

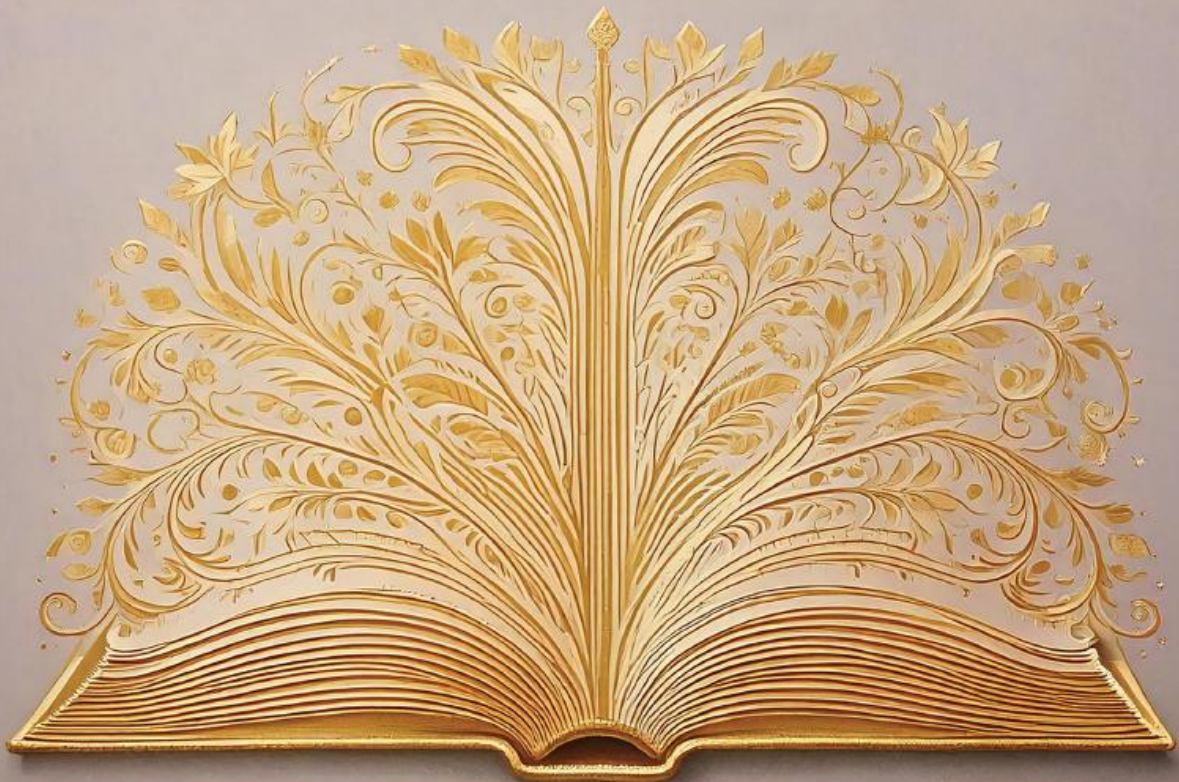
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LIFEGROUP STUDIES

TERM 2, 2025

The **King** and **His** **Disciples**



Contents

About this series	3
About these studies	4
Mark 8:22-38 - Taking up crosses Authority	5
Mark 9:1-29 – Hearing and Trusting Jesus	9
Mark 9:30-50 – Greatness through Humility.....	14
Mark 10:1-14 – Bigger than Divorce	18
Mark 10:17-34 – The Eternal Question.....	22
Mark 10:35-52 – The Need to See.....	27
Mark 11:27-12:12 – Questions and Response.....	31
Mark 12:13-35 – Traps, Questions, Responses	35
Mark 12:38-44 – How much is Jesus worth to you?	39
Mark 13:1-37 – Be Ready for the Return of the King	42
1 Cor 15:1-28 - The Gospel is of First Importance	47
References and Resources.....	51

About this series

The Gospel of Mark, traditionally attributed to John Mark, offers a vivid, action-packed account of Jesus' life and ministry. According to early church tradition recorded by Papias, Mark wrote his Gospel in close consultation with the Apostle Peter, lending the book apostolic authority despite Mark not being one of the twelve disciples. Likely composed to meet the early church's need for a written record of Jesus' ministry, Mark's narrative also reflects a clear evangelistic purpose, prioritizing rapid storytelling and a relentless progression toward the cross.

Scholars suggest Mark's Gospel was the earliest written account, serving as a source for Matthew and Luke. Its simple, immediate style and numerous Latin terms suggest it was written for a Roman audience. Though the date is debated, it was likely composed before Jerusalem's fall in A.D. 70, possibly as early as A.D. 45. If Luke used Mark and completed his Gospel during Paul's Roman imprisonment, Mark had to have been written by A.D. 60.

Thematically, Mark addresses humanity's existential dilemmas—balancing hope and progress against suffering and destruction—by pointing to the resolution of these paradoxes through Jesus Christ. The broken relationship between humanity and God stands at the heart of this struggle, and Mark presents Jesus as the unique figure who bridges this divide.

Structurally, the Gospel has two main sections. The first half (chapters 1–8) alternates between Jesus' growing popularity and rising opposition from Jewish leaders, creating an atmosphere of optimism. However, a shift occurs at Caesarea Philippi (8:27–31), where Jesus reveals his destiny as the suffering Messiah. His disciples' struggles with faith and understanding deepen as the narrative progresses toward the crucifixion.

Mark's Gospel is rich with thematic markers, such as repeated emphasis on spiritual blindness and transitional verses (e.g., 3:6, 6:6a, 8:21) that build tension in Jesus' mission. Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus is the Christ (8:29) and the Roman centurion's declaration, "Surely this man was the Son of God" (15:39), bookend the Gospel's central paradox. These declarations reveal that Jesus' identity as Messiah and Son of God is fully understood not in power, but in his suffering and apparent defeat. Through the cross, Mark declares, Jesus achieves ultimate victory.

About these studies

We're continuing our series in Mark, focusing on Jesus and His disciples in the latter half of this Gospel. In this section, Jesus teaches His disciples about Himself, His mission, the Kingdom of God, and what it means to follow Him.

After Easter, we will take a five-week break from Mark to look at Philippians. Then, on June 1st, we will resume our Mark series, starting with the final study from the previous booklet (Mark 8:22–38). This study is duplicated in this booklet

This booklet is designed to be flexible. Your group can follow the Sunday sermon series or begin the Mark studies ahead of schedule. While Mark 14 and 15 will be covered on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, your group may also choose to conclude the series by studying those chapters together.

This booklet uses the SOAP framework: Scripture, Observations, Application, and Prayer, with subheadings to guide your study.

- **Scripture:** We believe Scripture is clear and understandable. By engaging directly with the text, we can explore what it says and discern its meaning for us today.
- **Observation:** As we examine the text, questions may arise. Some answers might not be in the text, and we must let the passage guide us, not impose our biases. The goal is to identify the passage's main idea—whether a key verse or a timeless principle.
- **Application:** Scripture, empowered by the Spirit, transforms us. From our observations, we ask what to believe or how to act, aiming for practical, everyday application.
- **Prayer:** Group prayer should reflect on the text and application, thanking God for His word and asking for help to live it out.

For those finding the text or method challenging, additional questions are included for deeper reflection. Specifically, in this series two key questions to ask every week are “What does this tell us about Jesus?” and “What does this tell us about following him?”

I'll be praying for you and your group as you continue looking at our Saviour, Jesus Christ. May your affections for Him deepen, and may your actions increasingly reflect who He is.

Andrew Vella

Mark 8:22-38 - Taking up crosses Authority

Scripture

²² They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. ²³ 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?"

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

²⁵ 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. ²⁶ Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into the village."

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

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

²⁹ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹ 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. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ 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."

³⁴ 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. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ³⁸ 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

Questions from the text

What verses are unclear? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse/idea does this whole passage hang off, and why?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us today?

Extra Questions

1. What do we learn about Jesus and who He is?

2. Why do you think Jesus asked about His identity at this point? Why do you think Jesus asked the two questions in the order He did?
3. How is Peter like the blind man? What do you suppose Peter was thinking when he rebuked Jesus (8:32)? What are man's concerns (8:33)?
4. Who do you say Jesus is?
5. What does it mean to follow Christ and to take up your cross?
6. How can we make sure we "have in mind the things of God"?

Prayer

Thank God for the truth in this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live out that truth.

Sermon Notes

Mark 9:1-29 – Hearing and Trusting Jesus

Scripture

And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

²After 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. ³His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

⁵Peter 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.” ⁶(He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

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

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

⁹As 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.

¹⁰They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what “rising from the dead” meant.

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

¹²Jesus 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?

¹³But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him.”

¹⁴When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. ¹⁵As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

¹⁶“What are you arguing with them about?” he asked.

¹⁷A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. ¹⁸Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”

¹⁹“You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”

²⁰ So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

²¹ Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"

"From childhood," he answered. ²² "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

²³ " 'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes."

²⁴ Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

²⁵ When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

²⁶ The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

²⁸ After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

²⁹ He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."

Observations

Questions from the text

What verses are unclear? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse/idea does this whole passage hang off, and why?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us today?

Extra Questions

1. What do we learn about who Jesus is?
2. Up the mountain, Jesus doesn't say a word, but the voice says we should listen to Him. In this context, what are the disciples to hear, what are we to hear from Jesus? How can you listen closely to Christ this week?
3. Was there a moment in your life when Jesus suddenly was revealed to you as the glorious and holy God? Share that moment with someone this week.
4. What does Jesus mean about rising from the dead and that Elijah has come?
5. How did this lesson after the transfiguration bring them down to earth from their mountaintop experience?

6. How does turning to Jesus with questions and doubts demonstrate at least small faith rather than no faith at all (v24)? What would no faith look like?

Prayer

Thank God for the truth in this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live out that truth.

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,
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 Notes

Mark 9:30-50 – Greatness through Humility

Due to an additional sermon on 1 Corinthians 15 being added to the schedule, this passage will not be looked at on Sunday. Your Life Group is welcome to use this study to keep with Mark, or do the study on 1 Corinthians 15 at the end of this booklet.

Scripture

³⁰ They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, ³¹ 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.” ³² But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

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

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

³⁶ He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ “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.”

³⁸ “Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

³⁹ “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, ⁴⁰ for whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹ Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

⁴² “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. ⁴³ If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. ^[44] ⁴⁵ And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. ^[46] ⁴⁷ And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸ where

“ ‘the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched.’

⁴⁹ Everyone will be salted with fire.

⁵⁰ “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”

Observations

Questions from the text

What verses are unclear? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse/idea does this whole passage hang off, and why?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us today?

Extra Questions

1. What do we learn about Jesus and His teaching?

2. What does the disciples' argument tell you about their understanding of who Jesus was and why He had come? (9:33–34)
3. Why do you think Jesus used a child to illustrate His point?
4. Why did Jesus not mind others, who were not part of His group of disciples, performing miracles in His name (9:40)? How can we support cooperation among Christians and churches today?
5. What does this passage teach about the kingdom of God? (9:43–47)
6. How can we allow the message of not causing others to stumble to shape our behaviour towards fellow believers?

Prayer

Thank God for the truth in this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live out that truth.

O God,
your Son has taught us
that those who give a cup of water in his name
will not lose their reward:
open our eyes to see those who are in need,
and teach us to set no store by riches and earthly rewards,
so that, in surrendering ourselves to serve you
in your children,
we may labour for the treasure that endures;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sermon Notes

Mark 10:1-14 – Bigger than Divorce

Scripture

Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

² Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

³ “What did Moses command you?” he replied.

⁴ They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”

⁵ “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. ⁶ “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ⁷ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, ⁸ and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

¹⁰ When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. ¹¹ He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. ¹² And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Observations

Questions from the text

What verses are unclear? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse/idea does this whole passage hang off, and why?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us today?

Extra Questions

1. What do we learn about Jesus and His teachings?
2. What was God's original plan for marriage before sin entered the picture? (10:6–9)
3. What is the difference in the Bible between regulating divorce on the one hand and sanctioning or affirming divorce on the other?
4. Why do you think the disciples asked Jesus about their question privately?
5. How can we sustain and help married people? For what couple can you pray every day this week?

6. Who does the Kingdom belong to? How might we be more like those this week?

Prayer

Thank God for the truth in this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live out that truth.

Loving God,
you have made us in your own image,
creating us male and female,
and you have consecrated the covenant of marriage
so that in it is signified the spiritual marriage between Christ
and his Church:
pour out your grace upon all who are called to this holy state,
that, keeping their promises of faithfulness to each other,
they may reflect in their lives your love for us all;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sermon Notes

Mark 10:17-34 – The Eternal Question

Scripture

¹⁷ As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”

²⁰ “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

²² At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”

²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”

²⁸ Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”

²⁹ “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

³² They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. ³³ “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to

death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

Observations

Questions from the text

What verses are unclear? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse/idea does this whole passage hang off, and why?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us today?

Extra Questions

1. What do we learn about Jesus and His teaching?

2. What was the attitude in which the rich man approached Jesus and then how did he leave after talking with Jesus? Why is this?
3. How would you answer the question in verse 23? How would you explain how someone can enter the Kingdom of God?
4. Is wealth evidence of God's favour? How can it also be an impediment to salvation? What determines your own ideas about money? How can we help those distracted by wealth to have a different attitude towards possessions?
5. What steps can we take to ensure that we place a value on eternal things and not material things?
6. What news did Jesus tell His disciples for the third time?
7. How is it significant that Jesus "was leading the way" to Jerusalem in light of this news? Why was Christ willingly going to Jerusalem when He knew what was going to happen there? How would you explain this in two sentences?

Prayer

Thank God for the truth in this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live out that truth.

Merciful God,
in your Son you call not the righteous
but sinners to repentance:

draw us away from the easy road that leads to destruction,
and guide us into paths that lead to life abundant,
that in seeking your truth, and obeying your will,
we may know the joy of being a disciple of Jesus our Saviour;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Sermon Notes

Mark 10:35-52 – The Need to See

Scripture

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

³⁶ “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

³⁷ They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

³⁸ “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?”

³⁹ “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, ⁴⁰ 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.”

⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. ⁴² 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. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ 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.”

⁴⁶ 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. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.”

⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

⁵² “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Observations

Questions from the text

What verses are unclear? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse/idea does this whole passage hang off, and why?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us today?

Extra Questions

1. What do we learn about Jesus and His teaching?
2. What cup is Jesus talking about in verse 38 and 39? How is this the same and different for Jesus?

3. How is Jesus an example for us in service and humility and sacrifice? How is He different?
4. How does servanthood go against human nature? How does it compare with what advertisements/social media compel us to think of ourselves?
5. How would you answer someone who asked you, “Why did Jesus have to die?” What did Jesus say was His reason for coming?
6. In what sense are we all blind until Jesus heals us? Do you remember when you did ‘see’ Jesus? How would you explain that to someone?

Prayer

Thank God for the truth in this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live out that truth.

O God,
you gave light to the blind and comfort to the sorrowing,
and in your Son you have given us
a High Priest who has offered the true sacrifice for us
and yet can sympathise with us in our weakness:
hear the cry of your people
and lead us home to our true country,
where with your Son and the Holy Spirit
you live and reign, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Sermon Notes

Mark 11:27-12:12 – Questions and Response

Scripture

²⁷ They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. ²⁸ “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you authority to do this?”

²⁹ Jesus replied, “I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ³⁰ John’s baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin? Tell me!”

³¹ They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ ³² But if we say, ‘Of human origin’ ...” (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.)

³³ So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

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’?”

¹² 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.

Observations

Questions from the text

What verses are unclear? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse/idea does this whole passage hang off, and why?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us today?

Extra Questions

1. What do we learn about Jesus and His teaching?

2. How did the religious leaders challenge Jesus' authority and how did Jesus answer their challenges? How might you answer Jesus' question in verse 30 and what does that mean for you?

3. 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 really accomplish?

4. Israel killed the prophets God sent. In what way are we guilty of crucifying Christ? How can you explain this to someone without them thinking Christians feel guilty all the time or have terrible self-esteem because Christ died for them?

Prayer

Thank God for the truth in this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live out that truth.

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 Notes

Mark 12:13-35 – Traps, Questions, Responses

Scripture

¹³ Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. ¹⁴ 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? ¹⁵ 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.” ¹⁶ They brought the coin, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ¹⁹ “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁰ Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. ²¹ The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. ²² In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. ²³ At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?”

²⁴ Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? ²⁵ When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ²⁶ Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

²⁹ “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The

second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

³² "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

³⁵ While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David?"

Observations

Questions from the text

What verses are unclear? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse/idea does this whole passage hang off, and why?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us today?

Extra Questions

1. What do we learn about Jesus and His teaching?
2. What does this story teach about being patriotic or obedient to your country?
3. What difference does it make to you that God “is not the God of the dead, but of the living”?
4. How does a person’s love for God manifest itself in everyday life?
5. Who is one neighbour to whom you can show your love in a practical way this week? How?

Prayer

Thank God for the truth in this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live out that truth.

Eternal God,
you have taught us through Christ
that love is the fulfilment of the law:
help us to love you with all our heart, with all our soul,

with all our mind, and with all our strength,
and our neighbour as ourself;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Sermon Notes

Mark 12:38-44 – How much is Jesus worth to you?

Scripture

³⁸ As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Observations

Questions from the text

What verses are unclear? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse/idea does this whole passage hang off, and why?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us today?

Extra Questions

1. What do we learn about Jesus and His teaching?
2. What can we do to avoid being showy about our faith, but also live in an authentic way to the watching world?
3. What has been your attitude towards giving your money to the Lord? What else does God want from us besides our material wealth?
4. How can you ensure that your attitude and motivation is right when you give to the Lord this week?

Prayer

Thank God for the truth in this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live out that truth.

Living God, Judge of us all,
you have placed in our hands the wealth we call our own:
through your Spirit give us wisdom,
that our possessions may not be a curse,
but a means of blessing in our lives.
Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermon Notes

Mark 13:1-37 – Be Ready for the Return of the King

Scripture

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

Questions from the text

What verses are unclear? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse/idea does this whole passage hang off, and why?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us today?

Extra Questions

1. What do we learn about Jesus and His teaching?
2. Are there parts of the end times, as you understand prophecy, that frighten you? If there are, what are they?
3. 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?
4. How would you respond to someone who says they know 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

Thank God for the truth in this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live out that truth.

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 Notes

1 Cor 15:1-28 - The Gospel is of First Importance

Scripture

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹ Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his

enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. ²⁸When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

Observations

Questions from the text

What verses are unclear? Does the rest of the text help answer your questions?

Key

Which verse/idea does this whole passage hang off, and why?

Application

From the key above, what is this passage telling us today?

Extra Questions

1. From this passage, what is the Gospel?
2. How important is the resurrection?
3. What hope do you have in your own resurrection? How does this help as you live your day-to-day life or when you contemplate your own death?

Prayer

Thank God for the truth in this passage. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us live out that truth.

Brightness of God's glory,
whom death could not conquer nor the tomb imprison:
as you have shared our frailty in human flesh,
help us to share your immortality in the Spirit;
let no shadow of the grave terrify us,
and no fear of darkness turn our hearts from you.
Fill your Church with the power that flows from Christ's resurrection,
that, in the midst of this sinful world,
it may signal the beginning of a renewed humanity,
raised to new life with Christ;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sermon Notes

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All prayers have been taken from A Prayer Book for Australia.