

# REMARKABLE

*The man who changes everything*

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## INTRODUCTION

At St Matts we know that refreshment and health grow when we keep our eyes fixed on our Saviour King. So together, we are focusing on Jesus by listening afresh to the Gospel according to Mark.

Mark's gospel is probably the earliest account Jesus life, death and resurrection. Matthew and Luke built their own accounts using much of Mark.

Papias's was a Turkish Christian who seems to have learnt from the Apostle John. He said that Mark wrote down the words of Peter. This is one of the reasons why many scholars think that Mark wrote this gospel no later than around 66 AD when Peter was executed in Rome.

The Gospel has three stages based around geography: "stage 1 in and around Galilee (up to roughly 8:21), stage 2 on the road to Jerusalem (roughly 8:22–10:52), and stage 3 in Jerusalem (from 11:1 on)"<sup>1</sup>. Many have noticed the fast-paced nature of this Gospel as Jesus seems to be always on the move. Over a third of his Gospel is spent on the last week of Jesus life. This is very strange in the world of biographies - but it is saying something very significant to us about Him.

It has been noted that every paragraph in Mark's gospel is answering at least one of the following three questions:

1. Who is Jesus - His identity
2. Why has He come - His Mission
3. How will I respond - Discipleship

These three questions would be worth asking every time you meet together to discuss what the Holy Spirit has inspired for our learning.

Time to grab your diary and circle the first weekend of April. St Matts will be running The Mark Drama. This is a 90-minute play acting out the whole story of this gospel. This would be a great opportunity to invite those who haven't had an adult look at Jesus to come and see and experience this three-act drama of Jesus. For strangers to be confronted with the questions of who Jesus is, what he came to do and what it means to follow Him.

Please be in prayer for this Term's learning and for the Mark Drama. Pray for your own mind and heart, and for your Life Group and the whole Church. That we would see the reMARKable Jesus afresh and so find ourselves pulled even closer in our orbit around Him.

We pray that your heart and life would be gripped by Him who is the "Beloved Son" and our Saviour.

Your brother Ian Powell and all the staff team at St Matts

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<sup>1</sup> R. T. France, The Gospel of Mark (The New International Greek Testament commentary)

## ABOUT THESE STUDIES

### BIBLE STUDY

Two of the goals of our series is to think about 1) the identity of Jesus and 2) what it means to follow Him. We do this by looking at God's word.

The inductive approach to Bible study is partly aimed at growing each one of us to be able to interpret God's Word correctly without the need for extra mediators or materials.

We can then use these skills to be able to read the Bible with others. That way, we can take our place in seeing strangers of God's love become believers in Christ. We can help believers to grow as lovers of God and see lovers become warriors who represent Christ and bring others to Him through God's Word.

The essential elements of the study are:

**Observation** - through reading, sharing what stands out, and asking questions

**Interpretation** - answering the questions through deeper reflection in the passage

**Key verse** - identifying the big idea in searching for a key verse, and explaining why that is the key verse

**Application** - working from the key verse to see what it means for us today

If you would like more information about this method, please contact Andrew Vella ([andrew.vella@stmattswanniassa.org.au](mailto:andrew.vella@stmattswanniassa.org.au)). He would love to help and is willing to meet up with you and run you through this process in more detail.

### ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS

You'll find questions that accompany each study. They're designed to fit into the interpretation and application phases. While we're convinced that some of the best questions are those each person poses themselves, a couple of additional questions can help think through aspects we might not have considered yet.

### PRAYERS

Each week there is a prayer from *A Prayer Book for Australia*, to help us draw from our Anglican tradition and to model what some corporate prayers may look like.

### SERMON REFLECTION

Use this space to take notes during the sermon and then refer to your notes at the start of your Life Group time together. You can raise any questions and talk through them briefly in your group, with the Bible passage open. This is a good way of remembering God's Word and continue to do the work of applying it.

Remember the aim of our Life Groups is to study God's Word and not the sermon. We are to always hold God's Word above everything else. Ideally, in our Life Group discussion we will not be saying "In the sermon they said...". Instead we should be saying "In the passage it says...", that is, we should primarily let the passage guide our discussion and not what we heard on Sunday.

## WEEK 1 BEGINNING MONDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY

### Mark 1:1-15

**1** The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, **2** as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way”—

**3** “a voice of one calling in the wilderness,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.’”

**4** And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. **6** John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **7** And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. **8** I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

**9** At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. **11** And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

**12** At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, **13** and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

**14** After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. **15** “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

## **OBSERVATIONS**

(mark up the text, ask questions, look at the flow of the passage, share what stands out to you)

## **INTERPRETATION**

(Answer questions raised and understanding the text more)

## **KEY VERSE**

(What is the big idea of this passage?)

## **APPLICATION**

(This is based on the Key above. What does this mean for us?)

## **ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS**

What are the implications of Jesus' title "Messiah" or "King" in the lives of His followers?

What are the implications of His being "the Son of God"?

How is John's humble message about Christ similar to what we should tell others about Christ? How is our message different? What is your Gospel message to people?

## **PRAYER**

Eternal God,

at the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan

you proclaimed him your beloved Son,

and anointed him with the Holy Spirit:

grant that all who are baptised into his name

may keep the covenant they have made,

and boldly confess him as Lord and Saviour;

who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,

one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

**SERMON REFLECTIONS**

## WEEK 2 BEGINNING MONDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

### Mark 1:14-2:5

<sup>14</sup> After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. <sup>15</sup> “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

<sup>16</sup> As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup> “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” <sup>18</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him.

<sup>19</sup> When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. <sup>20</sup> Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

<sup>21</sup> They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. <sup>22</sup> The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. <sup>23</sup> Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, <sup>24</sup> “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

<sup>25</sup> “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” <sup>26</sup> The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

<sup>27</sup> The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” <sup>28</sup> News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

<sup>29</sup> As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. <sup>30</sup> Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. <sup>31</sup> So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

<sup>32</sup> That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door, <sup>34</sup> and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

<sup>35</sup> Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. <sup>36</sup> Simon and his companions went to look for him, <sup>37</sup> and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

<sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” <sup>39</sup> So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

<sup>40</sup> A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.”



<sup>41</sup> Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" <sup>42</sup> Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

<sup>43</sup> Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: <sup>44</sup> "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." <sup>45</sup> Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

**2** A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. <sup>2</sup> They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. <sup>4</sup> Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

## OBSERVATIONS

(mark up the text, ask questions, look at the flow of the passage, share what stands out to you)

## INTERPRETATION

(Answer questions raised and understanding the text more)

## KEY VERSE

(What is the big idea of this passage?)

## APPLICATION

(This is based on the Key above. What does this mean for us?)

### **ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS**

Make a note of all the things Jesus initiates versus what is asked of Him. What does this tell us about Jesus' priorities?

What is the difference between circumstances and needs? How can the church avoid getting caught up in addressing circumstances and focus on the true needs of people?

In the last miracle account (2:1-5), what relationship did Jesus' forgiving the man's sin have with healing his body? How might you extend this thinking with the cross and Jesus' resurrection?

### **PRAYER**

O God, the fount of wisdom,  
you have revealed to us in Christ the hidden treasure and pearl of great price:  
grant us your Spirit's gift of discernment,  
that, in the midst of the things of this world,  
we may learn to value the priceless worth of your kingdom,  
and be ready to renounce all else for the sake of the precious gift you offer.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **SERMON REFLECTIONS**

## WEEK 3 BEGINNING MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

### Mark 4:1-20

**4** Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. **2** He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: **3** "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. **4** As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. **5** Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. **6** But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. **7** Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. **8** Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

**9** Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

**10** When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. **11** He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables **12** so that,

"they may be ever seeing but never perceiving,  
and ever hearing but never understanding;  
otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"

**13** Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? **14** The farmer sows the word. **15** Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. **16** Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. **17** But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. **18** Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; **19** but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. **20** Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown."

## **OBSERVATIONS**

(mark up the text, ask questions, look at the flow of the passage, share what stands out to you)

## **INTERPRETATION**

(Answer questions raised and understanding the text more)

## **KEY VERSE**

(What is the big idea of this passage?)

## **APPLICATION**

(This is based on the Key above. What does this mean for us?)

## **ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS**

Why do some people call this the parable of the sower and some call it the parable of the soils? Which do you prefer, and why?

Why is this parable foundational to comprehending other parables?

Is one kind of soil prevalent in our culture? Is there a particular way we should present the Word of God that might make people more receptive? How can we change the presentation without changing the message?

## **PRAYER**

Eternal God,

through long generations you prepared a way

for the coming of your Son,

and by your Spirit you still bring light to illumine our paths:

renew us in faith and hope

that we may welcome Christ to rule our thoughts

St Matts, Term 1 2022 Studies in Mark

and claim our love;  
to whom be glory for ever. **Amen.**

## **SERMON REFLECTIONS**

## WEEK 4 BEGINNING MONDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY

### Mark 4:35-5:43

<sup>35</sup> That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." <sup>36</sup> Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. <sup>37</sup> A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. <sup>38</sup> Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

<sup>39</sup> He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

<sup>40</sup> He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

<sup>41</sup> They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

<sup>5</sup> They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. <sup>2</sup> When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. <sup>3</sup> This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. <sup>4</sup> For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. <sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

<sup>6</sup> When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. <sup>7</sup> He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" <sup>8</sup> For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"

<sup>9</sup> Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." <sup>10</sup> And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

<sup>11</sup> A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. <sup>12</sup> The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." <sup>13</sup> He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

<sup>14</sup> Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. <sup>15</sup> When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. <sup>16</sup> Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. <sup>17</sup> Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

<sup>18</sup> As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. <sup>19</sup> Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." <sup>20</sup> So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

<sup>21</sup> When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. <sup>22</sup> Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. <sup>23</sup> He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." <sup>24</sup> So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. <sup>25</sup> And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. <sup>26</sup> She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. <sup>27</sup> When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, <sup>28</sup> because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." <sup>29</sup> Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

<sup>30</sup> At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

<sup>31</sup> "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

<sup>32</sup> But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. <sup>33</sup> Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. <sup>34</sup> He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

<sup>35</sup> While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"

<sup>36</sup> Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

<sup>37</sup> He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. <sup>38</sup> When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup> He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." <sup>40</sup> But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. <sup>41</sup> He took her by the hand and said to her, "*Talitha koum!*" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). <sup>42</sup> Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. <sup>43</sup> He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

## OBSERVATIONS

## INTERPRETATION

## KEY VERSE

(What is the big idea of this passage?)

## APPLICATION

(This is based on the Key above. What does this mean for us?)

## ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS

What do you think Mark is trying to say by placing these four stories in a row?

There are a few questions asked in 4:35-41. How might they be answered?

Jesus commissions the ex-demon possessed man to tell others what He has done for Jesus (5:19). Try and imagine what his story would be. Are you able to tell your story about what the Lord has done for you? What would you say?

Pretend you are Jairus at 5:35, what would you be thinking at this point after Jesus had stopped to heal that other lady? Have you ever been frustrated with God's timing? Explain.

## PRAYER

All-powerful God,  
in Jesus Christ you tuned death into life,  
and defeat into victory:  
increase our faith and trust in him,  
that we may triumph over evil,  
in the strength of the same Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
on God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## SERMON REFLECTIONS



## WEEK 5 BEGINNING MONDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

### Mark 8:14-38

<sup>14</sup> The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. <sup>15</sup> "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."

<sup>16</sup> They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread."

<sup>17</sup> Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? <sup>18</sup> Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? <sup>19</sup> When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"

"Twelve," they replied.

<sup>20</sup> "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"

They answered, "Seven."

<sup>21</sup> He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

<sup>22</sup> They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. <sup>23</sup> He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"

<sup>24</sup> He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

<sup>25</sup> Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. <sup>26</sup> Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into the village."

<sup>27</sup> Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

<sup>28</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

<sup>29</sup> "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

<sup>30</sup> Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

<sup>31</sup> He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

<sup>33</sup> But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

<sup>34</sup> Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life

for me and for the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? <sup>37</sup> Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? <sup>38</sup> If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

### **OBSERVATIONS**

(mark up the text, ask questions, look at the flow of the passage, share what stands out to you)

### **INTERPRETATION**

(Answer questions raised and understanding the text more)

### **KEY VERSE**

(What is the big idea of this passage?)

### **APPLICATION**

(This is based on the Key above. What does this mean for us?)

### **ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS**

What do you think Mark is saying with placing the blind man's story in between the story of the warning about the yeast of the Pharisees and Peter's confession of who Jesus is?

Have you ever encountered someone who wouldn't accept your explanation of Christianity even if you used sound logic? What would it take to get through to such a person?

What do you suppose Peter was thinking when he rebuked Jesus (8:32)? What are man's concerns (8:33)?

**PRAYER**

Gracious God,

you have placed within the hearts of all your children

a longing for your word and hunger for your truth:

grant that, believing in the one whom you have sent,

we may know him to be the true bread of heaven and food of eternal life,

Jesus Christ our Lord,

to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be glory and honour

for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**SERMON REFLECTIONS**

## WEEK 6 BEGINNING MONDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

### Mark 9:2-13, 30-37

<sup>2</sup> After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. <sup>3</sup> His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” <sup>6</sup> (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

<sup>7</sup> Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

<sup>8</sup> Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup> They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what “rising from the dead” meant.

<sup>11</sup> And they asked him, “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?”

<sup>12</sup> Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? <sup>13</sup> But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him.”

...

<sup>30</sup> They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, <sup>31</sup> because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.” <sup>32</sup> But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

<sup>33</sup> They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” <sup>34</sup> But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

<sup>35</sup> Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

<sup>36</sup> He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup> “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

## **OBSERVATIONS**

(mark up the text, ask questions, look at the flow of the passage, share what stands out to you)

## **INTERPRETATION**

(Answer questions raised and understanding the text more)

## **KEY VERSE**

(What is the big idea of this passage?)

## **APPLICATION**

(This is based on the Key above. What does this mean for us?)

## **ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS**

In what sense was Jesus changed in the transfiguration, and in what sense was He unchanged?

How would the transfiguration have given Jesus greater resolve to continue on His path to the cross?

How does the command to listen to Jesus alone, and not Moses or Elijah, affect our view of the prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament?

How are Christians to be like a child but not childish?

## **PRAYER**

Eternal God, our glorious King,  
whose Son Jesus Christ was transfigured on the holy mountain  
and seen in splendour by his chosen witnesses:  
grant us, his followers, faith to perceive his glory,  
to listen to him, and walk in his way,

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that we may be changed into his likeness from glory to glory;  
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **SERMON REFLECTIONS**

## WEEK 7 BEGINNING MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

### Mark 10:35-52

<sup>35</sup> Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

<sup>36</sup> "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

<sup>37</sup> They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

<sup>38</sup> "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

<sup>39</sup> "We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, <sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."

<sup>41</sup> When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. <sup>42</sup> Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> 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."

<sup>46</sup> Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging. <sup>47</sup> When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

<sup>48</sup> Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

<sup>49</sup> Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." <sup>50</sup> Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

<sup>51</sup> "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

<sup>52</sup> "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

(mark up the text, ask questions, look at the flow of the passage, share what stands out to you)

## **INTERPRETATION**

(Answer questions raised and understanding the text more)

## **KEY VERSE**

(What is the big idea of this passage?)

## **APPLICATION**

(This is based on the Key above. What does this mean for us?)

## **ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS**

How does servanthood go against human nature? How does it compare with what advertisements/social media compel us to think of ourselves?

How would you answer someone who asked you, "Why did Jesus have to die?"

Previously when Jesus healed a blind man (8:22-26), He touched him, applied saliva, and accomplished it in two stages. Here Jesus simply speaks and it is done. Why did Jesus do the same thing in two different ways? What point was He making?

In what sense are we all blind until Jesus heals us?

## **PRAYER**

Loving Father,

whose Son Jesus Christ has taught us

that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters

we do also for him:

give us the will to be the servant of all,



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who gave up his life and died for us,  
and yet lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **SERMON REFLECTIONS**

## WEEK 8 BEGINNING MONDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> MARCH

### Mark 11:1-11, 12:1-17

**11** As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, **2** saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. **3** If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"

**4** They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, **5** some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" **6** They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. **7** When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. **8** Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. **9** Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

**10** "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

**11** Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

...

**12** Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. **2** At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. **3** But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. **4** Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. **5** He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

**6** "He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

**7** "But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' **8** So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

**9** "What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. **10** Haven't you read this passage of Scripture:

"The stone the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone;

**11** the Lord has done this,  
and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

<sup>12</sup> Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

<sup>13</sup> Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. <sup>14</sup> They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? <sup>15</sup> Should we pay or shouldn't we?"

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?" he asked. "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." <sup>16</sup> They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

<sup>17</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

And they were amazed at him.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

(mark up the text, ask questions, look at the flow of the passage, share what stands out to you)

### **INTERPRETATION**

(Answer questions raised and understanding the text more)

### **KEY VERSE**

(What is the big idea of this passage?)

### **APPLICATION**

(This is based on the Key above. What does this mean for us?)

**ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS**

What kind of Messiah did the people expect and want? What kind of saviour do people want today—what do they want relief from? How does Jesus exceed those expectations?

Why did Jesus use parables as a teaching method? Why did He use a parable in this particular case?

What did the tenant farmers think they would gain from killing the landlord's son? What did the Jewish leaders hope to gain by killing Jesus? What did they in fact accomplish?

**PRAYER**

Everlasting God,  
in your tender love for the human race  
you sent your Son to take our nature,  
and to suffer death upon the cross:  
in your mercy  
enable us to share in his obedience to your will  
and in the glorious victory of his resurrection;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**SERMON REFLECTIONS**

## WEEK 9 BEGINNING MONDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

### Mark 13:1-37

**13** As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!”

**2** “Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

**3** As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, **4** “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”

**5** Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. **6** Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many. **7** When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. **8** Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

**9** “You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. **10** And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. **11** Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

**12** “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. **13** Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

**14** “When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. **15** Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out. **16** Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. **17** How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! **18** Pray that this will not take place in winter, **19** because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again.

**20** “If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. **21** At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. **22** For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. **23** So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

**24** “But in those days, following that distress, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light;

**25** the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’

**26** “At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. **27** And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

**28** “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. **29** Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. **30** Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. **31** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

**32** “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **33** Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. **34** It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

**35** “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. **36** If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. **37** What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

### **OBSERVATIONS**

(mark up the text, ask questions, look at the flow of the passage, share what stands out to you)

### **INTERPRETATION**

(Answer questions raised and understanding the text more)

### **KEY VERSE**

(What is the big idea of this passage?)

### **APPLICATION**

(This is based on the Key above. What does this mean for us?)

### **ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS**

Are there parts of the end times, as you understand prophecy, that frighten you? If there are, what are they?

In what context should you not “worry beforehand what you will say”? Does this mean we should not practice our testimony, study apologetics, or prepare for hypothetical theological debates?

How would you respond to someone who says he knows the precise date when Jesus will return? How would you respond to someone who says that Jesus could not come tomorrow because the things that are supposed to occur first have not happened?

### **PRAYER**

Eternal God,

you have taught us that the night is far spent and the day is at hand:

keep us awake and alert, watching for your kingdom,

so that when Christ, the bridegroom, comes

we may go out joyfully to meet him,

and with him enter into the marriage feast

that you have prepared for all who truly love you;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

on God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **SERMON REFLECTIONS**

## WEEK 10 BEGINNING MONDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

### Mark 14:1-26

**1** Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. **2** “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

**3** While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

**4** Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? **5** It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

**6** “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. **7** The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. **8** She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. **9** Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

**10** Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. **11** They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

**12** On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus’ disciples asked him, “Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

**13** So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. **14** Say to the owner of the house he enters, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ **15** He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.”

**16** The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

**17** When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. **18** While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.”

**19** They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, “Surely you don’t mean me?”

**20** “It is one of the Twelve,” he replied, “one who dips bread into the bowl with me. **21** The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

**22** While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.”

**23** Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.



**24** "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. **25** "Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

**26** When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

(mark up the text, ask questions, look at the flow of the passage, share what stands out to you)

## **INTERPRETATION**

(Answer questions raised and understanding the text more)

## **KEY VERSE**

(What is the big idea of this passage?)

## **APPLICATION**

(This is based on the Key above. What does this mean for us?)

## **ADDITIONAL (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS**

What is the balance between practical, responsible stewardship and radical, extravagant giving? How do we avoid using the former as an excuse to escape the latter?

Why might the Last Supper also be called the First Supper? What did Jesus inaugurate?

In what way did all the disciples betray Jesus? In what way has every person betrayed Him and put Him on the cross? How can that betrayal be forgiven?

## **PRAYER**

O God,

in a wonderful sacrament

you have given us a memorial of the passion of your dear Son:  
grant that we may so reverence  
the sacred mysteries of his body and blood  
that we may ever know within ourselves the fruits of his redemption;  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **SERMON REFLECTIONS**

## WEEK 11 BEGINNING MONDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

### Mark 14-15

This week, at the start of school holidays, your group may want to just read, or better sit and listen to a recording of these two chapters and afterwards reflect on any lasting impressions from this account. On YouTube there is audio of David Suchet reading Mark, along with other audio versions on common Bible apps (eg, YouVersion, Bible.is)

**14** Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. **2** “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

**3** While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

**4** Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume? **5** It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.” And they rebuked her harshly.

**6** “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. **7** The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. **8** She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. **9** Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

**10** Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. **11** They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

**12** On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus’ disciples asked him, “Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

**13** So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. **14** Say to the owner of the house he enters, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ **15** He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.”

**16** The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

**17** When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. **18** While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.”

**19** They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, “Surely you don’t mean me?”

**20** “It is one of the Twelve,” he replied, “one who dips bread into the bowl with me. **21** The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

**22** While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.”

**23** Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

**24** “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them. **25** “Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

**26** When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

**27** “You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written:

“‘I will strike the shepherd,  
and the sheep will be scattered.’”

**28** But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

**29** Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.”

**30** “Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.”

**31** But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same.

**32** They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” **33** He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. **34** “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

**35** Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. **36** “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

**37** Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Couldn’t you keep watch for one hour? **38** Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

**39** Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. **40** When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

**41** Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. **42** Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

**43** Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

**44** Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” **45** Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. **46** The men seized Jesus and arrested him. **47** Then

one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

**48** “Am I leading a rebellion,” said Jesus, “that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? **49** Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” **50** Then everyone deserted him and fled.

**51** A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, **52** he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

**53** They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together. **54** Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

**55** The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. **56** Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

**57** Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: **58** “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’” **59** Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

**60** Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” **61** But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

**62** “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

**63** The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. **64** “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

They all condemned him as worthy of death. **65** Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, “Prophecy!” And the guards took him and beat him.

**66** While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. **67** When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

“You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said.

**68** But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway.

**69** When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” **70** Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”

**71** He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”

<sup>72</sup> Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times." And he broke down and wept.

**15** Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

<sup>2</sup> "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate.

"You have said so," Jesus replied.

<sup>3</sup> The chief priests accused him of many things. <sup>4</sup> So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of."

<sup>5</sup> But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

<sup>6</sup> Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. <sup>7</sup> A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. <sup>8</sup> The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

<sup>9</sup> "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, <sup>10</sup> knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. <sup>11</sup> But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

<sup>12</sup> "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them.

<sup>13</sup> "Crucify him!" they shouted.

<sup>14</sup> "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

<sup>15</sup> Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

<sup>16</sup> The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. <sup>17</sup> They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. <sup>18</sup> And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" <sup>19</sup> Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. <sup>20</sup> And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

<sup>21</sup> A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. <sup>22</sup> They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). <sup>23</sup> Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. <sup>24</sup> And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

<sup>25</sup> It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. <sup>26</sup> The written notice of the charge against him read: the king of the jews.

<sup>27</sup> They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>[28]</sup> <sup>29</sup> Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and

saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, <sup>30</sup> come down from the cross and save yourself!" <sup>31</sup> In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! <sup>32</sup> Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

<sup>33</sup> At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. <sup>34</sup> And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

<sup>35</sup> When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

<sup>36</sup> Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

<sup>37</sup> With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

<sup>38</sup> The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup> And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

<sup>40</sup> Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. <sup>41</sup> In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

<sup>42</sup> It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. <sup>44</sup> Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. <sup>45</sup> When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. <sup>46</sup> So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. <sup>47</sup> Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.

## REFLECTION

From listening to this account what strands out to you? Share what you are thinking and feeling from hearing this passage.

## REFERENCES

Some of the application questions have been written for this booklet, while others have been taken from the following resources:

- Be Diligent (Mark) by Warren W. Wiersbe
- Exalting Jesus in Mark by Daniel L. Akin

Bible text is from the NIV 2011.