response to Jesus walking on the water? Why do you think they responded that way and how do you think they should have responded?
6. One response we looked at during our weekend gathering was to **Stay in Awe** of Jesus. Consider listening to a worship song that celebrates Jesus’ majesty and glory and just being in awe of Him. If you’re meeting in a Life Group, consider listening to a song together (or singing together) and sharing your thoughts!
7. Mark says the reason the disciples were astounded/amazed is that they didn’t understand about the loaves ... what do you think that means? What were they supposed to have understood about the loaves?
8. What do you think it means for someone to have a “hard heart”? Do you know anyone who has a hard heart? Is having your heart “hardened” something you can come back from? (*Hint: think about the disciples*)
9. When Jesus lands, we see people **running** to go get those with needs and bring them to Jesus. How does that compare with your eagerness to bring people to Jesus? **Who might God be calling you to bring to Jesus and what might that look like this week?**



Study Guide

Mark 7:1-23

November 28 & 29, 2020

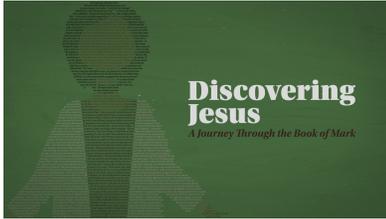
Read Mark 7:1-23

1. Who is your favorite actor? What do you like about their acting? What makes a good actor?
2. The word hypocrite refers to “one who wears a mask” or “plays a part”, in other words an actor. What were the religious leaders doing that was hypocritical? What was Jesus’ attitude towards this behavior?
3. Why do you think it was the religious leaders that were typically called out as hypocrites?
4. All of us have been hypocritical. What makes hypocrisy a very real struggle? Who are we fooling when we act hypocritically?
5. **Read Matthew 6:2, 6:5, and 6:16.** What is the goal of the hypocrite in these verses? What is the danger of hypocrisy?

6. According to verses 21-23, what is the issue that leads to hypocrisy and other sins?
7. If the issue is our hearts, what is the solution? What is the difference between struggling with sin and outright hypocrisy? What is the hope for the person who realizes and confesses their sin in **Isaiah 1:18**?
8. Someone might say, “What does it matter what is real as long as I am doing good things?” **Matthew 7:21-23** serves as a startling warning of the appearance of doing good.
9. How can we help one another be real?

Something to ponder ...

Is the person that you are when you are around Christians, the same person when you are around non-Christians ... or by yourself?

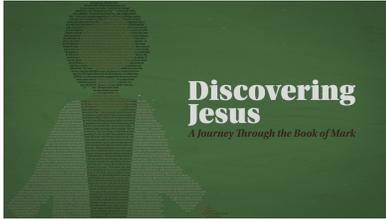


Study Guide

Mark 7:24-37

December 5 & 6, 2020

1. **Read through Mark from Chapter 1 through Chapter 8.** What similarities do you see in how Jesus performed miracles? What differences do you notice?
2. In both miracle stories, the people speak to Jesus out of desperation and humility. The woman fell at Jesus' feet and the people begged Jesus to heal their friend. In what ways does humility and desperation play into our faith? When was the last time you prayed for something that was fully outside of your control?
3. Amazement is a common response Mark shares in this gospel to Jesus' miracles. What are the people amazed with more: the miracle or Jesus Himself?
4. In your life, are you more excited about the gifts of God or God Himself?
5. In both stories, and many stories before this chapter in Mark, those who go to Jesus ask for help on behalf of their friends or family. In what ways can we advocate for our friends and family in our prayer life?
6. Healing is a major component of Jesus' life found in the gospels. In what ways do you need healing? In what ways do those in your life need healing? Take time as a Life Group or individually to pray for healing.



Study Guide

Mark 8:27-9:1

December 12 & 13, 2020

Read Mark 8:27-9:1

1. Public opinion can be a strong motivator or a shifter of ideas. What are some ways in which people are swayed by public opinion? Can you think of a topic or new story where you were swayed by the ideas/opinions of the masses?
2. What were the differing opinions when it came to the public's opinion on who Jesus was? How does that compare to the opinions of Jesus today?
3. What is the significance of Jesus' question from a broad perspective (**Who do people say that I am?**) to a personal belief? (**Who do YOU say that I am?**)
4. What are some of the things that Peter has observed through the book of Mark that would lead him to declaring Jesus as Messiah? What does Peter have right in this passage and what does he have wrong?
5. What are some things that you have had right about God, but had wrong in the application?

6. Peter is rebuked for not having his mind on what God desires. He defaults to his own perspective. What did the mind/plan of God entail in **verse 31**? What was the purpose of that suffering? How does this impact how we view our own hardships in life?
7. **Read verse 34.** What does it mean to deny ourselves? How does a consumeristic culture war against this mindset? What does it mean to pick up our cross? How do our personal rights play into denying ourselves and picking up our crosses?
8. A life of faith in following Jesus (taking up our cross) does not mean a pain or trouble-free life. It is mixed with highs and lows. **Hebrews 11** recalls those that lived by faith and had incredible results (victory, blessing, deliverance, etc.) as well as incredible difficulties (killed, poor, mistreated, etc.).

How does **Hebrews 12:1-2** relate to **Mark 8:34**? What is the end result on the other side of the cross? What is a focus on the end result meant to give to us now?

In the midst of a trying year, it might be difficult to remember that the Christmas season is still about joy to the world. But even greater than that is the realization that because of Jesus, there is eternal joy after this world when our crosses will be history. The coming of Jesus, the Messiah, is good news!



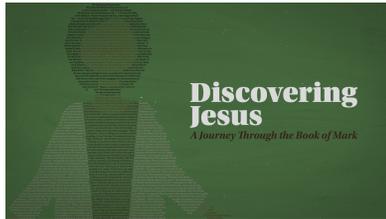
Study Guide

Mark 9:2-29

January 9 & 10, 2021

Read Mark 9:2-29

1. What comes to mind when you think about Jesus/God?
2. Why do you think it's important to have a clear view of all of who Jesus is?
3. Discuss why the transfiguration of Jesus was so important and why it happened when it did.
4. What do you think Peter was hoping for in **Mark 9:5**?
5. What is a clear application for us from **Mark 9:7**? What are some ways you could do better at listening and obeying?
6. How long had the demon possessed boy been suffering? What do you think the emotional state of the father was by the time he met Jesus?
7. The father of the boy says, "But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." And Jesus calls out his doubt ... "If you can?" What are some things that you have doubted God about? What would it look like to practice faith in this area?
8. **Read verse 24.** Do you resonate with his exclamation? How are we like this father?
9. **Read verse 28-29.** What is one of our most powerful tools in combating evil? How would this look lived out in your daily life?
10. What is one thing you want to do differently in your life after interacting with this section of Scripture?



Study Guide

Mark 9:30-50

January 16 & 17, 2021

Read Mark 9:30-50

1. Sometimes we think that if we just had an explanation of what God was doing, we would “get it”. Jesus clearly makes two statements about what’s about to happen, yet His disciples are confused. Looking back now, we can understand what Jesus was saying. How is this an important lesson for us in the uncertainties that we currently face?
2. **In verse 31**, what is the significance of Jesus saying He was going to “be delivered” instead of “captured”? Who do you think Jesus is referring to that will deliver Him into the hands of men?
3. Who is greater: the one with the power to kill or the one with the power to raise back to life? How does that impact what we fear and what we live for? How does **Matthew 10:28** give additional perspective on this?
4. What does greatness look like in the eyes of the world? What role does greatness have in our understanding of significance?
5. How does Jesus reframe our understanding of greatness in **verses 35-37**? What happens if the Church loses the point that we are to be servants of all?
6. The disciples wanted to shut down someone who was not part of their group. How do Jesus’ words in **verses 39-41** help guard us against an “us vs. them” mentality? What happens if churches have a competitive mindset with one another?
7. At times we may not look at the putrid offensiveness of sin because we are quick to jump to forgiveness because of the cross. How serious is leading another in sin according to **verse 42**?
8. If we literally applied **verses 43-47**, we would expect to see a lot of maimed, mutilated people in church. Obviously we do not literally apply that because sin springs from heart. However, what are some examples of taking sin seriously and taking certain, definitive steps to keep it from happening?
9. How should unrepentant sin’s ultimate result as noted in **verse 48** impact our attitude towards it now? Do you take sin as seriously as the Bible does?
10. **Verse 49** says that everyone will be salted with fire. This is not a reference to hell. Salt was used for purification in the Old Testament. Trials, hardships, and persecution are not easy topics, yet they serve a divine purpose for the believer (**James 1:2-4**). How does this give hope and perspective to us in the hardships we face?



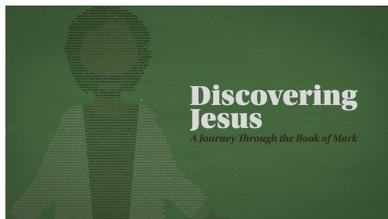
Study Guide

Mark 10:1-16

January 23 & 24, 2021

Read Mark 10:1-16

1. What was the real reason the Pharisees were asking Jesus about divorce?
2. What do you think are some symptoms of a hard heart in a marriage relationship?
3. How can each of us do battle against a hard heart either in marriage or in other significant relationships?
4. What is God's complete design for marriage in **Mark 10:7-9**?
5. Why do you think Jesus' teaching in **Mark 10:10-12** is so hard for the society we live in?
6. What do we have to remember for believers who have already divorced and remarried (**Romans 8:1**)?
7. Why did Jesus get so indignant about the situation with the children?
8. What does that show us about God's view of children?
9. How can we receive the kingdom of God like a child ourselves?
10. Pray for marriages in your group or in your life, pray for protection and perseverance.



Study Guide

Mark 10:17-31

January 30 & 31, 2021

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you and then **Read Mark 10:17-31** two times out loud if possible.

1. In answering the man's question about what he must do to gain eternal life, Jesus quotes part of the 10 Commandments (**Exodus 20:1-17**). Why do you think Jesus includes the ones He does and leaves out others!?

2. Jesus often taught about wealth and poverty and their relationship to discipleship! Take a look at the following passages and jot down what you learn from Jesus' teaching on money.

Matthew 6:24

Matthew 13:22

Matthew 26:6-13

Luke 4:18

Luke 6:20, 24

Luke 12:13-21

3. The man in this passage had let his wealth become an idol that was keeping him from giving his full allegiance to Jesus. What idols are you tempted to let compete for your allegiance to Jesus? In other words: **What do you love so much that you would be willing to sin in order to get it? What do you love so much that you would be willing to sin in order to not lose it?**

4. When Jesus says it's difficult for **"the rich"** to enter the kingdom of God, what do you think He means? Do you consider yourself amongst **"the rich"**? Why or why not?

5. Some people tend to demonize the rich and others make material prosperity into an idol! **Proverbs 30:8-9** contains a succinct piece of balanced Biblical wisdom on money. How would you paraphrase it? How does it correct the extremes on both sides?

6. What would you say to a friend who asks, "Does this story mean we can gain salvation by giving all our money to the poor?" What clues in the text go against that interpretation? How about other passages of Scripture?

7. Jesus says we will have blessings in this age (with persecutions!) and the age to come! Write down the blessings you are thankful for in this age! Then write down what you are looking forward to about the age to come!



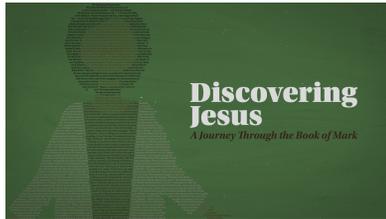
Study Guide

Mark 10:32-52

February 6 & 7, 2021

Read Mark 10:32-52

1. Discuss why the disciples might be astonished and the rest of the crowd afraid as Jesus led them to Jerusalem (**v. 32**).
2. What price is there to pay in our modern context for following Jesus? What might you have to give up?
3. What do you think James and John are missing about the kingdom when they ask to be right and left hand men beside Jesus in His glory?
4. How does the world wield its authority and how is this different for leaders who are part of God's kingdom?
5. What does it mean to sacrificially serve people? What would that look like at home? What would that look like at work? How about church?
6. Create a description of someone who is great in the kingdom of God. What are they like and what do they do?
7. Have you ever felt like you were an outsider or someone who is marginalized? Describe that experience or how you think that would feel.
8. What was unique about Bartimaeus and his approach to Jesus?
9. What does the fact that Jesus entertains Bartimaeus' request tell us about God's heart for the unseen and unheard?
10. How will you be servant to all this week? Name one concrete way that you plan to serve like Jesus.



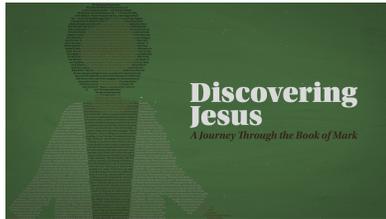
Study Guide

Mark 11:1-26

February 13 & 14, 2021

Read Mark 11:1-26

1. Jesus' command to the disciples in **verses 2-3** seems a little odd. Have there been any biblical commands or expectations that have seemed odd to you?
2. What was the response of the two disciples to Jesus' command? How is this a good example to us when we don't necessarily understand the big picture?
3. Jesus' command to them was not just an unusual request, it was a fulfillment of Scripture. **Read Zechariah 9:9**. How does seeing the fulfillment of prophesy impact your faith? What does it reveal about God?
4. The people's response to Jesus was one of excitement. Hosanna! Save us! Compare this account with the response to Solomon's anointing as king in **1 Kings 1:32-40**. The people of Jerusalem probably had this account in their minds. There was a big difference between their worship of Jesus and their expectations on Jesus. What were the people expecting Jesus to do? How can we be sure to worship God for who He is and not for what we expect Him to do for us?
5. What we see in **verses 11-12** stands in stark contrast to the scene we have just witnessed. The focus of the crowds shifts to Jesus and the twelve disciples and a hungry Savior. This is not the kind of king they were expecting. Jesus did not cater to the expectations of the crowds. As you think through what we have read in Mark, what kinds of situations have made Jesus upset?
6. Jesus was angry that people had made the temple something it was not to be in **verse 17**. What are some ways in which we can make the Church out to be something it's not meant to be?
7. Why did the leaders want to kill Jesus in **verse 18**? Sometimes we might assume that if we do the right thing, people will like us. We see that's not always the case though. What did Jesus prepare us for in **John 15:18-25**?
8. Jesus talks about the power of faith in **verse 23**. What does Jesus mean by a mountain? Is Jesus saying that anything we believe can happen will happen? What is the relationship between faith and prayer?
9. What does Jesus say we should make sure is dealt with when we pray in **verse 25**? Is there something in your life that you have been holding on to that you need to forgive?
10. What are some mountains in your life that your Life Group can pray together about?



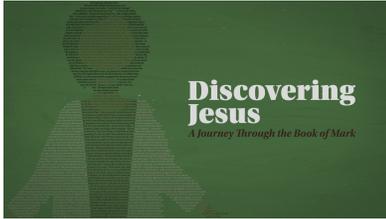
Study Guide

Mark 11:27-12:12

February 20 & 21, 2021

Read Mark 11:27-12:12

1. Read through the entire passage and write down any observations or questions! Look them up in a study Bible or commentary or bring them to your Life Group to discuss!
2. This passage revolves around the question: who has God-given authority over God's people? When you think of **authority** what does it bring to mind?
3. Does anyone have spiritual authority over you? Should they? What does that look like?
4. Jesus speaks a parable *against* the chief priests, teachers of the law, and the elders, but doesn't explain it to the disciples. Write down your thoughts. What do the various characters and actions in the parable represent? (**ex: the vineyard, the owner, the tenants, the servants, the Son, etc.**)
5. Most commentators think Jesus is reworking the imagery from Isaiah in this parable. **Read Isaiah 5:1-7**. What does it say about God's people Israel and specifically Jerusalem? How does this impact your reading of the parable in Mark?
6. What happens to those in the parable who reject the son? What does tell us about those who reject Jesus?
7. This passage illustrates the fact that those who reject Jesus face God's judgment. How would you try to explain that to a friend or family member who checks out this weekend's message online and has questions about it? How does that truth relate to God's love?
8. Jesus quotes **Psalms 118** saying, "THE STONE THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CORNERSTONE." What does it mean to treat Jesus as the Cornerstone?
9. What is the evidence in your life that you are building your life on Jesus as the Cornerstone? If you were on trial for being a follower of Jesus, would you be convicted?



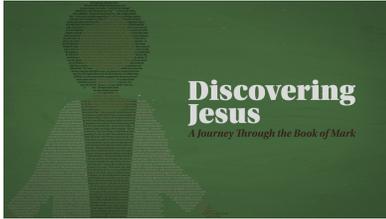
Study Guide

Mark 12:13-34

February 27 & 28, 2021

Read Mark 12:13-34

1. Have you ever been asked a trick question or one that puts you in a difficult situation? What were the circumstances?
2. What is the hypocrisy in what the Pharisees and Herodians were calling Jesus and what they were attempting to do? How can we guard against hypocrisy in our own lives?
3. There have been so many issues this last year that have divided people. The leaders were trying to cause division with Jesus' response to their question. What is Jesus' response to them in **verse 17**? Do you think Jesus is pushing for a separation of church and state here?
4. In **verses 16-17**, Jesus makes the point that the coin bears the image of Caesar and so, should be given to Caesar. According to **Genesis 1:27**, what bears the image of God? What is the significance of that?
5. There is a long history of people asking crazy questions about God such as "Can God create a boulder so large that He can't lift it?". In **verses 18-23**, the leaders came up with a crazy scenario and from there ask Jesus a question. According to Jesus, what led to their error in thinking?
6. This error in thinking happened to people in position, power, and influence. How does this serve as a good reminder to us? There are times where we may have questions of God or what He is doing in our circumstances and the answers are illusive. Even then, what should our response to Him be?
7. May we not be people who don't know the word of God or the power of God. What does **Romans 12:1-2** remind us to do? What will be the result of that?
8. Wisdom and power look completely different in God's eyes from the world's eyes. What does the world consider the cross to be according to **1 Corinthians 1:18**?
9. What is the greatest commandment according to **Mark 12:29-30**? Like a poorly planned workout, we can stress some areas over others when it comes to love. We may love in ways we're comfortable with — our emotions, thoughts, service, decisions. Yet, we are not told to pick and choose which parts of us to give God. What makes it difficult to give God our all?
10. How can we develop a continually growing love for God? How can we develop a growing love for others?



Study Guide

Mark 12:35-44

March 6 & 7, 2021

Read Mark 12:35-44

1. **Verses 35-37** really wrap up Jesus' confrontation with the religious leaders in the temple courts. Jesus poses a Bible-interpretation puzzle to get them to question their assumptions about the Messiah. Go back and read **Psalm 110**. Who is it written by? Who is it talking about? Who is "the LORD" and who is "my Lord" in this passage?
2. Now that you've read the Old Testament passage in its context, how would you summarize the puzzle Jesus is putting forward to the religious leaders? What is He trying to get them to see?
3. Next (**v. 38-40**), Jesus goes after the teachers of the law for their hypocrisy! How would you define "hypocrisy?" What does it mean to be a hypocrite?
4. If you were really being honest with yourself, in what areas have you been a hypocrite at times?

5. What would you say to someone who says, "I can't stand Christians. They're just a bunch of hypocrites!"?
6. What can we do to make sure we don't slip into becoming hypocrites? How can you as a Life Group help each other?
7. Next (**v. 41-44**), Jesus focuses in on a poor widow and her offering. **AGREE or DISAGREE:** Jesus is saying, "It's not about the amount you give, it's about the *percentage* you give."
8. The woman displayed an undivided heart devoted to God. What are the indicators in your life that your heart is undivided in its devotion to God? Where have you "put in your whole life"?
9. We tend to see the surface ... Jesus sees through it. What are some external markers we tend to judge people by? What kind of judgments do you make about someone based on "the surface"?

Prayer: Spend some time praying alone or as a group asking God to align your heart with His. Ask for Him to change the way you see yourself and others to reflect what He sees.



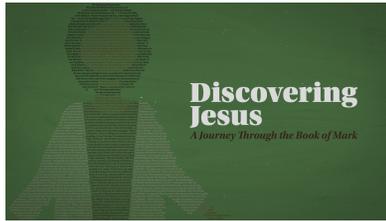
Study Guide

Mark 13

March 12 & 13, 2021

Read Mark 13

1. What comes to your mind when you think of the end of the world?
2. Think of popular books, shows, or movies that describe the end of or near the end of the world. What are some of the more outlandish ones you've seen or read? Are there any common themes among them?
3. What is your attitude towards the end of the world? What is your attitude regarding the return of Jesus? As believers, should we care about what happens?
4. What does Jesus warn against in **verse 5**? Why is it important as followers of Jesus to know our Bibles well?
5. In **verse 9** Jesus talks about a scenario that is very concerning to think about. While not pleasant to think about, how does God use such a situation in **verse 10**?
6. Being hated by others is probably not a preference for any of us. Some of us may be more concerned about what others think than we should be, while others may be less concerned about what others think than we should be. What is the root cause for the hate that a follower of Jesus can expect in **verse 13**? We might think that being hated means that we're doing something wrong, but what does **verse 13** tell us to do?
7. Read **Luke 2:6-7**. Contrast the difference between Jesus' first and second coming. (**v. 26**)? How does this impact how we view Jesus?
8. Over the years, different people have tried to assign dates to the return of Jesus. What does this passage tell us about that?
9. Does a lack of knowledge about the timing of Christ's return impact our preparation for His return? What does it mean to be prepared or not "sleeping" as Jesus says in **verse 36**?
10. If you knew Jesus was coming back tomorrow, how would it impact how you lived today?



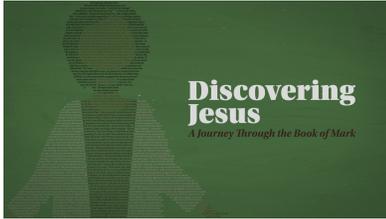
Study Guide

Mark 14:1-31

March 20 & 21, 2021

Read Mark 14:1-31

1. Perhaps at a some point you have had a child draw a picture for you. The picture may have come with an explanation of what it was. For instance, that box with four straight lines coming out of it is a horse. Did you yell at the child for the portrayal not being true to life? What was your reaction to receiving such a portrait? Compare your reaction in this scenario to Jesus with the woman who anointed Him. What is similar?
2. What was the reaction of those observing? **Read John 12:4-6.** What was behind Judas' reaction to this woman's (Mary's) offering?
3. Who was the deceived one in this particular occasion? There is a contrast between the rebukers' and Jesus' response. Why is it important to be mindful of that difference when it comes to how we choose to live our lives?
4. Whose house was Jesus staying at? What is interesting about that and how can it encourage us?
5. **Read Exodus 12:12-14** which details what the Passover was about. What is significant about the Passover Jesus is having with His disciples?
6. As a church we regularly have communion. What should we be doing as we partake in communion? What is Jesus currently holding off for?
7. What would your reaction be if your spouse or best friend said that you would betray them? What was Peter's reaction in **verse 29** as well as the other disciples in **verse 31**?
8. What is encouraging about the fact that Jesus knows us better than we know ourselves? Why does that also serve as a stark reminder?
9. Have you ever made promises to God that you did not keep? What is your reaction to such failure?
10. Peter and the disciples did not want to believe that they could fail to the degree that they did. At times we may be surprised by the depth of our own sin and failure in our lives. Why is it important for us to remember that our standing before God is based on His promises and not our own, on Jesus' work and not our own?



Study Guide

Mark 14:32-72

March 27 & 28, 2021

Read Mark 14:32-72

1. Why do you think God inspired the writers of Scripture to record in great detail the events leading up to the cross?
2. What grabbed your heart as you read about the events leading up to the cross? Why did that portion of Scripture make an impact?
3. Describe Jesus' state of mind and being when it came to His time in the garden. What is this section of Scripture supposed to show us?
4. Discuss a time where you had to go to God in prayer when you were under great distress? What was difficult about it?
5. How is it possible that Judas witnessed all that Christ did and taught, but still ended up betraying Him? What does that tell us about the danger of false faith?
6. What 'sin' did Jesus commit in the eyes of the chief priests? Was He truly guilty?
7. What is significant about Jesus answering "I am" in **verse 62**?
8. What sin do we commit when we forget God and live our lives as though we are masters of our own destiny? What should our punishment be?
9. Go back and read **verse 31**, what did Peter promise Jesus? Do you think he was sincere?
10. What kinds of things can we do to harden ourselves against denying Jesus when we face opposition and fear? What is the proper response when we begin to fall away from faithfulness to Jesus?



Study Guide

Mark 16:1-8

April 3 & 4, 2021

Read Mark 16:1-8

1. The last week of Jesus' ministry would have been a whirlwind for His followers. The week before they were celebrating Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem. Now, only a couple of women go to visit the tomb where Jesus was buried. What do you think they and the other disciples were thinking?
2. What indicator do we have from Mark's account that the women (or the other disciples) had no clue that Jesus was going to rise again? Through Mark, we saw three different times Jesus laid this out (**Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33**). Why do you think they didn't get it?
3. It's easy for us to look back and question how they didn't get it. What are some ways that we just don't get it when it comes to trusting God? What excuses do we make?
4. What was the biggest concern for the women on that day? What would your reaction be if you went to the gravesite of a loved one and it was open? What impact would that have on your grief that was already present?
5. Entering the tomb, they see a man dressed in white. Mark's account seems pretty tame. How do **Matthew 28:3-4** and **Luke 24:4** describe the angel's apparel? What impact did this sight have on those guarding the tomb?
6. Name five things from verses 6-7 that are encouraging statements.
7. "There you will see him, just as he told you." (v.7) How does this particular phrase ring true for us as well? What is your reaction when you think about your faith being made sight? What Jesus says will happen. This pertained directly to fulfilled statements of His death and resurrection, but that statement is also true regarding His return and eternity. How should that impact our lives?
8. Read **1 Corinthians 15:54-58**. What impact should the resurrection of Jesus make on our lives? What hope is there in staying faithful even when times are difficult and seemingly pointless?
9. What are the circumstances that test your ability to stand firm?
10. As we wrap up the book of Mark and our series, *Discovering Jesus*, what is one takeaway for you regarding Jesus from our study? (A good reminder, encouragement, challenge, etc.)