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Essential
 **King Jesus:**
Studies in the
Gospel of Mark



Dr. Troy M. Borst

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ESSENTIAL KING
JESUS: STUDIES
IN THE GOSPEL
OF MARK

Dr. Troy M. Borst

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Church in Bloomfield, Indiana.*

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Dear Reader:

My prayer overall is that as you make your way through the Gospel of Mark, that you will encounter the Essential King Jesus and bolster your faith or perhaps find it for the first time.

And... in each chapter I want to share with one essential truth that is important for us to believe and then also communicate to others about Jesus.

We are going to focus on the Essential King Jesus.

Mark 1: You cannot be part of the Kingdom of God without Jesus.

Mark 2: Jesus has all authority and all power to forgive sins.

Mark 3: Jesus came to do the will of God.

Mark 4: Jesus casts out fear.

Mark 5: Jesus breaks our chains.

Mark 6: Jesus can be rejected.

Mark 7: Jesus distastes hypocrisy.

Mark 8: Jesus is the Christ.

Mark 9: Jesus only.

Mark 10: Jesus wants child-like faith in the Kingdom of God.

Mark 11: Jesus overturns sin to holiness.

Mark 12: Jesus expects yielded fruit.

Mark 13: Jesus is in control.

Mark 14: Jesus is the blood of the covenant.

Mark 15: Jesus is the forsaken.

Mark 16: Jesus is the resurrection.

CHAPTER 1 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS KINGDOM COMES

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Essential King Jesus:

You cannot be part of the Kingdom of God without Jesus.

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The word *essential* means ‘of the utmost importance.’ *Essential* also means ‘basic,’ ‘indispensable,’ and ‘necessary.’ We might say that air, food, and water are essential for life. Exercise and good nutrition are essential for good health. Gas is essential for a vehicle to continue working. Some of us might say companionship, joy, and clothing are essential for life as well.

Some things we think are essential are probably not. Shelter may or may not be necessary. I feel like people can and do live outside and all the people who camp prove shelter is overrated. Camping in our house is a big 🐾. The internet is not essential for life even though we may feel that it is an essential right. TV and movies are not essential. Except Stargate SG-1¹. That *is* essential.

In the past few years, the word *essential* got connected with the word ‘worker’ meaning “those who conduct a range of operations and services in industries that are essential to ensure the continuity of critical functions in

¹ Yes it is.

the United States.”² During the height of COVID in 2020, if you were *essential* you kept your job and if not, you perhaps lost your job.

Essential is not a bad word in and of itself, but we may not like it especially if someone somewhere in a high-rise office termed us *non-essential*.

BACKGROUND ABOUT THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Before we get too far into the Gospel of Mark, I’d like to share a little background about the Gospel.

Eusebius, one of the earliest Christian historians, tells us (Ecclesiastical History iii.39.15) that Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (around 140 AD) said: “Mark, having become Peter’s interpreter, wrote down accurately, though not in order, all that he remembered of the things either said or done by Christ... he was careful to omit nothing of what he has heard or to make any false statements.”

Mark, also known as John Mark, was a young man who accompanied the Apostle Paul on a few of his journeys (Acts 12, 13, 15). He is the author of the Gospel.

He became an associate of the Apostle Peter and received all the information in his account from Peter. In fact, 1 Peter 5:13 (ESV) says: “*She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.*” Peter means “*my son in the Gospel*” and was Peter’s close friend.

² <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/categories-essential-workers.html>

He also probably was the actual one who wrote down the words of 1 and 2 Peter as Peter dictated the letters to him. I find this important in that this Gospel account... this telling of the life and events and teaching and miracles and conversations we have written in Mark... come right from someone who walked and talked with Jesus.

The Gospel of Mark is the recollections and testimony of Simon Peter. That is trustworthy!

I find that interesting and important as we look through these trustworthy chapters over the coming chapters and discover the **Essential King Jesus**.

MARK CHAPTER 1

There is quite a lot of significant information, theology, and truth in Mark 1:

- We see John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus' ministry (1:1-8).
- We reflect on the baptism of Jesus (1:9-11) which begins His public ministry.
- Jesus of Nazareth is driven into the desert and tempted by Satan after His baptism (1:12-13).
- We read Jesus beginning His ministry in verses 14-15.
- Jesus calls His first disciples, who I might add, includes Simon Peter (1:16-20).

- Jesus heals a man with an unclean spirit (1:21-28).
- We then have some summary verses about Jesus healing, teaching, and travelling (1:29-39).
- The chapter concludes with Jesus healing a leper in a profound way (1:40-45).

I'd like us to focus on verses 14-15.

MARK 1:14-15 (ESV)

“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.””

As we look at these two verses, we see Jesus beginning His ministry with a bang. His words are spot on and direct our focus on God and His Kingdom.

THE TIME IS FULFILLED

When the leaves turn color and fall from the trees, we know winter is near. If you are trekking through the woods and smell smoke in the air, you are close to a campfire. The traffic light turns yellow to warn you that the light is about to turn red and you need to speed up to make it through.

When there is a full moon, you can be warned people will be crazier than normal and werewolves will be out and about. Thunder is a signal that lightning is in the area and rain probably will fall. Your stomach growls and

signals your body that you are hungry and a meal will soon follow.

When the brakes on your vehicle squeal, that is a signal the pads are wearing down. When a junior high boy starts showering regularly and uses cologne, you know there is a girl. When contractions start and water breaks, you know a baby is on the way.

There are signals for all kinds of things that changes will occur, the pattern of life will shift, or something is about to break.

This is true for many things.

In Mark 1:14-15, Jesus tells us that '*the time is fulfilled*' and there are signals that all that He is about to do has come.

I see two meanings in Jesus' words.

WORLD IS PREPARED PRACTICALLY FOR THE GOSPEL

I think He firstly means that the world is prepared practically for the Gospel message. In Jesus' day, most Jewish people were part of the Roman Empire and they were always looking for relief from the oppression of the Romans.

They wanted a Savior.
They wanted a Deliverer.

In addition, even though they were indeed conquerors, the Roman Empire brought peace, stability and their

version of civilization to much of the world including the spreading of common language and common money. The Romans built major roads for travel and commerce between regions, established a mail system for communication, laid out towns with streets, running water and sewage disposal, and had a system of justice that protected its citizens. All of this created a unified world in ways it had never been before. This provided a wonderful canvas for God to bring the Gospel to be spread.³

GOD'S PLAN IN COMING TO FRUITION

I think secondly, Jesus Christ says that the time for Him to begin His day to day mission towards the cross is to begin because the plan God has been weaving since before the Garden of Eden is coming true. Make no mistake, the cross of Christ was always His ultimate destination and His journey to the cross begins in this passage.

The time is fulfilled...

John the Baptist prepared as much of the way as he could. Jesus will now reveal Himself slowly as the Christ.

Old Testament prophecies have been fulfilled.

Jesus is now ready to preach about God and His Kingdom.

We do not know much about Jesus' life from His birth to this time when He is thirty years old and begins His ministry. We *do* know that He was on task and preparing Himself. We know that because when He was twelve years old there was an incident recorded in the Gospel of Luke.

³ The historical term for this is 'Pax Romana.' You're welcome!

After the incident, Luke records...

LUKE 2:51-52 (ESV)

“And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And His mother treasured up all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.”

Jesus of Nazareth spent His life increasing in the wisdom of God. He spent His life growing up. He spent His life living without sin and growing in favor with God the Father. He learned the trade of Joseph, the carpenter, and grew in favor with the people around Him. Jesus spent His first thirty years preparing for the last three of His life.

The time is fulfilled...

Jesus will now reveal Himself slowly as the Christ. Jesus is now ready to preach about God and His Kingdom. Jesus would begin to do miracles and point people to God. Jesus would teach and mold those closest to Him.

We see from this first statement that Jesus is on target and says that it is the proper time to begin His ministry and to begin the final stage of God’s plan to bring about salvation for those who would believe.

The Gospel, or Good News, is that: God, the loving Father, sent Jesus the Perfect Sinless Son, to die on the cross that we might have eternal life and a restored relationship with God in spite of our sinfulness. Once we believe, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to walk as Jesus walked and to live free and personally connected with Him.

Jesus comes and begins preaching the Gospel.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND

MARK 1:14-15 (ESV)

“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Keeping Mark 1:14-15 in view, we secondly see that Jesus says ‘*the kingdom of God is at hand.*’

What is this ‘*kingdom*’ He is talking about? The phrase ‘*Kingdom of God*’ can mean a few different things depending on the context of how it is used and some of the meanings overlap. It’s complicated.

The Kingdom of God is Jesus Christ and faith in Him.

The Kingdom of God is all of the promises God has made and kept with humanity.

The Kingdom of God is all of those who believe in Jesus and live for Him... the Church.

The Kingdom of God means Heaven.

The Kingdom of God means the way of life that Jesus teaches and shows by His example.

The Kingdom of God means *all of that* and Jesus says that because He is standing before them, the Kingdom of God

is at hand. There is a complicated [*now but not yet*] flavor to these verses. Jesus Christ is standing before the people preaching and healing and showing the way to God, but everything has not yet been fulfilled. Even now (in our present day) the Kingdom of God is here as we are His Church, but there are some parts of the Kingdom that have not yet been made real for us... notably the Second Coming of Jesus and our eternal life with Him in Heaven.

The Kingdom of God happened *then*. Jesus of Nazareth stood and was the crucial hinge on everything God was doing to seek us and save us. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life and no one enters into the Kingdom except by believing in what He has done (John 14:6). Jesus' teachings explain the Kingdom. Jesus' miracles showed the power of the Kingdom. Jesus on the cross brought forth the entrance to the Kingdom. The resurrection of Jesus affirmed the promise of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God happened *then*.

The Kingdom of God is happening *now*. You and I have the opportunity, as do all the people we know and all the people on this earth we do not know, to hear the Gospel and to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. That happens now. That happens every generation. The Gospel is spreading out until every tribe and tongue and people have heard the message that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. The Kingdom of God is happening *now*.

The Kingdom of God will happen *later*. In the future, new believers in Christ will stand on our shoulders and receive the Gospel from us. In the future, there will come a time when the fullness of time again has come and Jesus Christ

will return in power and Judgment Day will happen. Life in Heaven with God Forever will be offered to those who believe in Jesus. The Kingdom of God will happen *later*.

I think the Kingdom of God is a little bit like a meal at a nice sit-down restaurant with hors d'oeuvres⁴ or appeteeezers. You get the appeteeezer so you know you are having a meal, but the meal is still being prepared and is not quite at your table. *Now, but not yet*. When the waiter or waitress cleans up your starter dishes, you know the meal is at hand. When the waiter or waitress brings the foldable table close to the hungry patrons for the food, you know the meal is at hand. *There, but not yet*.

For those of us who are believers in Jesus, we have the entire will of God working through history to look back on and see how God worked. We can trust in Him because of what He has done. We also have now forgiveness of sins, peace, grace, and strength of the Holy Spirit. Those of us who are believers also have in the future the promise of Heaven, new spiritual bodies not tied to the sinful nature, freedom from pain and sickness and sadness, and an eternity to have a face-to-face relationship with God.

Author's Note:

The best appetizer that has ever existed is the Wonton Tacos at Applebee's. It is worth the trip to find an Applebee's and order this dish.

⁴ That is how you spell the French word for "or-derves." Boom.

REPENT AND BELIEVE IN THE GOSPEL

MARK 1:14-15 (ESV)

“Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

We thirdly see in these two verses that Jesus says that we are to repent and believe the Gospel. Every single person who hears about Jesus Christ must respond. We either accept that God, the loving Father, sent Jesus the Perfect Sinless Son, to die on the cross that we might have eternal life and a restored relationship with God in spite of our sinfulness... or we don't accept it. Not making a decision or putting things off until later means we do not accept.

You see, when Jesus says we must ‘repent’ and ‘believe’ He is not laying out reactive words or passive words, but action-oriented essential words.

‘Repent’ means to understand that you are sinful and nothing in you is good. None of us are good. Once we realize that we are sinful and bad and mostly give into temptation, we must change over from that and move towards God. Repentance is not an attitude. Repentance is an action and is a demonstration of a change on the inside.

No acceptance of sinfulness, no repentance.

No change, no repentance.

No demonstration, no repentance.

Repentance is active.

Repentance is an action borne from the heart.

Repentance is a continual ongoing process in some cases.

'Believe' means to place faith and more importantly trust in Jesus Christ in our hearts. The interesting truth about the Christian faith is that it is not passive. If anyone told you to get dunked in some water and say a few magic words and Jesus the fairy godfather would sprinkle Holy Spirit dust on you... and you then are good spiritually for the rest of your life... they lied a serious lie to you. Serious lie. Belief is continual ongoing active trust in Jesus.

Faith is active.

Faith is constantly denying self and pursuing Jesus.

Faith is loving God with our whole hearts and demonstrating that love every single day.

There is one significant obstacle that I have noticed to people placing trusting faith in Jesus and repenting of sin. That significant obstacle is *self*. What I mean by *self* is that we do not want to live the way God wants us to live and so we don't accept Him. I have to tell you... I honestly think that is a legitimate reason to reject Jesus!

You see, Jesus is an all-in-kind of Savior. He wants *all* of our hearts and *all* of our minds and *all* of our strength dedicated to Him and most of the time we want to give Him *much less than that*. We might appreciate cute stories about Jesus, but becoming a believer means He has a claim on us and we serve Him. Accepting Him means He is King Jesus to us. Not everyone wants to do that.

If you only want to live your life the way you want, do not enter into a relationship with Jesus.

If you want to be responsible for your own soul, do not enter into a relationship with Jesus.

If you go to church and carry around a Bible only to avoid conversations, just be honest and say you don't believe.

A time has coming and has now come when God is pruning His Church of those who only want Him in a half-hearted way. Commitment to Jesus means 100% trusting belief and 100% repentance from the values of this world.

Nothing else is going to cut it.

Mark 1:14-15 is a passage that shows us Jesus' entrance into His ministry. He begins His teaching and preaching and miracles and traveling when the time was right and He shared the Good News about the Kingdom of God. We either accept it or not... there is no middle ground.

We are called to faith.

We are called to repentance.

We are called to be an active part of the Kingdom of God.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

So what is the **Essential King Jesus** from this passage?

Essential King Jesus: *You cannot be part of the Kingdom of God without Jesus.*

Jesus is the Kingdom.

Jesus is entrance into the Kingdom. Jesus is the teaching of the Kingdom. Jesus is the reason for the Kingdom. Absolutely everything God wants for a person is wrapped up in Jesus Christ. You cannot be in a relationship with God without Jesus. All paths and all faiths and all spiritual practices do not lead to God... the only way to God is by way of Jesus. That is the **Essential King Jesus**.

**You
cannot
be part of
the Kingdom
of God
without
Jesus.**

QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

Is Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior?

Is there anything presented in this chapter that you do not agree with or believe? Why?

Why is *faith* important in a relationship with Jesus?

Why is *repentance* important in a relationship with Jesus?

How is the term 'Kingdom of God' a little confusing and how does the context of the passage help with this when reading the Bible?

Are you trying to be part of the Kingdom of God without Jesus?

What things, people, beliefs get in the way of your relationship with Jesus?

Have you ever had the Wonton Tacos from Applebee's?

GOSPEL

The Good News is this: God, the loving Father, sent Jesus the Perfect Sinless Son, to die on the cross that we might have eternal life and a restored relationship with God in spite of our sinfulness.

I am calling on you today if you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior to confess Him. You need to decide if you believe in Jesus or not. Be baptized or not. Decide to follow Him or not.

No one is promised anything about the future.

I am letting you know right here and right now that this is one solid opportunity you have to accept the gracious gift of Jesus on the cross and to obey as He has asked and to enter the Kingdom. Everything has been done and fulfilled and planned and fixed so that anyone can come to Jesus and accept Him in trusting faith.

Acts 2:36–38 (from the Bible) says, "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

FAITH: This is more than just agreeing something is true. It involves commitment and deep trust. It is something we build our lives around and becomes the center of our

worldview. We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the Living God and is our Lord and Savior.

REPENTANCE: We recognize that we have sinned (missed the mark) and have been separated from God. Through sin we alienate ourselves from God and from other people. We have disobeyed God. We confess this freely and vow to turn from that way of living.

BAPTISM: We offer ourselves for baptism by immersion. This represents our death to our old self, burial, and resurrection to a new life in Jesus Christ. This is also reminiscent of the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. It is the baptism practiced by the early church.

FORGIVENESS: Forgiveness comes at baptism. We fully accept the forgiveness of God for all that we have done. Daily we continue to ask God for forgiveness for we recognize ourselves as sinful by nature and desire to have God cleanse us from those things that keep us from Him and His blessings.

HOLY SPIRIT: The Holy Spirit then commences in every believer after baptism into the Church, the Living Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit becomes our Comforter, Counselor, and Sustainer and helps us to remember all the things that Jesus has taught and continues to teach us daily.

Go find a Christian. Get immersed. Live for Him.

CHAPTER 2 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

HE HAS THE POWER

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Essential King Jesus:
Jesus has all authority and all power to forgive sins.

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He-Man is a superhero and the main character of the sword and sorcery-themed Masters of the Universe franchise which came out in the early 1980s. It was the toy to have at the time.

I had them.

He-Man includes a toy line, several animated television series, comic books and a feature film. He-Man is characterized by his superhuman strength as he and his friends defend their planet Eternia and the magic and secrets of Castle Grayskull from the evil forces of Skeletor. It is a good versus evil classic cartoon from the 1980s designed to sell toys. It worked. The Castle Grayskull toy, which I got for Christmas in 1983 or 1984, sold 3.5 million units⁵ so we know it was popular.

Prince Adam of Eternia becomes He-Man when he raises his Power Sword and says “By the power of Grayskull, I

⁵ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castle_Grayskull

have the power.” He then grows muscles and even transforms his pet into the best armored cat around.

I mention this silly cartoon and toy from the 1980s, because if you had asked any kid in the early 1980s, what fictional hero was the Master of the Universe and the strongest and best... many kids would have said “He-Man!”

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

What is the **Essential King Jesus** from Mark Chapter 2? As we go through Mark 2, we will find that: *Jesus has all authority and all power to forgive sins.*

Forgiveness of sins is a central Truth about Jesus Christ and we need to make sure we understand and we communicate to others that Jesus Christ not only has the willingness to forgive sin, but also the authority and the power.

In Mark 2:1-12, we find Jesus Christ having all the power and all the authority. We are not talking about a fictional character! We are talking about Jesus of Nazareth. Understanding what it means that Jesus has all authority and all power is important in understanding Who King Jesus is and what He has to do with us.

BACKGROUND ABOUT MARK

Before we get too far into Mark 2, we need to uncover a little more background about the Gospel of Mark. We have four unique works in the Bible called Matthew,

Mark, Luke, and John. Christians call them ‘Gospels.’ A ‘Gospel’ is not a biography or history or a memoir or a narrative or advertising, but a combination of all of those.

There is nothing written quite like the Gospels in the ancient world or even today which makes them unique. Probably because the subject matter... Jesus... is not like any other Subject!

A ‘Gospel’ is a record of Jesus’ life inspired divinely by the Holy Spirit and written without error by the author. The record of Jesus’ life is ‘good news’ which is why the name for the type of book is a Gospel.

‘Gospel’ means ‘good news.’

Mark is the shortest of all four Gospels even in the original language with 11,304 words. It has 16 chapters. It is the shortest of the Gospels, but it is packed with the life, ministry, and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Let’s dig into **Mark chapter 2:1-12 (ESV):**

And when He returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that He was at home. 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And He was preaching the word to them. 3 And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic carried by four men. 4 And when they could not get near Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. 5 And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there,

questioning in their hearts, 7 “Why does this Man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” 8 And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic— 11 “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” 12 And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

HOPELESS SITUATION (VERSES 1-4)

The beginning of chapter 2 presents us with a hopeless situation. We find Jesus at His home in Capernaum which is a town on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee. We may not realize this, but after His baptism and after His temptation in the wilderness, Jesus moved from Nazareth where He grew up to Capernaum and lived there (Matthew 4:13, 9:1-2). It was here that He met Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew who would all become five of His future Apostles.

Jesus is at home after having been out and about in Galilee preaching and teaching. We know from Mark chapter 1 that He spent His time teaching, healing the sick, and driving out demons. He got noticed. Miracles tend to get one noticed even in a world without radio or TV or email. News about Jesus spread. He was a bit of a

celebrity and when people found out He was a home they gathered around His home.

The scene is a crowded house with people wanting to hear what Jesus has to say. The scene also includes people outside the house looking in and wanting to catch a glimpse of this Teacher and Miracle Worker. The excitement was great. The anticipation of Him doing something amazing was greater. The crowds were gathering. We get the picture that it was literally wall to wall people packed in outside Jesus' house so that no one could make their way through the crowd.

Four men bring a paralyzed man to Jesus, but because of the crowds they can't get to Jesus. They can see His house, but there is no way to get to Him.

We don't know anyone's names. We don't know why the man was paralyzed. We don't know how long the man was paralyzed. We don't know what they said to each other as they realized it was hopeless in trying to get to Jesus.

Four men bring a paralyzed man to Jesus, but because of the crowds they can't get to Jesus.

They can see His house, but there is no way to get to Him.

We do know these four men did not give up easily. We know somehow they managed the paralyzed man onto the roof of Jesus' house. We know they broke open the roof and let the paralyzed man down into the house close to Jesus.

This brings my mind to football. My high school career playing football lasted for my junior and senior year at Baumholder American High School in Baumholder, Germany. My dad was stationed in Germany with the US Army and I went to the high school on base.

My team lost all 8 games in my junior year.
My team had lost 7 of 8 games in my senior year.

I remember thinking that we had one game left and it was pretty much hopeless to win. I had played football for two seasons and had never been part of a team that had won anything.

It was the last game. It was homecoming.

I remember this game vividly because we literally had no hope of winning the game. The other team was better than us. With no wins for 2 years, everyone was literally better than us! As a small school, all players played both offense and defense and the other team had enough students for two separate squads (that might be embellishing, but I think it's true).

I recall one particular play during the game as I played defense. I was doing my best to get past the player in front of me and sack the quarterback... because that is the goal... when all of a sudden the ball ended up in my hands. The ball was fumbled and the ball was in my hands.

I stood there.

In two seasons, I had never held the ball in my hand in a game unless I was substituting as the center. I hear one word yelled out from the sidelines by all the coaches...

“Run!”

I took off down the field towards the end zone. There I was running down the field trying to score. I made it all the way from about mid-field to the five-yard line when I was tackled by one of the fast skinny kids from the other team. He dashed my hopes for a touchdown, but my entire team rushed and congratulated me on a great play.

Hopelessness for us was gone.

It was on home turf on the last game of my high school football career that my team and I won the first and only football game.

Hopelessness turning to hopefulness made all the difference.

HOPE GIVING JESUS (VERSES 5-7)

I often wonder what Jesus was thinking when the men were lowering the paralyzed man down into His house. As God, He knew what was happening and knew they would do this before they even tried. As Jesus, I wonder if He wished they had waited and avoided ruining His roof!

It is commendable and compassionate that these men lowered the paralyzed man into Jesus' house so that he

could have the opportunity to see Jesus to be healed. Jesus was known for teaching about God. Jesus was known for healing. Jesus was known for casting out demons. The paralyzed man was in the right place at the right time with the right Person because Jesus was also known for giving hope.

MARK 2:5 (ESV)

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

These men, seeking a hopeful blessing from Jesus, had demonstrated great faith. I can imagine all the people in the room were a little put off that someone broke open the roof and interrupted all that was going on.

Jesus knows the man's heart and his faith.

Jesus knows the man's heart and his repentance.

Jesus knows the hearts of some of the people in the room and their bitterness.

MARK 2:5 (ESV)

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

Jesus declares His identity and His plan all with five words.

Jesus calls this paralyzed man '*son*.' Make no mistake, every single person is created in the image of God and in one very general way are all '*children of God*.' Yet, to be a child of God and considered His son or daughter in a more specific way means peace and forgiveness and a

relationship with Him... faith and repentance are required of us. Jesus is claiming to be God by referring to this paralyzed man as ‘son.’

Jesus references ‘*your sins.*’ We do not know why this man was paralyzed. It could be related to some error or terrible action or illegal effort on his part. We do not know. In the absence of fact we should not theorize, but let’s just focus on the words Jesus uses. Jesus says, ‘*your sins.*’

I hope you realize that all sin creates brokenness. Sin creates broken hearts and broken spirits and hurts relationships and affects us physically. Sin is brokenness. Jesus addresses the parts of this man which are most broken. Jesus is claiming to be God’s Plan for addressing sin in the human heart when Jesus addresses ‘*your sins.*’

Jesus also says, ‘*are forgiven.*’ As we see later in this passage, forgiveness of sins is an important topic... a critical topic... a spiritual theological heavy topic. Jesus looks at this paralyzed man and knows his heart and gives him forgiveness.

Forgiveness in this passage comes from a word that means “to separate,” “to send away,” and “to release.” It is used 133 times in the New Testament to express the idea of being separated from the consequences of our sins. Jesus is claiming the authority of God to forgive sins.

MARK 2:5 (ESV)

And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

The picture we get of this crowded room is that as soon as Jesus utters these five words, the religious leaders in the room are not happy. If they were a cartoon character, little black squiggly lines like a storm cloud would appear over their heads because they did not like what Jesus said. If they were an anime character, the little veins would pop out on their foreheads and faces. That actually probably happened anyway. They were not happy.

MARK 2:6-7 (ESV)

Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 “Why does this Man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

There are phrases that usually make people mad as soon as they hear them.

A person makes a mistake and you might feel obligated to rub it in because you want to remind them you warned them and they did not listen to you who are clever and wise... you say “I told you so.” “I told you so” never goes well.

Another one of these phrases is immediately followed by something unpleasant, unloving, and probably something you should not say. It is a way of apologizing in advance for being rude. You first say... “Forgive me for saying this, but...” or the ever popular “No offense, but...” Hearing those two phrases never goes well.

A person is feeling stress and they are upset to the max. Maybe something has broken. Maybe a situation got out of hand. Perhaps someone said something hurtful. You listen to them and instead of listening and showing support and understanding, you say... “Relax. It happens to me all the time.” Telling someone to “relax” never goes well.

The person in front of you may be worried a lot about a particular problem and they've tried time and again to discuss it. Maybe you have talked about it all before. They are still worried. With one phrase, you can let them know you're awfully tired of the subject, as well as totally indifferent to it by saying... “Here we go again.” “Here we go again” never goes well.

There are some phrases that when said just set people off. Jesus is in His house surrounded by people and a paralyzed man is before Him.

MARK 2:5 (ESV)

And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

That phrase set off many people in the room even as He was giving hope to many others.

We have in the beginning of Mark 2, a narrative from the life of Jesus where it is established that Jesus has all authority to forgive sins. Forgiveness of sins is a central Truth about Jesus Christ and we need to make sure we understand and we communicate to others that Jesus Christ not only has the willingness to forgive sin, but also

the authority and the power. We see this in action in this passage, but as the passage concludes, we see Jesus' words teaching us the same Truth.

AUTHORITY OF JESUS ESTABLISHED (VERSES 8-12)

It is interesting that the scribes and leaders who are in His home do not speak aloud their anger or their objections. They are offended in their unspoken thoughts. The leaders believe that it is impossible for anyone to forgive sins of our souls except for God. The truth is... they are absolutely correct and they are absolutely incorrect.

Let me explain.

It is *correct* that only God has to power to forgive the sins between Himself and a human being. We can certainly forgive wrongs between one another, but none of us has the power to forgive sins.

Psalm 32:5 (ESV) says as much...

I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

So does Isaiah 43:25 (ESV):

I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

Sins between us and God must be forgiven by God and only by God. Psalm 32 says they cannot be covered by us. God says in Isaiah 43, with the repeated 'I' words... that

it is He and He alone who blots out our sins and does not remember them. The people listening to Jesus are correct in their theology and in the Truth that only God forgives sins.

It is *incorrect* that Jesus cannot forgive sins. You might ask... *how can they be correct and incorrect at the same time?!* Those things can exist at the same time because of Jesus' identity. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is God. Jesus has the ability, authority, willingness, and power to forgive sins.

Mark 2:10-11 (ESV)

***But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic—
11 “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.***

This entire episode in the life of Jesus is establishing His authority to be the Messiah, to be the Savior, and to be the One that will save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). The entire point of this passage is to establish Jesus has all authority and all power to forgive sins. That ability and authority and willingness was finished on the cross. Jesus begins the work of forgiveness during His life and ministry and finishes it on the cross.

Forgiveness is important.

FINAL THOUGHT ON AUTHORITY

I am not sure what you think gives someone authority or power. For He-Man, it is a power sword and magic and crazy children buying toy after toy. In politics, it is votes and money. The law gets power from consequences and enforcement.

Essential King Jesus: *Jesus has all authority and all power to forgive sins.*

Forgiveness of sins is a central Truth about Jesus Christ and we need to make sure we understand and we communicate to others that Jesus Christ not only has the willingness to forgive sin, but also the authority and the power.

Jesus does not get His authority or power from money or magic or a lucky charm or public opinion, but rather gets His authority to forgive sins from God. This authority was given to Him by God the Father and sealed permanently with His own blood on the cross. May we make that clear to others in our lives who do not know Jesus.

Jesus
has

all authority

and

all power

to



forgive sins.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

What does the word 'forgive' mean in your own words?

Is there a sin in your life (past or present) that you believe Jesus cannot forgive?

Is there a sin against you from another person that you are unwilling to forgive?

How unsettling is it for contradictions to be present in the Person of Jesus Christ?

How does Jesus have the authority to forgive sins?

How important is it to have a right relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ?

What statements or phrases might bring someone hope who feels completely lost in their sin?

VERSES TO MEMORIZE IN MARK 1-2

MARK 1:9-11 (ESV)

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

MARK 2:16-17 (ESV)

16 And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 17 And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

CHAPTER 3 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS DOING THE WILL OF GOD

=====
Essential King Jesus:
Jesus came to do the will of God.
=====

People can be pretty eccentric. I bring this up because in the passage we are going to look at in this chapter, some people considered Jesus “eccentric” “beside Himself” or “out of His mind.” To warm us up to this idea, I’d like to share about some eccentric people I learned about on the interwebs!

Hetty Green (1834-1916): Hetty Green was an eccentric miser who became known as the “Witch of Wall Street.” With her business wits she accumulated such wealth that she was the richest woman in the world. In order to save money, Hetty would work out of trunks at her local bank so she wouldn’t have to pay for office space. When her son fell ill, she disguised herself and took him to a charity hospital; when they realized who she was, she fled. She always wore the same black dress and never changed her underwear unless it wore out. She moved back and forth between New York and New Jersey in order to avoid taxes.

Simeon Ellerton (1702-1799): Simeon Ellerton lived in the 18th century and was a fitness fanatic. Because he loved to walk long distances, he was often employed to carry out errands or act as a courier for the locals. On his many frequent journeys he would gather up stones from the roadside and carry them on his head. His aim was to

gather sufficient stones to build his own house. Eventually he had enough stones and he made a little cottage for himself. Having spent so many years carrying extra weight, he felt uncomfortable without it, so for the rest of his life he walked around with a bag of stones on his head.

Sir George Sitwell (1860–1943): Sir George Sitwell was a very bizarre man in many ways. He was a gardener who was annoyed by the wasps in his garden so he invented a pistol for shooting them. After he moved to Italy to avoid taxes in Britain, he refused to pay his new wife's debts which resulted in her spending three months in prison. He was such an avid reader and collector of books that he had seven libraries in his home. He tried to pay his son's school fees with produce from his garden. Sir George the Weird also had the cows on his estate stenciled in a blue and white Chinese willow pattern in order to make them look better. To top it all off, he had a notice hung on the gate of his manor in Derbyshire, England: "I must ask anyone entering the house never to contradict me or differ from me in any way, as it interferes with the functioning of my gastric juices and prevents my sleeping at night."

Francis Egerton (1756–1823): Francis Egerton became famous for his unusual dinner parties which he threw for dogs. All of the invited dogs would be dressed in the finest fashions of the day, including shoes. Another eccentricity was his manner of measuring time; Egerton would wear a pair of shoes only once – when he was done with them, he would line them up in rows in order to count the

passing days. He also kept pigeons and partridges which had their wings clipped so he could shoot them for sport.

Jemmy Hirst (1738–1829): Jemmy Hirst was so famous in his own time that King George III summoned him to tea and he declined stating that he was training an otter to fish. Jemmy loved animals and he trained his bull to behave like a horse. The bull (named Jupiter) would draw his carriage around the village and Hirst even rode him in fox hunts. No bull. Instead of dogs, he used pigs that he trained as hunting dogs. He regularly blew a horn to invite the poor to his home for free food which he served out of a coffin. When he died, he requested 12 old maids follow his coffin to the grave, as well as a bagpiper and a fiddler to play happy music.⁶

I think stories about those folks are quite humorous!

In verse 20 of Mark 3, it tells us that the crowds were so big and pressing and demanding that Jesus and the disciples could not even eat. In verse 21, Jesus' family arrives and they want to take Him away from the crowds and the pressures because they think He is not acting like Himself and He is not acting in His best interest.

I imagine Jesus was teaching at all hours and the demands on Him were overwhelming. Jesus' family sees the pressure and the activity and they come to take charge of Him, but they find Him doing exactly what He wants to be doing... He is doing the will of God.

⁶ listverse.com/2009/03/15/10-incredibly-eccentric-people/

BACKGROUND ABOUT MARK

I need to give you a little bit of background about this part of Mark because the way Mark wrote this passage is important and leads us to the meaning of what is going on. Mark writes at different times in his gospel using something called ‘intercalation.’

‘Intercalation’ is a way of writing used to indicate a lapse of time, to draw attention to something, to contrast something, or to use two accounts to interpret one another. It is also called sandwiching or bracketing. He does this in chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 14, 15. Apparently Mark, like Experiment 625,⁷ loves his sandwiches.

Basically, Mark often uses two related stories in the life of Jesus to explain one point. One story begins, then he inserts another story, and then finishes up the first story. The combined point of the two stories is the point of the passage.

For example, in the passage we are going to look at in this chapter in verses 20–35 of chapter 3, Mark sets up telling the story by talking about:

the Crowd (20)

Family (21)

Scribes (22)

Center with teaching

Scribes (30)

Family (31)

the Crowd (32–35)

⁷ See Disney’s Lilo and Stitch... get some old pop culture would ya?

Yum.

The point of the passage is the teaching in the middle sandwiched between the stories about the crowds and family.

MARK 3:20-35 (ESV):

“Then He went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. 21 And when His family heard it, they went out to seize Him, for they were saying, “He is out of His mind.” 22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons He casts out the demons.” 23 And He called them to Him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. 27 But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house. 28 “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— 30 for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.” 31 And His mother and His brothers came, and standing outside they sent to Him and called Him. 32 And a crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking You.” 33 And He answered them, “Who are My mother and My brothers?” 34 And looking

about at those who sat around Him, He said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! 35 For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

There are some extreme truths in this passage I have to say. In the midst of all of the eccentric and extreme things going on, Jesus explains to us what He is all about. Jesus explains the point of His ministry.

Let's go back through this narrative about Jesus and get to the meat of the passage.

CROWD PRESSURE AND FAMILY INTERVENTION

The passage begins with Jesus' family arriving to try and take care of Him. If we add some details from the parallel end of the passage, we know that Mary arrives with some or all of Jesus' brothers⁸ to try and help Jesus.

What does He need help with?

In their opinion, things are out of hand. Crowds are gathering around Jesus so that He can't eat. We need to remember that... yes... Jesus is the Son of God, but Jesus is also a normal human being. He needs to eat, sleep, exercise, work, rest, and all of the other things we all do to survive. They were concerned for Him because at the end of verse 21 they were saying that He was not acting

⁸ I believe Jesus had siblings based on the Biblical text... 4 brothers and at least 2 sisters. Joseph and Mary had children after Jesus. Catholics believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary and explain away these men as Jesus' cousins. This is not Biblical. The Greek supports these were 1/2 brothers of Jesus because they shared the same mother. They obviously did not share the same Father.

like Himself... He's not caring for Himself... because He's under all this pressure!

Mary and her other children stage and intervention to whisk Jesus away, but from what we can tell from this whole passage, Jesus is unwilling to stop. And the pressure of the crowds is not the only pressure Jesus is under.

RELIGIOUS LEADER PRESSURE

We also see that Jesus is under pressure by the religious leaders of His day by way of accusations meant to make Him look bad. Verse 22 tells us that scribes, who were most likely Pharisees, came from Jerusalem to critique Him and spoil what He was doing. He was operating outside of their authority and they wanted Him stopped.

The scribes accuse Jesus of:

- Being possessed by Satan⁹ (verse 22)
- Using Satanic power to cast out demons (verse 22)
- Having an unclean spirit in Him (verse 30)

All three of those pretty much are the same accusation... Jesus is working for Satan and not for God. All the teaching and miracles and healing and demon smashing He is doing is not a Godly good thing, but a Satan evil thing.

The religious leaders are trying to counteract everything Jesus has been doing. Remember, Jesus came and

⁹ Satan = Beelzebul = Beelzebub

declared (Mark 1) that the Kingdom of God was at hand. He was working on behalf of the plan of God for salvation that God had been weaving through history since before the beginning of time and these religious leaders wanted Him stopped. Their first solution to their 'Jesus problem' is to accuse Him of working for Satan and discredit Him in the eyes of the crowds. Keep in mind their final solution to their 'Jesus problem' is to kill Him.

In the midst of all this pressure on Jesus, and I believe it is real pressure, Mark shares with us Jesus' response to the pressure and His teaching on the matter.

We should not forget that Jesus spent the first thirty years of His life preparing for His ministry. He was prepared for the pace He would need to have for 3 years to accomplish the will of God. He was prepared for the pressure from His family. He was prepared for the eccentric flavor His life would take on. He was prepared for the opposition from the Pharisees and other religious leaders.

Jesus answers. What does He say?

CENTRAL TEACHING

Jesus wisely answers the objections of the scribes first and then lays out His purpose. His purpose as explained in chapter 3 is the **Essential King Jesus** truth.

First, Jesus responds by wisely telling the scribes that their accusation that He works for Satan in driving out Satan makes no sense and is very far from the truth.

Israelites, like Jesus and like the leaders standing before Him, know that a house divided cannot stand. They know that a kingdom divided falls. How do they know that? It happened to Israel. After King Solomon in Israel's history (1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles), the nation of Israel was divided and the North fell first and then the South. A divided house is part of Israel's identity and they all know this truth!

Second, Jesus teaches us that Satan is coming to an end. In verse 26, Jesus says "*he cannot stand but is coming to an end*" (ESV). Satan and his lies are ending. The Kingdom of Flesh is ending. The rule of sin and brokenness and sickness and death is coming to an end.

How is it coming to an end? How is Satan coming to an end? That question is most important because we are in the middle of the sandwich Mark is writing. Let's not forget how Mark is writing this passage. He's got crowd, family, and religious leader pressure on the outsides and Jesus explaining His purpose on the inside.

Verse 27 is the middle.

MARK 3:27 (ESV)

27 But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

Jesus is sharing a short parable about His purpose. We all live in the strong man's house. The strong man's house is the world. The strong man... is Satan. Satan is the current lord of this world who exists on borrowed time

and runs the world according to his rules. Because of the way he runs his house, he is condemned (John 16:11).

Jesus, as He speaks in this passage, is at the beginning of binding up Satan. Satan exists on borrowed time because Jesus came and binds Him up with His life, ministry, death, and resurrection.

Jesus is tying the hands of Satan by:

- slapping the cuffs on Satan's way of life by teaching and preaching God's way
- foiling the work of Satan by working miracles and driving out demons
- binding sin and guilt with His death and offers grace instead
- tying up death and conquering death with His resurrection
- binding any authority Satan has in this world with His ascension into Heaven

In the short parable, the goods that are plundered is us! Those trapped by the guilt of the sinful nature belong to Satan. Jesus comes and binds up Satan by conquering sin and death and leads us out from under the thumb of Satan.

In Jesus' short parable, a person breaks into a strongman's house and only after binding Him up, is able to make off with the household goods and plunder. In Jesus' short parable, Jesus has broken into the world, is binding up Satan, in order to liberate souls from under the control of Satan.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

My prayer overall in this book is that you will encounter the **Essential King Jesus** and bolster your faith or perhaps find it for the first time. Each chapter I want to share with one essential truth that is important for us to believe and then also communicate to others about Jesus. We are focusing on the **Essential King Jesus**.

Essential King Jesus: *Jesus came do the will of God.*

Jesus explains in chapter 3 that the will of God involves teaching, preaching, healing, driving out demons, and planting the seeds of the Church which binds up Satan in this world and allows for the freedom of any soul captive to sin. *Jesus came to do the will of God.* Because of Jesus, forgiveness and grace is available for anyone to escape from the strong man's house.

It is completely the will of God that Jesus bind up Satan. Revelation 20 gives us a glimpse of what happens in the end.

REVELATION 20:7-10 (ESV) tells us:

And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. 9 And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, 10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and

sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Jesus came to do the will of God and through His faithfulness Satan is defeated.

APPLICATION

What does this have to do with me?
What does this have to do with you?

Jesus explains in the rest of the passage what this has to do with us. He first explains *spiritual choices* in verses 28–30 and then secondly explains *discipleship* in verses 31–35.

SPIRITUAL CHOICES

First (verses 28–30), because Jesus has come and done the will of God, you and I have a spiritual choice to make. We can choose to accept Jesus and enjoy a relationship with God and have our sins forgiven or we can choose to reject Jesus.

In context in verse 29, ‘blaspheming against the Holy Spirit’ is unforgivable because a person rejects God and does not want forgiveness. It is not that God cannot and/or will not forgive, but that the person cuts themselves off from the source of forgiveness... Jesus Christ. This choice of choosing Jesus or not is not a one-time thing, but rather a continual ongoing choice to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior and to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

DISCIPLESHIP

Spiritual choices lead us to discipleship. In verses 31–35, because Jesus has come and done the will of God, we must choose Jesus daily and pursue Him. The end of the passage Jesus makes a statement about following Him. Jesus says that those who follow Him with all of their heart and all of their mind and all of their strength are His family. I don't know about you, but I want to be in God's family. I want to be in Jesus' family. I want Him to count me among those He loves and saves. This means we pursue Jesus with our whole heart.

Choosing and pursuing Jesus with your whole heart means:

- intentionally physically meeting with believers on Sundays for worship 4/4 Sundays
- on purpose joining a small group of Christians to study the Bible and sharpen one another
- weekly taking your children to youth group and forcing them if necessary... yes forcing them
- tithing on a regular basis showing God is your priority and money is secondary
- regularly choosing to serve where you have gifts and talents
- purposefully praying to God and listening to what He has to say
- fasting and praying when decisions have to be made so we follow God's choice
- pursuing forgiveness with those who hurt us especially when they don't deserve it
- dating only Christians

- read regularly from books that invest in your spiritual life
- with zeal work through doubts and questions you have about faith
- when you find attitude problems, with resolve pray and give them to God
- tenacity in living out the truth found in the Bible
- regularly remove influences in your life that lead to sin and lead you away from God

SUMMARY

Essential King Jesus: *Jesus came do the will of God.*

Jesus Christ explains in chapter 3 that His ministry involves teaching, preaching, healing, driving out demons, and planting the seeds of the Church which binds up Satan in this world and allows for the freedom of any soul captive to sin. Jesus came to do the will of God. Because of Jesus, forgiveness and grace is available for anyone to escape from the strong man's house.

We are thankful that Jesus came to do the will of God!
We also submit to Jesus because He did the will of God!

The background features several sets of concentric circles in a light gray color. One set is on the left side, another is on the right side, and a third set is at the bottom, partially overlapping the text. The circles vary in size and are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement.

**Jesus
came
to
do
the
will
of
God.**

QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

What surprises you the most about Mary's intervention of Jesus' ministry?

What portions of Mark 3 give you more questions than answers?

Have you ever been falsely accused of something?

What types of things could have blinded the religious leaders to the message of Jesus Christ?

Have you chosen Jesus?

What areas of discipleship do you find easy?

What areas of discipleship do you find hard?

Where do you need to invest in your spiritual life?

Is there an area of your life where you are divided and eventually it will fall apart?

CHAPTER 4 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

NO FEAR

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Essential King Jesus:
Jesus casts out all fear.
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The date was December 31, 2000. It was a Sunday. The time was about 9:30pm. The weather was very cold and the conditions of the roads in rural Tennessee were mostly clear. The 24-year old man was on his way to work for the overnight shift.

Life was good.

He was driving his brand new blue Nissan Frontier which was one of the first vehicles he ever got to pick out... he loved it. It drove nice. It was new. The truck sat high and he felt like a big shot. Life was also good because his wife was at home pregnant with their first child... a girl. She was due in about three months.

The young man was not a good driver. He was going too fast for the conditions as most young men tend to do. The roads were clear... yes... but there were also patches of ice on the road that could not be seen in the dark. He came around one bend in the country road and hit a patch of ice. His truck slid sideways on the narrow road. Once the truck slid to the side of the road, it did not stop. The truck tipped over onto its side.

The problem with tipping was the road was raised and sloped down into the pasture on the side of the road to which he had slid. The truck tumbled over the side of the bank and rolled nice and gentle into the pasture. The outside of the truck was damaged on all sides.

Inside the truck, the foolish young man was not wearing his seatbelt and was tossed around in his seat as the truck rolled. He held onto the steering wheel. Pain in his left arm. Glass shattering. The radio stopped playing. The truck became still in the field.

The feeling he felt: Fear.
Fear at almost dying.
Fear of what could have happened.

People from the farmhouse to which the field belonged heard the accident and came running immediately. They recognized him and knew his wife was pregnant. They also knew that his house was not far away. The good natured folks offered to take him to the hospital, but did not want him to simply call his wife. They wanted to take him home first for him to explain what happened in person to his wife so she could see he was not badly injured.

The feeling they felt: Fear.
They were afraid that if he or another person called the pregnant young wife about the accident that the shock and stress would send her into labor. They drove him home briefly and then took him to the hospital and he rang in the new year of 2001 in the ER.

FEAR

Fear is a powerful emotion built into us by our Creator. Most of the time when I personally think of fear I think of it as an aggressive negative emotion, but fear can certainly save our life. When we talk about fear we also use words like anxiety, stress, phobia, panic, tension, apprehension, uneasiness, worry, and dread. We know fear when we feel it. We know how it makes us feel physically.

We may or may not think about our fears all the time, but we all have our own lists of things we are afraid of or situations that bring us fear. Fear of failure, the future, rejection, intimacy, success, taking responsibility, conflict, meaninglessness in life, sickness, death, public speaking, loneliness, change, and Coca-Cola going out of business so that all we are left with is Pepsi¹⁰.

Fear is serious business because it is a powerful emotion that can affect many parts of our lives. Fear can stop us. Fear can change our behavior. Fear can change how we think. Fear can change how we treat other people.

FEAR IN THE BIBLE

Fear is mentioned in the Bible. There are over 400 verses in the Old and New Testament that deal with fear. The Biblical idea of fear embraces a much wider dimension than our common word which simply means ‘dread and terror.’

¹⁰ Pepsisolophobia or Cokenomophobia depending on where you live

What I mean is that sometimes the word ‘fear’ is used in the Bible to mean ‘awe inspiring reverence for God.’ That is NOT what this chapter is about. In this chapter, we are talking about ‘shaking in your boots afraid of something’ fear. We are talking about the stress inducing emotion of fear.

The first time we find fear in the Bible is in Genesis 3 where Adam and Eve are hiding from God because they disobeyed Him. They disobeyed God and were ‘shaking in their fig leaves’ afraid.

Fear is a consequence of sin.

GENESIS 3:8-10 (ESV) says of that first day of sin...

“And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 And he said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”

In the Old Testament, Cain was afraid of the results of God’s judgement after he killed his brother Abel. King Saul was afraid. King Ahaz in 2 Chronicles 28 is so plagued with fear that he set up many altars for idol sacrifices all over Jerusalem. In the New Testament, Joseph was afraid to take Mary home as his wife. King Herod was afraid of John the Baptist. Pilate was afraid of the crowds. The whole Church was afraid in Acts 5 after Ananias and Sapphira fell dead in the middle of church.

Fear is a real emotion that really does impact people. All people.

We are focusing on Mark 4 in this chapter:

MARK 4:35-41 (ESV)

“On that day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” 36 And leaving the crowd, they took Him with them in the boat, just as He was. And other boats were with Him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” 39 And He awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” 41 And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?””

BOATY MCBOATFACE

As we look at these few verses beginning in verse 35, we see the word ‘boat’ repeated. They went in a ‘boat.’ Other ‘boats’ were with them. Waves were breaking in ‘the boat.’ The ‘boat’ was already filling. The boat, the boat, the boat, the boat. Ok, we get it! Jesus and the disciples are in a boat!

Do we get it?

You see Mark is making sure we know Jesus and the disciples, many of whom are seasoned experienced expert

fishermen, are in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. They should be quite safe. Those in control of the boats are experts. The boats are made to go on the water and keep folks safe and get them where they are going. Sudden storms on the Sea of Galilee are normal.

The huge storm (MSG)... the furious squall (NIV)... the fierce windstorm (HCSB) came upon them and the picture we get is that the situation is dangerous. Water is filling the boat. It is not like they are on an ocean liner. They are in fishing boats and those boats are being swamped. The boat, the boat, the boat, the boat. The boats were in trouble. Those things that should have been safe were not.

VERSE 38

Verse 38 is very telling I think.

The disciples come to a decision and they wake Jesus. Honestly, Jesus must have been a very sound sleeper. I can imagine with the wind and waves and water and yelling and the carrying on and the rocking side to side that it would have been hard to sleep. Yet, He was snoozing very well.

Jesus was asleep.

His ministry was taxing and hard and a heap load of pressure and I am sure He was physically exhausted. He was sleeping to gain strength for whatever would come next.

They wake Jesus with these words: *“Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”*

Those words tell us a lot actually.

First, we find that they wake Jesus up by calling Him ‘Teacher.’ It is very true that Jesus is their rabbi... their teacher... but they are coming to realize He is much more than just a good moral teacher. Why did they not address Him as ‘Master’ or ‘Lord?’ Such things were being clouded over in their minds and in their emotions.

Second, we get the sense that the disciples were angry at Jesus for not acting in a way that they assumed He should. He should at minimum be awake and at most leading them through this storm. Jesus is literally asleep at the rudder. He should be encouraging them. He should be helping them through the storm. He should be doing something active in the midst of the wind and waves and water and yelling and the carrying on and the rocking side to side.

Jesus was not doing what they expected.

VERSE 40

Verse 40 is also quite telling I think.

Jesus wakes up. His disciples are calling on Him to meet their expectations. Jesus spoke three words and the storm quit. Jesus spoke three words and the wind died down and the churning waters became calm. I can’t help but see in Jesus the same power from Genesis 1 where God

says, “*Let there be light*” (Genesis 1:3) and the universe sprung into existence. Jesus is God. The same God who brought forth light with a word is the same God who calmed the storm with a word.

Jesus says in verse 40: “*Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?*”

Jesus’ words in this verse tell us something significant. His words teach us much about faith.

What is faith? Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as, “*the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*” (ESV). I’d like to point out that in this passage Jesus is not defining faith for the disciples and is not talking about faith.

Jesus is talking to them about the opposite of faith. Most of the time we would say that the opposite of faith is... doubt.

Doubt is not the opposite of faith.

Fear is the opposite of faith.

Fear is the opposite of faith.

Fear is the opposite of faith.

The disciples have called out to Jesus in the midst of this huge storm (MSG)... this furious squall (NIV)... this fierce windstorm (HCSB) and they were completely and utterly afraid. Fear was in the heart of each and every one. The fear in their hearts downgraded Jesus from ‘Lord’ to ‘Teacher’ and they were afraid that Jesus would not save

them. Their fear led to doubt, anger, frustration, a lack of trust, and maybe even uncharacteristic thoughts.

Fear is the opposite of faith.

APPLICATION

Fear is the opposite of faith for us as well.

You and I are not so different from the disciples. I am going to draw out truths from this passage because the truth for these disciples in the midst of an actual physical windy storm is the same for us in the metaphorical storms of life.

Storms of Life:

Medical diagnoses

Loss of a job

Stress over COVID (or other lingering pandemic)

Our children and grandchildren making foolish decisions

Dealing with mental illness

Divorce

Doubting our Christian faith

Confronting an addiction

We get in the midst of the heart wrenching storms of life and we go through the same things the disciples went through. We get stressed and afraid and we expect Jesus to do something.

We believe in Him... so...

- Jesus bless me.
- God make my situation go away.
- Bad things happen to other people, but God I believe You and I serve You, so make my life smooth sailing.

We expect God to be a certain way and when He seems not to do what we want... we become... afraid.

Fear rules us.

Fear fuels our questions and our responses.

Jesus, why are You not helping us?

God, why are You abandoning me in this storm?

Jesus, where are You in the midst of my distress?

God, have You abandoned me, one of Your people?

Jesus, You said You'd never leave me or forsake me... I feel forsaken so what is the deal?

Fear is the root of every single one of those thoughts because fear is the opposite of faith.

Fear feeds doubt.

Fear feeds anger and mistrust and expectations.

Fear feeds false beliefs.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

I want to share with you the essential truth that is important for us to believe and then also communicate to others about Jesus. The **Essential King Jesus** from chapter 4 is: *Jesus casts out fear.*

When you and I have faith in Jesus Christ, we have faith not in a good teacher or a moral leader or a philosophical framework that is a beneficial crutch. No, when you and I have faith in Jesus Christ we have faith in the Messiah Self-Sacrificing Deliverer Who Makes Good on All the Promises of God. Faith in Jesus drives out fear because faith in Jesus is complete trust in One Who loves us and will be with us in the storms.

Medical diagnoses are storms and faith in Jesus means an absence of fear in that no matter the outcome whether healing or pain; Jesus Christ is with us giving peace when we ask. Faith in Jesus pushes out fear and gives peace.

A loss of a job is a tempest and faith in Jesus means we believe that God is working for our good and we need not be afraid because He will lead us where we need to work next. Faith in Jesus drives out fear and gives provision.

Stress over COVID (or other global disease issue) is a storm and faith in Jesus means that even if we get COVID and die that we will not be afraid of death because our Savior has already conquered death. Faith in Jesus drives out fear and gives confidence and assurance.

Our children and grandchildren making foolish decisions is a squall and we need not fear that Jesus will never forgive them when they finally wise up because Jesus Christ extends grace to anyone who seeks Him. Faith in Jesus drives out fear and gives hope.

Dealing with mental illness is a terrible rainstorm and faith in Jesus casts out the fear that because we deal with

depression or anxiety or obsessive compulsions that God has left us behind and forsaken us. Jesus is next to us always and wants to be our guide through the illness. Faith in Jesus casts out fear and gives an anchor.

Divorce is a blizzard and faith in Jesus Christ covers over the fearful thoughts that through the brokenness there is no hope of reconciliation or a healed heart or forgiveness when it is all said and done. Jesus makes all things new. Faith in Jesus wipes out fear and gives a clean slate.

Doubting our Christian faith is a storm and leaning into Jesus and continually pursuing Him even when we have huge questions boots away the fear that because of our questions God will turn His back on us. Faith in Jesus stomps out fear and gives answers or comfort when there are no answers.

Confronting an addiction is a hurricane and pressing into faith in Jesus means that we do not have to be afraid that our label of 'addict' is the defining label of our lives. Faith in Jesus drives out fear and gives us a label of 'forgiven child of God.'

Essential King Jesus: *Jesus casts out fear.*

SUMMARY

I do not know what all of your lives are like right now. I know some of you reading this are going through a storm in life and you have just about had it. You are up to your eyeballs in crisis or hurt or frustration or being let down.

If you are not in a faith stretching time right now, just wait. Life is unfair and it is on the way.

Jesus says to us in Mark 4 that faith in Him casts out fear.

- May you give the things that bring fear into your life over to God in faithful prayer.
- May you find strength in faith in Jesus when fear is what you feel.
- May you completely believe that Jesus casts out fear.

Jesus

casts

out

fear.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

What are you afraid of? What makes you worry?

Have thee any debilitating phobias?

Why does it matter what the disciples called Jesus and by extension why does it matter what we call Him?

Do you agree that doubt is not the opposite of faith?

Do you agree that fear is the opposite of faith?

How do you normally downgrade Jesus' role in your life?

What storms of life have you faced?

What expectations do you have of God that He meets?
What expectations do you have that God does not meet?

In a crisis, what questions do you normally have of Jesus?
How do you normally respond?

What good will prayer do when fearful?

What good will reading Scripture do when fearful?

What good will singing worship songs do when fearful?

What good will Christian fellowship do when fearful?

VERSES TO MEMORIZE IN MARK 3-4

MARK 3:16-19 (ESV)

16 He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter); 17 James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); 18 Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him.

MARK 3:24 (ESV)

If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

MARK 4:18-19 (ESV)

18 And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, 19 but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

CHAPTER 5 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS LEGION OF CHAINS

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*Essential King Jesus:
Jesus breaks our chains.*

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We are in Mark chapter 5. We are going to look at an absolute amazing passage that describes what happened to Jesus when He entered an area where a demon-possessed man lived. Yes, demon-possessed! The whole passage teaches us something very important about Jesus that we need to understand and that we definitely need to share with others. This Truth about Jesus speaks to our brokenness and the sinful nature that we all deal with.

Essential King Jesus: *Jesus breaks our chains.*

MARK 5:1-5 (ESV)

They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. 2 When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet Him. 3 This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. 4 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. 5 Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

Jesus steps onto land and a man under bondage to evil immediately finds Him. We get a small sense of this poor

man's life and it is not good. He had been driven to live in tombs. People had tried to help him by chaining him to control what was happening to him, but the evil in him was stronger than all chains and irons.

The worst part I think is verse 5.

The man was being tortured by the unclean spirits and he not only cried out in pain or anger or anguish, but he hurt himself as well.

What words would we use to describe this man?

Deranged.

Afflicted.

Tormented.

Unclean.

Hurting.

Bloody.

Enraged.

Miserable.

Hostile.

I cannot help but notice that the man has been physically chained hand and foot and is very much chained symbolically to the demons that fill his life. Right away I see our lives in this man. This man is chained by demons that infest his life.

You and I might deal with chains as well.

Addictions chain us to a substance in order to deal and cope with life.

Apathy chains us to not feeling like we will ever measure up and gives permission for hypocrisy.

Anger chains us to overreactions.

Envy and Greed chain us to material things and the need to have meaning by what we own.

Fear chains us to doubt and inaction.

Labels chain us away from our identity in Christ.

Lies and false beliefs chain us to defeat and a continual loss of worth.

Lust chains us to impure thoughts that ruin relationships.

Memories of the past chain us to mistakes and we can't see grace.

Pornography is a chain that messes with us sexually.

Resentment chains us to pride which chains us to self-importance.

Social media chains us to the need to be affirmed and liked and celebrated.

Unforgiveness chains us to bitterness and the need to feel justified.

'Chains' are any of those sinful habits and attitudes that we feel tied to and we feel weighed down when it comes to life.

Chains hold us.

Chains bind us.

Chains keep us from moving forward.

Sinful chains drag us away from God and away from seeing ourselves as God sees us and identifying ourselves as God identifies us. I see this demon-possessed man that Jesus meets and he is chained to hopelessness, self-harm, and inner and outer chaos.

MARK 5:6-10 (ESV):

When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of Him. 7 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!" 8 For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"

9 Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." 10 And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

It is very interesting that the demon-possessed man understood that he had nothing in common with Jesus. Jesus was the Son of the *Most High God*. This man was infested with servants of Satan. One was dedicated to righteousness and goodness and justice and peace. One was dedicated to unrighteousness and sin and perversion and chaos. I also cannot help notice that the demon-

possessed man is running and falling and shouting and wild while Jesus seems composed and peaceful.

It is also completely evident that in this conversation and in this interaction that at no point are the demons in charge or have any sort of authority over Jesus. The demons fall before Jesus. The man knows Who Jesus is and knows that He has all power and all authority. When asked to give its name to show His authority, the demons obey and name themselves. The demon-possessed man does the begging. The demons understand that it is Jesus who can send them to eternal punishment following the last judgement. The demons enter this conversation with Jesus already knowing they are defeated.

I see some of us in this passage as well. Sometimes when people encounter God they assume He is angry because of sin or wants to torture them into submission or punish them with a life of righteousness. Many people assume God is mad at them.

Where do they get that idea?

Many times that idea comes from their own guilty conscience. Guilt and its cousin shame are powerful. All people are aware of God and are aware they do not measure up, but not all people know what God thinks of them. They know they don't want to change.

Other times the idea that 'God is angry' comes from Christians. We who are believers are many times more famous for what we disapprove of or cannot tolerate rather than sharing about our gracious loving Father.

MARK 5:11-13:

A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. 12 The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." 13 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.

We find in verses 11-13 a potential problem for some as we are reading the Gospel of Mark. Twice in the Gospels, here and when Jesus curses the fig tree (Matthew 21, Mark 11) we see Jesus associated with destruction. Jesus being associated with destruction does not sit well with some folks and is out of character for Jesus given His life-giving nature. Jesus heals, provides, comforts, and builds... He does not destroy.

"See... God is a prick and so is His Son and therefore should not be believed." If you've never come across someone who believed the previous statement, you need to get out more.

If we look quite closely at these verses, however, Jesus did not command the demons to leave the man and enter the pigs... that destructive path was the idea of the demons and Jesus only gave permission. I do not think I am rationalizing anything or splitting hairs or making any excuses for people that see God as fickle.

Yes, Jesus is sovereign.

Yes, the demons wanted to go into the pigs.

Yes, Jesus let them.

The destruction of the pigs shows us that Jesus has complete authority over everything including demons. Jesus can destroy demons and restore, forgive, and make all things right. It is also true that in giving permission, Jesus prioritized the health and well-being of the man over the health and well-being of the pigs.

MARK 5:14-17 (ESV):

Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. 15 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. 16 Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. 17 Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

The man's condition had completely changed. His composure and peace now matches Jesus. Where once he was chaotic and wild and hurting, he is now peace-filled and orderly and dressed. I can imagine his whole world changed. His whole outlook changed. The healing change might even feel like a dream to him.

We find a few interesting attitudes with the townsfolk that may or may not surprise us:

First, notice that the people were afraid (verse 15). The man went from demon-possessed and wild to peaceful. That change did not bring gladness to them, but fear. Fear because they could not explain it. Fear because it

was change. Fear because it was different. Change, the unknown, and differences brought the townspeoples fear.

We are not so different from them. We peeples are like them peeples. We fear what we cannot explain. We fear change. We fear what is different. I hope you can see in this passage that their fear is misplaced, unfounded, and got in the way of having a relationship with Jesus. It is the same for us.

Second, notice that the people asked Jesus to leave (verse 17). This is one of the most important verses in all of the passage and the most heartbreaking. Jesus has just worked a true miracle against the actual forces of darkness in this region and all He gets for His effort is a thumbs down and a request to leave. He came, He saw, He conquered, and they did not give Him the t-shirt. It seems like the people feared Jesus more than the demons or loved pigs more than people. The townsfolk rejected what Jesus was offering.

We need to understand that not everyone who encounters Jesus will accept Him. Some people will reject Jesus even though they experience Him. Some want their life the way they want it and they don't want God playing in their sandbox. Some do not want to submit to Jesus as Lord and Savior.

It is heartbreaking when someone we love rejects Jesus. I think it is even more emotional when they accept Jesus for a while and then the struggles of this life or worry or temptation or doubts left untended steal away their faith and they walk away from God. People have a choice to do

that. All of us do. Jesus does not force faith on any of us. Jesus could have demanded respect after He healed this man and helped their entire area, but Jesus let them choose. He lets us choose. He lets the people we love choose.

MARK 5:18-20 (ESV):

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with Him. 19 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." 20 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.

As the passage closes, we have a stark contrast of begging. Actually, we have had begging the whole time through the passage. The demons begged Jesus not to torture them and asked that they go into pigs. The townspeople beg Jesus to leave their region. Now, in verse 18, the man who had been healed begs to go with Jesus.

What a contrast!

In response to healing, the town wants Jesus to leave.

In response to healing, the man wants to go with Jesus.

We learn several important truths from Jesus' response:

First, it is the job of every convert to be a disciple that follows Jesus. Our desire as Christians above all else should be to 'be with Jesus.' More than one passage in the New Testament commands us to abide in Jesus... to

pick up our cross and follow Him... to dwell in His presence... and to follow after Him on the narrow way.

That means we deny ourselves and we submit to Jesus as Lord and Savior. That means we spend time with God in prayer, Bible study, discussing Scripture sharpening one another, worshipping, tithing, meditating on God, listening to Christian music, and practicing spiritual disciplines like rest, fasting, and solitude. We should be committed to anything that drives us towards God and allows us and encourages us to spend time with Jesus.

Why spend time with Jesus? *Because it is Jesus Who breaks our chains* [**Essential King Jesus**].

Second, it is the job of every convert to be a disciple that tells others what the Lord has done for us and how He has had mercy on us. This means we cannot hide our sins. This means we cannot hide how we have changed. We must share the story of how we once we lost, but in our lost-ness Jesus found us and gave us a clean slate. None of us are pure or sinless. All of us in Christ are forgiven and blameless.

If we keep Jesus to ourselves as a private matter, we betray everything Jesus has done. This means we encourage our family members to read the Bible and ask questions about faith. This means we watch carefully for opportunities to pray for our friends and share with them the hope that we have. This means we dig into our faith so that we can explain what we believe and why to others.

Why share Jesus? *Because it is Jesus Who can and will break their chains* [Essential King Jesus].

APPLICATION WITH A LEFT-TURN TO PAUL'S WORDS

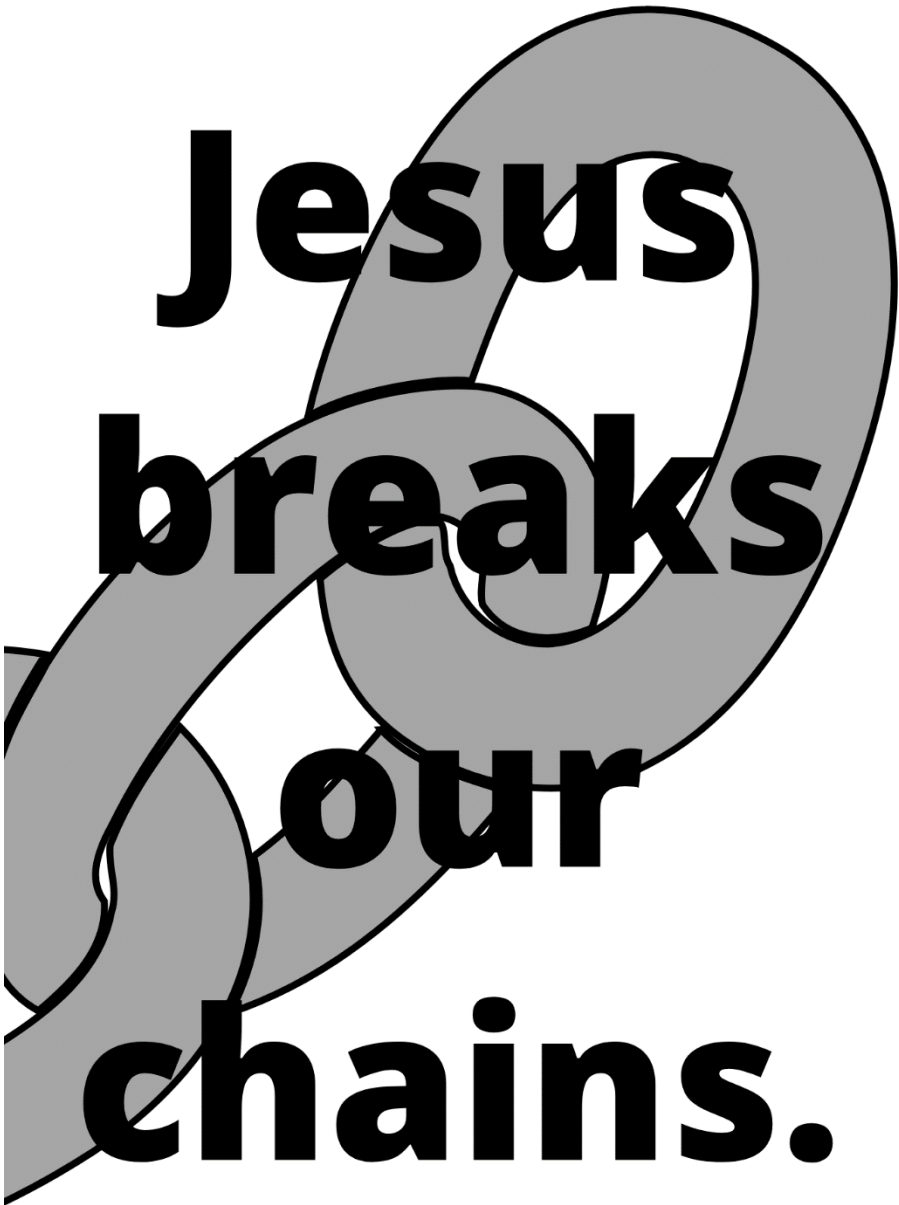
I do not know what chains you down in life.

Romans 8 (written by the Apostle Paul) tells us that we can “*set our minds on the things of the flesh*” (verse 5) and those things chain us to that kind of life that is hostile to God (verse 7). Chains of the flesh mean we cannot and do not want to submit to God (verse 7) and do not please God (verse 8).

Galatians 5 (written by the Apostle Paul) lists things like “*sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.*” Each of those things in the Apostle Paul’s list in Galatians 5 is a link in a chain to a kind of life that God does not want for us.

Galatians 6 tells us that if we sow into fleshly sinful things that fleshly sinful things is all we will get out of our lives (verse 8). We reap what we sow.

I do not know what chains you down in life, but I do know that King Jesus breaks our chains and offers forgiveness, grace, a way out of temptation, a clean slate, a do-over, a path forward, a new identity, a seal of approval, and so much mire. Jesus breaks all our chains and offers a life lived in Him and for Him.



QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

How are you broken?

If you are honest with yourself, what chains do you have?

Thinking over the whole demon-possessed man episode, what shocks you the most?

So... what have you done that makes you think God is mad at you?

Do you know someone who feels God is a big angry menace in the sky?

What does it mean for our issues... all our issues... that Jesus is sovereign?

Do you take issue with Jesus' destructive act?

Do you take issue that 1000s of pigs were destroyed, killed, and drowned to save 1 human being?

Why might someone choose to reject Jesus?

Have you rejected Jesus?

What sins do you hide that might help someone else?

Is Jesus a private matter for you?

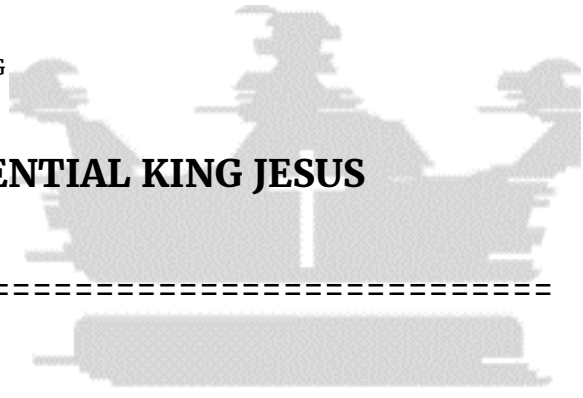
Do you sow and invest in your fleshly life more or your spiritual life more?

#EssentialKingJesus

Focus on the Family offers a one-time complimentary consultation from a Christian perspective.
Reach a counselor at 1-855-771-HELP (4357)

Also look at...

<https://www.ccef.org/resources/>



CHAPTER 6 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS REJECTED

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*Essential King Jesus:
Jesus can be rejected.*
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Sometimes we forget why people don't believe what we believe or do what we do or think like we think or watch what we watch. Everyone is different. Our experiences and thought processes are all different.

For example, I do not understand why some of you people like coffee. Coffee smells good, but then when you drink it you are greeted with a terrible taste. In my life, I have not had more than 1 cup of coffee total. Some of you find that very strange. Well, I think you who drink cup after cup of coffee a day are strange!

For example, I forget that Star Wars is not a normal part of life for some people. I am reminded of this fact every time I make a Star Wars reference in a staff meeting and one of my folks says, "I've never seen it." "Excuse me, whah?" I think now she just hasn't seen any of it out of stubbornness, but you'd have to check with her on that.

For example, many many people love country music. You love songs where you lose your wife, truck, dog, and all you are left with is friends in low places. I don't like music like that. Not all the time, at least.

Sometimes we forget why people don't believe what we believe or do what we do or think like we think or watch what we watch.

This tendency to forget is also true in spiritual matters. People come to Jesus at different stages of life (or not at all) and our path to Jesus may be different than others around us. Make no mistake... Jesus is the path... but how we start on the path looks different.

We forget that not all people come to Jesus in the same way. It is also true that people reject Jesus and sometimes we forget that. It is possible to be a Christian so long that we cannot imagine why anyone would say "no" to God or reject Jesus or get tired of talking about the Bible or spiritual matters.

People do reject Jesus.
We forget that.

People not only reject Jesus in our day, but people rejected Jesus to His Face.

READ MARK 6:1-6 (ESV):

He went away from there and came to His hometown, and His disciples followed Him. 2 And on the Sabbath He began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? What is the wisdom given to Him? How are such mighty works done by His hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary and Brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him. 4 And Jesus said

to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in His hometown and among His relatives and in His own household.” 5 And He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And He marveled because of their unbelief. And He went about among the villages teaching.

REASONS FOR JESUS' REJECTION IN NAZARETH

Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth where He grew up from approximately two years old until He left for His ministry at about thirty. People in Nazareth knew Jesus and apparently they knew of His growing reputation as well because they asked Him to teach on the Sabbath in the synagogue.

Jesus spoke.

People listened.

People were astonished.

People rejected Jesus.

Whoa, that de-escalated quickly!

The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus because even though they listened; they associated Him as a carpenter and not a spiritual teacher. During the time He grew up, He learned the carpentry trade and was considered a carpenter. Carpenters do carpentry work. In their estimation, carpenters do not teach from God's Word. They could not reconcile the wisdom coming from Jesus from what they knew of Him and how they remembering Him growing up.

The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus because some of them doubted His legitimacy and His birth. Some in town may have thought He was an illegitimate child. How do we know this? They call Him 'Son of Mary' (verse 3) which means the story of Joseph not technically being Jesus' father had gotten around. Even if Joseph were dead, He would be referred to as a 'Son of Joseph' in their culture. He was not. They considered the message and then tossed out the Messenger because there was some unknown in His background they didn't understand.

The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus because they knew His brothers and sisters and they seemed normal and ordinary. None of Jesus' brothers or sisters were exercising demons (Mark 1, 5), cleansing lepers (Mark 1), healing paralytics (Mark 2), restoring withered hands (Mark 2), teaching in parables (Mark 4), calming storms with a word (Mark 3), or raising people back to life (Mark 5).

These miracles followed Jesus and told the masses that this Man was something else... and yet His family was normal. The townspeople did not accept Jesus because they could not reconcile the Man standing before them with His family.

Overall, see verse 2 clearly, the majority of people in Nazareth saw His authority and wisdom and affirmed His reputation. He was indeed teaching about God! He was astonishing in the wisdom He presented! The miracles He was doing were real! They all knew it... and yet... they are offended.

Offense led to astonishment.
Astonishment led to a lack of trust.
A lack of trust led to rejection.

Jesus was rejected.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

Each chapter of this book we are drawing out one principle from a chapter in the Gospel of Mark. My prayer overall is that as you make your way through the Gospel of Mark, that you will encounter the **Essential King Jesus** and bolster your faith or perhaps find it for the first time. Each chapter I want to share one essential truth that is important for you to believe and then also communicate to others about Jesus. We are focusing on the **Essential King Jesus**.

Jesus returns to His hometown of Nazareth where He grew up and we encounter Truth about King Jesus: *Jesus can be rejected*.

It could be that you have been a Christian for so long that you cannot fathom why someone would reject Jesus. Mark 6 shares with us that Jesus was rejected in His own hometown. People rejected Jesus when He was staring them in the face! People rejected Jesus when they heard and saw and knew Him to be true... yet... they were offended and rejected Him.

Why do people reject Jesus?
Why... maybe... have *you* rejected Jesus?

REASON 1: “I HAVE NO NEED OF A SAVIOR”

Picture if you will a most wonderful scene in the mountains... not the beach mind you... but the mountains. The scene narrows to a lazy stream and a person floating in an inner tube. The weather is perfect. They have a drink in their hand and feel so relaxed and are living their best life floating lazily down the river. Calm. Wonderful. Great.

Another person is on the shore waving their arms and calling out and trying to get the attention of the lazy tuber. The person throws out a rope into the calm serene river. Why? The person on shore knows that there is a deadly waterfall downstream that will ruin the lazy day of the floating tuber, but the floating person rejects the rope and just ignores the calls and the hand motions. This person is floating blissfully and ignorantly toward danger!

Why? They love what they're doing and don't see a need to be saved.

Reason #1 people reject Jesus (in no order by the way): They do not see the need of a Savior. Most of us think that we are pretty much good people. *I'm ok and you're ok. I mean, I'm not a serial killer or a drug dealer or a Tom Brady fan or anything like that. I have no huge failures in my life. I'm nice to my spouse and my kids are normal as can be... they are all pretty much good people. I give to charity. I'm pretty well-rounded and good.* People believe they are basically good and so they reject Jesus.

The message of Christianity is that because of our sin we are all dirty rotten scoundrels. We all have sinned and fallen short of what God wants for us and that means we are corrupt and a sinner and have issues. It is a difficult conversation when trying to share about Christ when one of the first steps is for the person to realize that they are a bad person. That does not always go well. It can be offensive and it can feel like someone is judging you when you press that a person is a sinner in need of a Savior.

That is offensive.
The Gospel is offensive.

Self-awareness of our sin is the first step towards Jesus. If a person is unwilling or unable to accept their sinfulness, then repentance can't happen and they will see no reason to accept Jesus. I might go so far as to say they *can't* accept Jesus if there is no awareness of sin. The Gospel zeros in on our sinfulness and our failures. I hope that makes sense for those of us who are aware of our sinfulness and can't understand why someone would keep their own soul in their own hands.

REASON 2: GOD DOESN'T ACT LIKE HE SHOULD

Picture if you will a most wonderful scene in the mountains on a lazy calm stream. The weather is perfect. The person floating down the river on an inner tube is relaxed and has a drink in their hand with one of those little fun umbrellas in it. They are living their best life floating lazily down the river. Calm. Wonderful. Great.

Another person is on the shore. This other person is waving their arms and calling out and throws out a rope into the calm serene river. The floating person rejects the rope and just ignores the calls and the hand motions because they figure that if there really was danger... signs would be posted or the government would have put up a barrier or the lazy river would be moving faster or there would be rushing sounds or the person on shore would have thrown a life preserver and not just a rope. So... because things didn't go how they expected... there is no issue.

Reason #2 people reject Jesus: God doesn't act like He should. You know there is a whole lot of terrible war, famine, obvious Christian hypocrisy, dying churches, floods, storms, innocent children dying, and lots of bad things that happen for a good God to exist. If a good God really did exist, then He should clean up some of the mess in the world so He would be seen clearly. A good God should not let so much evil happen. The bad things that happen in the world... the sinful things that happen in the world... make some think that because they happen and exist that a good God cannot possibly exist. Or if He does... He's a complete jerk. God doesn't act the way we think He should so people reject Jesus.

The message of Christianity is that yes the world is sinful and terrible, but God is good and holy and righteous. The sinfulness of the world does not change the character of God. The fact that God does not act like we think He should is a legitimate confounding issue. It is a real roadblock of faith. We believe that God promises to be with us through all of the terrible no good very bad days,

but for some that is not enough. That is not enough of an explanation.

Sin is a real problem. It is a real problem for the human soul and it is a real problem for the world we live in. Christians believe that Jesus came to redeem the world from sin, but He did not take sin out of the world... He paid for it. God is sovereign and does not prevent all war, famine, Christian hypocrisy, dying churches, floods, storms, innocent children dying, and lots of other bad things. Some people don't like that and they reject Jesus.

REASON 3: THE WORLD IS MORE APPEALING

Picture if you will a most wonderful scene in the mountains... not the beach mind you... but the mountains. The scene narrows to a lazy stream and a person floating in an inner tube. The weather is perfect. The water is cool. The breeze is perfect. The sounds of the babbling brook are nice and relaxing. The person likes where they are at.

There is another person waving their arms and calling out and trying to get the attention of the lazy tuber so that they will come ashore because of the waterfall. The person throws out a rope into the calm serene relaxing river. The floating person, hears the warning, but rejects the rope and then just ignores the calls and the hand motions because they like what they are doing and being where they are seems more appealing than coming ashore. They are used to the calm river and want to stay where they are at even if they sort of know the waterfall is coming.

Reason #3 people reject Jesus: The world is more appealing. From some perspectives, the standards of the world and the offer of the world is more appealing than what Jesus offers. There is the reason why the way of the world is described as a wide path or a wide gate and the way of Jesus is the narrow path or the narrow gate. There is a reasons why it is called “the pleasures of the flesh” and also “spiritual disciplines.” We are talking about two different ways of living. We are talking about living life for self, flesh, and earthly desires and another way of living that focuses on others, spiritual life, and denial of self. Depending on your perspective, one looks like freedom and the other looks like rules and regulations.

The message of Christianity is that this world and all that it offers is not freedom or pleasure, but rather chains and baggage and hurt. God is the author of life and the human soul and knows how to live life best.

The world is appealing because everything about the world is designed to drag someone away from God. Satan does not want people to come to Christ so he has done and will do everything to tempt people away from God into the world system focused on self. And you know what? He is successful.

RELATED REASON 4: “I DON’T WANT TO CHANGE”

There is a related reason to the reason above, Reason #4 that people reject Jesus is because they don’t want to change. Unwillingness to give up immoral practices or lifestyles also causes people to reject Jesus Christ. Many people refuse to commit their life to Him because, if they

did, they would have to admit that the choices they have made and the way they want to run their life is sinful. It was bad. It was terrible and in the future they will have to be accountable to God.

The message of Christianity is that Jesus is Savior and Lord and yes... committing to Him means life change. People don't want God interfering with what they consider their good life and the way they want to live. Thinking about eternal judgement when they die is not something people want to do. Change is hard no matter what it is or the issue. All of us resist change, some more than others, and wholesale changing our life for God is not appealing.

Such change touches money, relationships, feelings, dating, sex, voting, entertainment, music, books, movies, TV, and every single aspect of life because Jesus is Lord over all parts of the life of a Christian. Some reject that.

REASON 5: JESUS IS CONFUSED WITH SOMETHING ELSE

Picture if you will a most wonderful scene in the mountains on an inner tube floating down the river with perfect weather and water temperature and even a side tube filled with favorite drinks and snacks. A good book. So relaxing. The tube lazily floats down the river.

A person is on the shore is waving their arms and calling out and trying to get the attention of the lazy tuber by jumping up and down and waving hands and calling out. Why? The person on shore knows that there is a deadly waterfall downstream that will ruin the lazy day of the

floating tuber, but the floating person rejects the rope because they think the person on shore is just eccentric and saying 'hi.' There is confusion.

Reason #5 people reject Jesus: Jesus is confused with something else. Sometimes the message of Jesus and Who Jesus is can be confused with something else or merged with something else.

For example, a person may believe that all religions lead to the same God so one path is just as good as another. Christianity claims Jesus is the only way, so there is confusion.

Or, Jesus is confused with the idea that if we just live a good life that we all get to heaven... all good people get into heaven and all bad people just don't.

Confusing still is the belief that, "If you give money to Jesus, He'll make you healthy and wealthy and wise." Plant that seed of faith and Jesus will give you your best life now. Confusing.

The message of Christianity is very simple and also very important. God so loved the world that He sent His One and Only Son to die for the sins of each and every person and by believing in Jesus Christ we have life in His Name.

That's it.

Jesus can be confused with being a Republican, being an American patriot, being pro-life, being pro-immigration, being homophobic, and a whole host of other issues that

get twisted and confusing. Jesus plus something else always confuses someone as they are trying to get to the Truth of Who Jesus is and what it means to be a Christian. This confusion can lead to rejection.

RELATED REASON 6: CHRISTIANS

The biggest related reason to the thoughts above is #6: Christians. Jesus can be confused with Christians. Christians... followers of Jesus... you and I... can be what people are confused about because we are very poor examples of following Christ. Christians are not Jesus. The Church is not Jesus. Christians are sinful people just like the people we are sharing the Gospel with. The Church is full of sinful hypocritical people. We never measure up and that is confusing because why would someone want to accept Christ and then just end up being a false hypocrite?

Hypocrisy is real.

Christian author Brennan Manning famously said, “The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.”¹¹ In your head if you then sing DC Talk’s *Jesus Freak*... that’s where they got it.

It is a real issue when we believers live in a certain way and hurt and sin and that impacts those around us who

¹¹ The Ragamuffin Gospel, 1990

are watching and do not yet know Jesus. People reject Jesus because of us.

Boy does that hurt.

REASON 7: THEY DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW

Picture if you will a most wonderful scene in the mountains... not the beach mind you... but the mountains. The scene narrows to a lazy stream and a person floating in an inner tube. The weather is perfect. They have a drink in their hand and feel so relaxed and are living their best life floating lazily down the river. Calm. Wonderful. Great.

Another person is on the shore. This other person is waving their arms and calling out and trying to get the attention of the lazy tuber. The person throws out a rope into the calm serene river. Why? Because this person is floating blissfully and ignorantly toward danger! The person in the tube never actually hears. They do not notice anything the person on shore has done because their eyes are closed and they are snoozing the day away.

Reason #7 people reject Jesus: They don't actually know. It could be that you and I assume that someone has heard the message of Jesus and in reality they have not heard. How is that possible? It is possible because though they may have heard words *about* Jesus, they never really understood what it was about. It is possible because in our American culture we think we live in a Christian nation where everyone has heard the Gospel and owns a Bible, but that is not true. It is possible because we left

the sharing of the Gospel up to Sunday School teachers and we never did it ourselves. Maybe the person grew up in a home where no one had a Bible and no one cared.

The drive of Christianity is that those who know tell those who don't. Make no assumptions that someone knows. Make no assumptions that someone has heard. Make no assumptions that a person has read the Bible and understood it. It is our job as believers in Jesus to share the Gospel and explain it and answer questions and pray and wait and share again and listen and pray.

MARK 6:6 (ESV):

“And He marveled because of their unbelief.”

Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth where He was rejected. **Essential King Jesus:** *Jesus can be rejected.*

Christians! It is our mission and calling and purpose to understand why those around us reject Jesus and meet those reasons by listening, praying, and talking over those reasons with a Spirit-infused heart.

Non-Christians! I also want to mention that if you are reading this and you have never accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior and you hold some of these reasons as your reason for rejecting Jesus, I'd love to listen and discuss. I'd love to talk over with you the reasons for rejecting Jesus.

SUMMARY

REASON 1: "I HAVE NO NEED OF A SAVIOR"

REASON 2: GOD DOESN'T ACT LIKE HE SHOULD

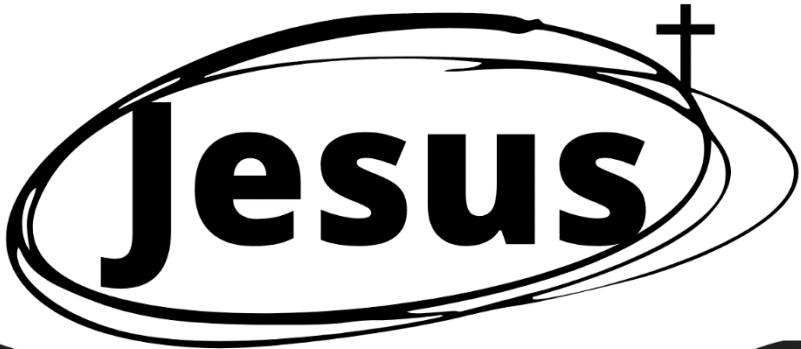
REASON 3: THE WORLD IS MORE APPEALING

RELATED REASON 4: "I DON'T WANT TO CHANGE"

REASON 5: JESUS IS CONFUSED WITH SOMETHING ELSE

RELATED REASON 6: CHRISTIANS

REASON 7: THEY DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW

Jesus 

**can
be** 

rejected. 



QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

Do you know someone who thinks they are pretty much a good solid person and don't need Jesus? How can you still talk to them about Christ?

In what ways have your disappointments with God impacted your faith?

What news headlines make people turn away from God?

What is it about the sinful nature that makes immorality attractive to us and holiness seem boring?

How can Jesus be confused with politics?

How can Jesus be confused with Christians?

How can Jesus be confused with Church?

How have you misrepresented your Savior and caused someone to doubt that Jesus is real?

What would be a sign someone doesn't know about Jesus?

Who in your family do you need to sit down and have a conversation about spiritual things?

... at work?

... at school?

... among friends?

... someone in crisis?

VERSES TO MEMORIZE IN CHAPTERS 5-6

MARK 5:36 (ESV)

“But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.”

MARK 6:34 (ESV)

“When He went ashore He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things.”

CHAPTER 7 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

THE TRAP OF HYPOCRISY

=====

Essential King Jesus:
Jesus distastes hypocrisy.

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The ruddy fishy-looking military leader says: “It’s a trap!” It is a famous line from Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi.¹² The character Admiral Ackbar, while engaging in an ambush on the large dangerous enemy Death Star... an enemy weapon... is informed that enemy ships have arrived after they begin their attack. Realizing that the enemy army was aware of their plans, was waiting, and prepared to defend itself, he exclaims famously, “It’s a trap!”

I think we see something similar happen in Mark 7 which happens over and over throughout Jesus’ ministry. The Pharisees and Teachers of the Law are often trying to trap Jesus in some manner to discredit Him. The passage we will look at in this chapter is one of those times.

The Pharisees and other folks from Jerusalem ask why Jesus’ disciples don’t wash their hands before they eat. This is not an innocent question, but meant to point out that Jesus and His disciples were not following the extra laws the Pharisees set up over the years... often called ‘*the traditions of the elders.*’

¹² LucasFilm, Ltd, 1983

You see, Exodus 30:17-21 prescribes that a basin of bronze was to be made and set up for the priests to wash before they go before the Lord and make sacrifices and minister before the people. Over the years, the religious leaders expanded this for all people before meals and at other times. The 'tradition' added to what God commanded.

The people from Jerusalem mean to point out wrongdoing on Jesus' part. This is meant to weave doubt into the minds of the disciples. The crowds ask why Jesus acts differently than what is expected. Jesus was not breaking God's Law in any way, but they made it seem like He was doing just that. The question is a trap.

Jesus does not answer the trap by falling into it, but rather goes on the offensive. He usually asks His own question or wisely sidesteps the trap, but here Jesus goes on the offensive, quotes from Isaiah, and narrows down the issue He sees in the Pharisees. It is an issue that you and I deal with as well.

OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND

Before we focus exactly on what Jesus says, I want you to know that what Jesus says to the Pharisees is rooted in Scripture. He directly quotes from Isaiah 29, but Isaiah is not the only book that He is drawing from. Other prophets have said the same truth and had the same message.

For example, AMOS 5:21-24 (ESV)...

"I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. 22 Even though you offer Me your burnt

offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. 23 Take away from Me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. 24 But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

And also MICAH 6:6–8 (ESV)...

“With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” 8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

You see there is a temptation for anyone who believes in God and is following Him to do exactly what the Pharisees are doing. I personally believe the temptation is understandable, but then in another life I was a Pharisee. The temptation is to go through the motions, only obey the letter of the law, or twist that which is true into something that is not. The temptation is to judge and blame and cast doubt. The temptation is to do religion... not have a relationship.

What they are doing has to do with hypocrisy, lips, and hearts. Those are three key words in the passage we are focusing on in Mark 7:

‘hypocrites’

‘lips’

‘heart’

MARK 7:6-8 (ESV)

6 And He said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; 7 in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ 8 You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

KEY WORD: HYPOCRITES

I find the word ‘hypocrite’ to be a very interesting word and a distasteful word. Even when I say the word ‘hypocrite’ aloud it just sounds bad. I automatically think of it as a bad word or a label that is undesirable. The root of the word comes from theater and describes someone who impersonates and plays a part. It has to do with wearing a mask on stage and pretending to be a character. It means to simulate, pretend, or to fool. A ‘hypocrite’ is pretending to be something we are not.

Jesus never looks fondly upon hypocrites.

We find in the Scriptures that Jesus is filled with grace and mercy for those we might call ‘sinners’ and those of less desirable character, but Jesus is hard and difficult on those who are hypocrites and are blasphemers against the Holy Spirit. If you appear to be Godly, but on the inside are empty, He has a harsh word.

He says in MATTHEW 6:2 (ESV)...

“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets,

that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.”

MATTHEW 6:5 (ESV)

“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.”

MATTHEW 6:16 (ESV)

“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.”
And perhaps the most telling passage of all...

And even later in **MATTHEW 23:13–15 (ESV)**...

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. 15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.”

Jesus’ perspective on those who feign Godliness, but really are not, are evil. These folks who seek to be praised by others or seek to be seen by others are children of hell and so are those who follow them. Jesus speaks true.

I believe that hypocrisy exists in the Christian faith in two forms. One we can do nothing about and the other we can.

First, hypocrisy exists because we serve a holy, perfect, and righteous God who calls us to be holy, perfect, and righteous. None of us are. By the very nature of the call of Jesus to be like Him in all things... we will fail. We do fail. We all sin. We all sin on accident and we all sin on purpose. There are sins of omission and sins of commission. The sinful nature every person deals with does not go away when we become a Christian.¹³ That sinful nature is paid for and we are called to fight against it.

So... in that sense... every single one of us is a hypocrite because we want to desperately be something we are not. I would say that the word '*hypocrite*' doesn't even fit as the word to use in this situation as failing at something does not mean we're pretending. Did you catch that? Failing at something does not mean we are pretending. That's a good word for somebody!

This type of hypocrisy we can do nothing about but look to Jesus and trust in Him. We claim the blood of Jesus because we are sinners. In the end, this is not hypocrisy at all, but we sorta think it is.

Second, hypocrisy exists because we do it on purpose, are faithless, twist the Bible to meet our own needs, and manipulate ourselves and others to look Godly. Hypocrisy exists because we give up. This is the kind that Jesus is focusing on in His words to the Pharisees. This is for reals hypocrisy. This is the play acting, pretending, and lie-filled living that makes Jesus go on the offense when talking to these religious leaders. Jesus recognizes

¹³ I learned recently this is called 'The Doctrine of Indwelling Sin'

that these men before Him have twisted the Word of God and are leading people away from God. They look Godly, but are not. They play a religious leader in public, but not in private. “They are not a religious leader, but did stay at a Holiday Inn Express last night.”

Overall, what does hypocrisy look like in our day?
What does hypocrisy look like in Christianity in America?
What does hypocrisy look like in our church?
What about us?

- Confusing politics with Jesus and voting for immoral laws and candidates
- Confusing patriotism with Jesus and ignoring evil in our society
- Coming to church to be seen as a good person
- Coming to church only to drum up busine\$\$
- Telling others that playing cards in church is evil, but you play cards at home
- Keeping your Bible in your car so that you can have it for Sunday
- Teaching your children and grandchildren to be pure sexually, but you live with someone
- Christians claim the sanctity of marriage, but divorce at the same rates as non-Christians

- We claim we want a friendly church, but if someone sits where we want then we glare
- Saying that Jesus and God is love, but we post hateful biting things on social media
- Anytime a Bible verse is misused out of context to hold power or abuse
- Having blessings and curses come from the same mouth
- We never admit we sin

The word '*hypocrite*' is a bad word because it means we are playing or faking *on purpose*. It is a word that sheds light on our weaknesses and in places where we fail, but does so when we *cease to care that we sin*. What should we do? Clearly Jesus rightly judges that hypocrisy is a sin.

What should we do?

First, take our walk with Jesus seriously. Accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior is not a one-time gig or a fad or a phase or a thing to do when we are kids. Accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior is a lifelong commitment to become more like Jesus every single day. It is a process. It is moving upward. It is moving towards Jesus. It is growing up in our salvation. It is continually being forgiven and redeemed. We must take our faith seriously and live it out. Walking with Jesus needs to be part of our identity and not just a thing for Sundays.

Second, be humble in the things we say. Many times our mouth gets us in trouble. Sometimes truth comes out of our mouths, but it is not combined with love. Sometimes tactfulness and patience is the order of the day while we let truth sink in. Being humble and patient and letting the Holy Spirit do His work is what is needed most often. It is important that if we say something is true that it matches in our own lives. It is important if we talk the talk to walk the walk. Practice what we preach.

The first key word in this passage is the word ‘*hypocrite*’ and it is a pretty heavy word. It’s a bad word. The next key words are ‘*lips*’ and ‘*heart*’ and they fall under the umbrella of the first word. ‘*Lips*’ and ‘*heart*’ dig deeper into what Jesus is teaching and how He is going on the offensive with the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law.

KEY WORDS: ‘LIPS’ and ‘HEART’

MARK 7:6-8 (ESV)

6 And He said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; 7 in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ 8 You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

Jesus is making a huge contrast in this passage. He is exposing the Pharisees and their views as counterproductive for their own spiritual health and the spiritual health of the people they are leading. The contrast is between the ‘*tradition of the elders*’ and then what the Bible actually teaches. I want you to notice that

Jesus does not use the phrase that the Pharisees and Sadducees regularly use... they call these rules... '*the tradition of the elders.*' These rules were handed down over many years by many teachers and leaders. What does Jesus call these rules? At the end of verse 7, Jesus calls them '*the tradition of men.*'

I think that is very telling. Jesus downgrades these additional rules and regulations that the religious leaders cling to as not helpful or authoritative in any way, but rather just human-centered rules and in no way are divine-inspired boundaries. Jesus says they are just men enforcing opinions.

It is important to note that Jesus does not condemn all tradition or thinking for ourselves, but He does not want our thoughts or our traditions to override the Scriptures. Only the Bible is infallible and divinely inspired. The Bible is the foundation for truth in our lives and measures all other things we know and learn. The Bible is God's Word and when we read the Bible we encounter God Himself. We in the Church can have traditions, but we must take care to distinguish between essential spiritual truth and human traditions.

Remember the key words are: '*lips*' and '*heart.*'

VERSE 6

When human tradition or human rules overtake the Scriptures in priority and authority, it leads to our lips honoring God, but our hearts being far from Him. There is a mismatch on the inside of us. It leads to hypocrisy

where we forget our first love and we end up not honoring God and we honor everything but Him. What we say is important and our words must match our heart and our mind and our emotions and the faith that we proclaim.

VERSE 7

When human tradition overtakes Scriptures, it leads to God's people worshipping in vain. Everything we do in a worship service should be rooted in the Scriptures and not just done because we've always done it that way or because we want people to see us in a certain light. If we just go through the motions, we end up being a club and not the Church. The Church is a group of sinners that have found Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and we gather to celebrate His life, death, and the offer of grace to us. God is the point. Helping people to find and follow Jesus is the point of who we are as the Church.

VERSE 8

When tradition overtakes the Scriptures in priority and authority, it leads us to hold onto human traditions and not to the Word of God. It is only the Word of God that is eternal and will not fade or perish. It is only the eternal principles of the Bible that will keep us heading in the right direction towards God. Human rules fail. Humans fail. God never fails. We need to make sure we distinguish as a Church those things in the Bible that are eternal principles and those things that are human traditions. We need to anchor ourselves in the eternal principles.

A FICTIONAL EXAMPLE

The movie *A Knight's Tale*¹⁴ is a 2001 adventure romantic-comedy movie starring Heath Ledger. I loved it when it came out and I love it still. It is inspired on some plot points to Geoffrey Chaucer's short story 'The Knight's Tale,' but has its own story (it's one of those stories you were supposed to read in English class, but didn't).

A Knight's Tale is about a squire named William Thatcher who dreams of competing in jousting tournaments, but is forbidden to do so because he is not of noble birth. Only people of noble birth and who are knights can joust. In the beginning of the story, his master, Sir Hector dies.

William decides to masquerade as a knight in order to sign up for some jousts. He beats other real knights all over the English countryside. William literally dresses up like a knight and passes himself off as one. He puts on a helmet and calls himself a knight. He wins and provides money and food for himself and the other servants.

William assumes the name 'Sir Ulrich von Liechtenstein from Gelderland.' It is totally made up. None of it is true. Towards the end of the movie, skipping the romantic-comedy part of the movie, the group travels to London for the World Championship in jousting. Upon arriving, William recalls leaving his father to squire for Sir Hector and learn to become a knight, hoping to "change his stars." It sort of happened. William visits his poor peasant father and William's enemy in the film finds out

¹⁴ Sony Pictures, 2001

he is faking. The enemy finds out he is not royal or noble or even a knight. The authorities are alerted.

William is arrested and placed in stocks. He is in trouble. Through a twist of fate during the tournaments, William has made friends with Prince Edward who reveals himself and declares William to be a knight.

Now, the message of the movie overall is that we should never give up because a person's true worth is not tied to a label or social standing or money, but from the inside. To have success, you must have both confidence and determination and a bit of luck.

Actually, the message of the movie is that hypocrisy is okay as long as you have friends in high places that will sweep everything under the rug. The real lesson here isn't 'believe in yourself,' but rather 'fake it until you make it and have rich friends.'

Now, I realize that this story is sort of about hypocrisy and sort of not. It is definitely about hypocrisy, since a man pretends to be a noble knight and is not. Yet, the movie is not about hypocrisy in the Church... in the Christian faith... which is what we are talking about.

Honestly, I don't want to share a story about how a preacher fell into sin or how a church secretary embezzled money or about a national ministry that lied for money or all of the other stories you expect to hear. I don't want to talk about #ChurchToo and how many churches sweep sin away and try to hide it. I don't want to tear down the Church.

Honestly, I also don't want to share personal stories about how my mouth gets me into trouble and how my anger makes me ashamed or the 100s of other ways I say one thing and struggle to live it out. I don't want to share shameful stories from my past, my present, or predict how I will fail in the future.

Honestly, I don't want to do any of those things. I do, however, want you to be honestly mindful of hypocrisy in your mind and in your heart and on your lips and to stomp it out when you find it. That is what I want. I don't want to share stories that make us shake our heads at the Church or at other Christians. Maybe I should, but I don't want to.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

As I reflect on Jesus' words in Mark 7, the **Essential King Jesus** in this passage is: *Jesus distastes hypocrisy.*

APPLICATION

We apply these words from Jesus in the manner I already said. We honestly and prayerfully self-examine and we make changes to stomp out hypocrisy in our minds, emotions, and bodies. We are not perfect, but on purpose hypocrisy has no place in our walk with Jesus. This is important for us to know and it is important for those that we share the Gospel with that they know this as well.

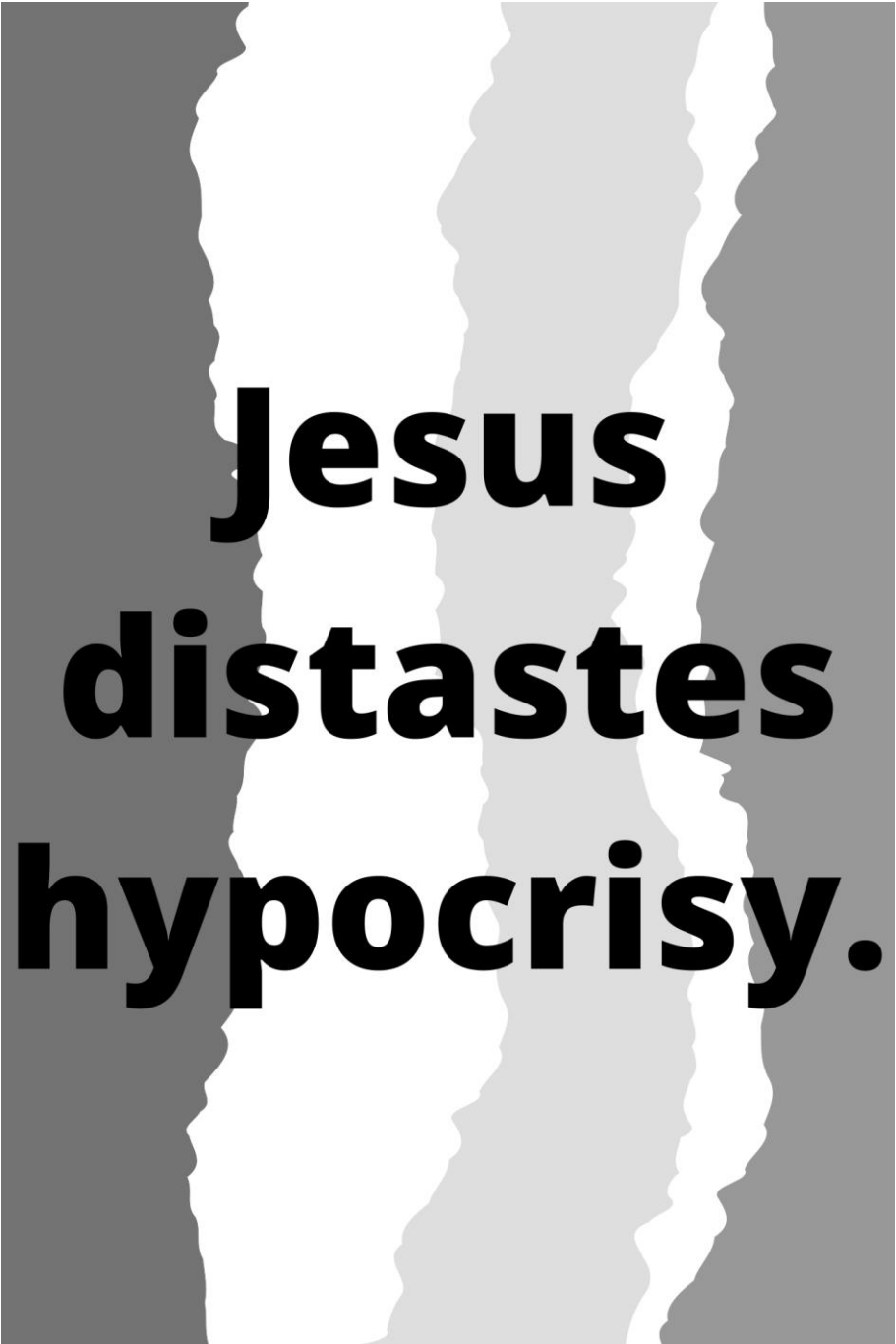
INVITATION

I have an invitation for you if you are reading this book and you are not a Christian. It could also be that you are a Christian, but you are disillusioned with what you see around you. The invitation is the same.

I invite you to have a conversation. Not a one-time conversation, but a conversation where you bring your list of hypocrisy that has turned you off from Jesus or the Bible... and talk about it.

If you happen to do it with me, you will talk and I will listen. I will talk. I hope you will listen. I invite you to have a conversation with the person who goes to church in your life or the person who gave you this book.

Talking through these obstacles to Jesus is something we want to do.



**Jesus
distastes
hypocrisy.**

QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

How do you fail as a believer and live the label 'hypocrisy?'

How are you an actual hypocrite?

What is dangerous about hypocrisy?

Why does Jesus distaste hypocrisy?

How do your lips get you in trouble?

How does your heart get you in trouble?

If a person came to you with a list of hypocrisy they see in the church (or even in you), how would you respond?

OPINION: SAMPLING OF THINGS IN THE CHURCH (OR THAT CHRISTIANS DO) THAT ARE 'TRADITIONS' AND NOT IN THE BIBLE.

Any order of service
Ash Wednesday Stuff
Baptism robes
Christmas and Advent Stuff
Church Board, Bylaws, Committees
Denominational Hierarchy
Easter Stuff
Funerals and Funeral dinners
Having a Baptistery
Infant Baptism
Instrument selections for worship service
Junior Church and separated Youth Groups
Lent Stuff
Most of what the Catholic Church does
Mother's Day Sermons
No card playing, dancing, or fun in church
Passing trays for communion and/or offering
Pastoral Robes
Pews
Praying before you eat
Service times
Sprinkling for Baptism
Sunday School
Using certain Bible translations
VBS
Wearing suits and dresses to church
Wedding Rings
Worship music styles and preference
Worshipping on Sundays specifically

CHAPTER 8 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS CHRIST

=====

*Essential King Jesus:
Jesus is the Christ.*

=====

A job title tells much about the job that a person does. It shares with others what they do and what is expected of them. Some companies or industries go for more creative titles to catch people's attention. I've seen and heard about these over the years:

Ambassador of Buzz
Lead Grammar Fascist
Head Schmooserizer
Genius
Head of Customer Wow
Dr. Fix
Interwebs Mechanic
Paranoid-in-Chief
Security Princess
Digital Overlord
Dr. No
Executive Sherpa
Indentured Rockstar
Lead Enabler
Herder of Helpless People
Transparent Wall Technician
Cube Guru
Head Baby Wrangler
Child Development Associate
Dayshift Domestic Manager

Dwelling Custodian
Tiny Human Entertainer
Tantrum Negotiator

I mention those funny job titles because we are talking about a serious title in this chapter. We are well into Jesus'¹⁵ ministry as we are in Mark 8. In this chapter alone...

Jesus feeds 4,000

He faces off again against the Pharisees

He warns His disciples about the Pharisees

He heals a blind man

Predicts His suffering and His death.

There is a lot going on around Jesus!

MARK 8:27-30 (ESV)

27 And Jesus went on with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" 28 And they told Him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." 29 And He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered Him, "You are the Christ." 30 And He strictly charged them to tell no one about Him.

THE WORD IN THE CONFESSION: CHRIST

The word that is most significant comes as Simon Peter confesses his answer to the question of Jesus. Jesus asks His disciples for the scuttlebutt and rumors about Him. He knows they hear what people say.

¹⁵ By the way, I have no idea if it is Jesus' or Jesus's... seen both

Some folks who do not realize John the Baptist and Jesus lived at the same time think Jesus is John. Makes sense. Rumors about an eccentric teacher in the desert are easily confused with one another.

Other people think He might be Elijah come down from the whirlwind that took him into Heaven (2 Kings 2). There was also a solid rumor that he was another prophet of God who had returned. The disciples tell Jesus about all the stuff they had heard about Him.

The word that is most significant comes as Simon Peter answers Jesus' real question. Jesus has now spent a significant amount of time with these 12 men and they have seen and experienced much with Him.

They have seen:

exorcism of demons (Mark 1, 5, 7)

lepers healed (Mark 1)

paralyzed people walk (Mark 2)

heard Jesus teaching (Mark 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8)

a withered hand restored (Mark 3)

a storm calmed (Mark 4)

a girl brought back from the dead (Mark 5)

Jesus rejected (Mark 6)

feeding of thousands (Mark 6, 8)

Him walking on water (Mark 6)

the deaf healed (Mark 7)

the blind healed (Mark 8)

In verse 29, Simon Peter answers:

"You are the Christ."

The word 'Christ' is a significant word. It is a heavy word. It means a lot. Christ is not Jesus' last name. Christ is a title. Christ is a very significant Biblical title.

=====
In my opinion, these are the options if Jesus had or needed a last name, in order of my preference:

Davidson	Nazarene	Bethlehemson
Josephson	Godson	Barjoseph
Carpenter	Goodworker	Bargod

=====
The word Christ comes from a Greek word. Christ is used 534 times in the New Testament. We know it is a title because, for example, in Matthew 2:4, we find that King Herod assembled *“all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born”* (ESV). A title is in view here.

Luke 2:26 shares with us about old man Simeon who, *“had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ”* (ESV).

In Luke 22:67 it was demanded of Jesus, *“If you are the Christ, tell us”* (ESV). Christ is a title; a very significant designation and one that eventually got Jesus killed.

The word Christ is a Greek word. John 1:41 tells us very clearly that 'Christ' also means 'Messiah.' John 1:41 says about Andrew, *“He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means Christ)”* (ESV).

Messiah is the Hebrew word of the same title which is the language of the Jewish people and the language of the Old Testament. Sometimes it is confusing when we read the Bible in English, but the original Scriptures have several languages all woven together at times. The 'Messiah' was the promised Savior. The Samaritan woman at the well says as much in John 4:25 when she confesses, *"I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things."* Jesus says in John 4:26, *"I Who speak to you am He."*

So we have this title assigned to Jesus... Christ or Messiah. They are the same word just from different languages. What does that word mean? Both words mean 'anointed.' Jesus of Nazareth is the 'Anointed One.' The Old Testament presents the idea that in God's Plan there would be One Who would come Who would be prophet, priest, king, deliverer, and savior all rolled into one.

Christ = Messiah = Anointed One = Jesus

We see in GENESIS 49:10 that it speaks in the Old Testament about this One Who would come...

"The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be His" (ESV).

The Prophet Isaiah does as well in several passages because he speaks much about the Savior-to-Come:

"He will be a holy place; for both Israel and Judah He will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem He will be a trap and a snare" (ISAIAH 8:14, ESV).

ISAIAH 11:10 (ESV)

"In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to Him, and His resting place will be glorious."

ISAIAH 42:1-4 (ESV)

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my Chosen One in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on Him, and He will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out. In faithfulness He will bring forth justice; He will not falter or be discouraged till He establishes justice on earth. In His teaching the islands will put their hope."

Jesus is the Messiah that the People of God were waiting on. Jesus is the Christ. Jesus is the Anointed One that the Old Testament predicts will come and will fulfill the plan of God.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

As we reflect on Jesus in Mark 8, we come to one of the most basic truths about Jesus, the **Essential King Jesus** in this passage is: *Jesus is the Christ.*

CHRIST

What do we need to share with others about the Christ? To answer this question, we will use each of the letters of C-H-R-I-S-T to highlight a truth about Jesus that is important to share with others. I usually find such things silly, but... 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em.'

CHILD BORN OF A VIRGIN

A central Truth about Christ is that Jesus was born of a Virgin and His birth is an absolute divine motivated miracle. There has been and there will never be anyone even remotely like Jesus Christ.

LUKE 1:30-31 (ESV)

“And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you shall call His Name Jesus.”

LUKE 1:34-35 (ESV)

“And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Child to be born will be called Holy—the Son of God.”

The Christ was born of Mary who was a young woman who was a virgin. I have often marveled that among all the women born throughout time, that Jesus came from Mary. She was highly favored by God. There is nothing special or miraculous about her other than her total faith and willingness to serve God in the manner He needed.¹⁶

That makes Jesus 100% flesh and blood human. Jesus is unique. Jesus is flesh. Jesus is blood. He got hungry and thirsty and got splinters and had disappointments. He

¹⁶ The Catholic Church teaches that Mary was perpetually a virgin and also teaches something called the ‘Immaculate Conception.’ Most Protestants think they refer to Jesus’ birth when talking about this. Nope. The Immaculate Conception thoughts apply to Mary who must have (according to them) had a birth where she was without sin in order to eventually produce the Christ-child. This nowhere in any Scripture.

had to pee and stubbed His toe and also felt joy and excitement. The fact that Jesus was born shows us that what Jesus came to do is tied to humbleness and service. Jesus could have arrived from Heaven in some spectacular manner, but rather the plan was for Him to be born and grow and be a lowly human being. It makes no sense, but it is what Jesus did. It is Who Jesus is.

HEALER OF SIN

A central Truth about Christ is that Jesus was sent to heal us from sin. From the beginning of creation, human beings ignored God and went our own way. We disobeyed God and that is called sin. Human beings invited shame, guilt, pain, sickness, death, thorns, earthquakes, lying, mistreatment, and all manner of error into God's perfect Eden. That "all manner of error" is passed down from generation to generation. All of us are sick with sin.

ROMANS 3:22-25 (ESV) says to us...

"the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith."

God knew we would sin and so before He even created us He had a perfect plan to redeem us. The Plan was the Christ. Everyone sins and we are all sick with it. Healing from sin comes from faith in Jesus Christ in the shedding of His blood. Jesus made payment for us. The Christ died for us. The Messiah was the plan for healing and renewal

and a clean slate. Jesus was the Anointed Chosen One to die.

That makes Jesus the way, the truth, and the life. That makes the Christ the only way to salvation that God has established. It is what Jesus does.

RESURRECTION

A central Truth about Christ is that Jesus is that not only did He die to heal us from sin, but He rose victorious from the grave which means the payment with His blood went through (not declined for insufficient funds) and He can now offer eternal life as a result. His resurrection is very much the proof that He is Who He claimed and He did what He claimed.

Notice please, if you will, how the Apostle Paul talks about Jesus in 1 Corinthians 15 in relation to His title and also His resurrection...

1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-23 (ESV)

“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For as by a man came death, by a Man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ.”

It was in the resurrection of the Christ that we find such hope. Death came because of sin. Life comes because of the Christ. Forgiveness and mercy and grace and being made alive in our souls comes from the Messiah.

Without Jesus and His resurrection, we are dead inside.

Without Jesus and His rising on the third day, we have no hope and should be pitied.

Without Jesus and His exit from the tomb, we are lost.

This makes Jesus Christ the only source of eternal life for us. Yes, you can live life without Jesus, but you can't have eternal life in Heaven with God without Jesus Christ. Jesus literally, figuratively, and theologically is the Source of Life. It is how Jesus did it.

INCARNATE GOD

A central Truth about Christ is that Jesus Christ is eternal (as is the Holy Spirit) and fully God and at no time was He created. Jesus is God. Jesus is made from the same stuff as God. Jesus is divine. Jesus is eternal. Jesus is Creator. Jesus is Redeemer. Jesus is Sanctifier. Jesus is the Son of the Most High God. Jesus is God incarnate.

JOHN 1:14 (ESV) says...

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

JOHN 10:30 (ESV)

“I and the Father are One.”

TITUS 2:13 (ESV) says as well...

“Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”

The Apostle Paul says in COLOSSIANS 2:9 (ESV)...
“*For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily*”

The witness of the New Testament is that God incarnated Himself. He is Jesus. It is a miracle and a mystery that Jesus is God. It is mind-bending and not altogether clear how it all works. Jesus is so far above us and beyond our understanding and yet, He was also human.

That makes Jesus 100% divine, eternal, and uncreated. Jesus is spirit. Jesus is unique. Jesus is timeless. Jesus is other. He has foreseen all that we will do and how each moment plays out. He will rule all things forever. Jesus could have stayed in Heaven, but because of His great love for us He humbled Himself and became a lowly servant. It is Who Jesus is. It is how He saved us.

SELFLESS SACRIFICE

A central Truth about Christ is that Jesus did not have to die for us, but He chose to. Jesus was not forced to die because He was guilty of a crime. Jesus was not at the wrong place and the wrong time. The Messiah dying was no accident. Jesus was not thrown in at the last minute and failed. Jesus willingly sacrificed Himself for us that He might become the payment for our sin.

In JOHN 10:15 (ESV), Jesus says about Himself...
“*just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*”

In JOHN 10:18 (ESV), Jesus says again...

“No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father.”

The Apostle Paul says in EPHESIANS 5:2 (ESV)...

“And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

I find it a great comfort that Jesus was motivated by love as He died. It is that motivation that allowed Him to stay on the cross when we know He could have come down at any time or called on the Armies of Heaven to aid Him or with a thought healed Himself. Jesus loves us. Jesus willingly laid down His life as a sacrifice.

The word ‘sheep’ is being batted around right now (as I write this) as a curse word and meant to harm people. I don’t know about you, but I am a sheep in the flock of the Great Shepherd Who takes my place when battling the beasts that want my soul. Jesus is our Willing Shepherd. Loving willingness is Jesus’ motivation for everything He did for us. It is why He did it.

TEACHER OF THE WORD

A central Truth about Christ is that He not only saves us, but He also shows us the way to live because He was The Teacher of the Word. We are not lost or aimless when it comes to following after Him. Jesus shows us the way. The Messiah taught us the way.

JOHN 6:67-69 (ESV) says to us...

*“So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?”
68 Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed,
and have come to know, that You are the Holy One of God.”*

Jesus not only shows us how to live, but He taught us how to live. The parables of Jesus are important. The lessons He shared are our lessons for life. His sermons are directions for us on how to live. Jesus never shared a careless word, but was always teaching and always showing us the way to God. If we follow Jesus, we find God.

The Holy One of God... the Christ... the Messiah... the Anointed One... has taught us what is good and right and proper and it is up to us to follow after Him and obey Him. It is what He expects.

EXPLAIN JESUS TO SOMEONE

Jesus is the CHRIST.
Child born of a virgin
Healer of sin
Resurrection
Incarnate God
Selfless Sacrifice
Teacher of the Word

The above mnemonic is a great plan if you are talking with anyone about Jesus. The items/topics above hit the core of Who Jesus is and leads to excellent conversations. Depending on the person's familiarity with the Bible, it

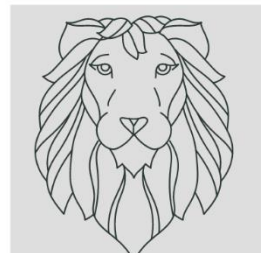
might be one or more conversation. May I also suggest that as you talk, plan to plant seeds about every one of these items and not try to wholesale convince them of the Truth of Jesus.

Belief will come by way of the Holy Spirit.

You talk about each of these items and introduce the truths behind each of them leading to their acceptance or rejection of Jesus. It is up to them. You just be faithful.



**Jesus
is the
Christ.**



QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

Why is Jesus' birth important and what should a person believe about Jesus?

Why is the death of Jesus on the cross important and what should we believe about Him?

Why is the resurrection of Jesus important with regards to our sin and our souls?

Why is it a big deal that Jesus is God?

What motivated Jesus to willingly die for us?

What teachings of Jesus flesh out His mission and what He wants for people who accept Him?

Can you fill in the blanks without looking?

C _____

H _____

R _____

I _____

S _____

T _____

Who do you need to pray about as you think about people to share the Gospel with?

Why is Jesus important to you?

What of the C-H-R-I-S-T emphasis in this chapter do you find hard to believe?

VERSES TO MEMORIZE IN CHAPTERS 7-8

MARK 7:20-23 (ESV)

20 And He said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. 21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

MARK 8:27-29 (ESV)

27 And Jesus went on with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" 28 And they told Him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." 29 And He asked them, "But Who do you say that I am?" Peter answered Him, "You are the Christ."

① [Sess-ah-ree-ah Fill-ip-eye]

MARK 8:34-38 (ESV)

34 And calling the crowd to Him with His disciples, He said to them, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? 37 For what can a man give in return for his soul? 38 For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

CHAPTER 9 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS JESUS ONLY

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*Essential King Jesus:
Jesus only.*

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The phrase ‘Last Man Standing’ is one that is applied to many TV shows, albums, and movies. It is a phrase that means ‘the sole survivor of a battle’ or commonly means someone who outlives all others or after all others have failed... the one who wins.

In music, ‘Last Man Standing’ is the 39th album released by rock and roll pioneer Jerry Lee Lewis in September 2006 who began his career in 1949. The title derives from the generation of 1950s Sun Studios recording artists such as Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, Charlie Rich, Carl Perkins, and Elvis Presley, all of whom have died, leaving Lewis the ‘last man standing.’

There is a biography of Jamie Dimon titled ‘Last Man Standing’ that came out in 2009 who is a billionaire and the CEO of JPMorgan Chase. His net worth is 1.8 billion.

In TV, there are five TV series with the name which includes Tim Allen’s comedy which just finished its run on FOX in 2021. It refers to Allen’s character who is the father of three daughters and pitches him as the last one holding on to what he values most.

There are three movies with the title ‘Last Man Standing.’ I’ve only seen one of them which is a Bruce Willis movie that came out in 1996 and was a box office bomb.¹⁷ It has a lot of similarities to Clint Eastwood’s ‘Fist Full of Dollars’ so I recall liking it.

I also noticed that there is an enduro off-road motorcycle race in Bulcher, Texas which has 300 riders racing over 40 miles in one lap. 2 laps are during the day and 2 laps are at night. Just for fun, I looked up Bulcher, Texas... it is a community with 6 residents and it has nothing but the 2,500 acre off-road park.¹⁸ The one who wins the race, sponsored by Red Bull, is crowned ‘The Last Man Standing.’

The phrase comes to mind as we read some verses from Mark 9. We see this miraculous event in the life of Jesus Christ and in the end, it is just Jesus standing there. He is the last and only Man standing.

Just Jesus.
Jesus only.

MARK 9:2-8 (ESV)

And after six days Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them, 3 and His clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. 4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. 5 And Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good that

¹⁷ New Line Cinema, 1996

¹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulcher,_Texas

we are here. Let us make three tents, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” 6 For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7 And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is My beloved Son; listen to Him.” 8 And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

The Essential King Jesus in Mark 9 is: *Jesus only.*

SITUATION: TRANSFIGURATION

The passage that we are looking at happened six days after the passage we looked at in chapter 8. In Mark 8, Jesus asked the disciples Who they thought He was. Peter confesses in Mark 8:29, “*You are the Christ.*”

That confession marks a turning point in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus foretells of His death and His resurrection even though they really are not sure what He is talking about.

Six days later Jesus takes Peter, James, and John with Him for a little field trip. This field trip underscores the confession that “*Jesus is the Christ*” (8:29) and also underscores Jesus’ comment in Mark 9:1 about some of the disciples seeing the Kingdom of God coming in power.

Peter goes with Jesus. Who is Peter? Peter, also known as Simon Peter, is the most-of-the-time leader of the disciples. He is always listed first when disciples are

listed. He is the one who jumped out of the boat when Jesus was walking on the water (Matthew 14). He is the one who made the confession about Jesus being the Christ in the last chapter (Mark 8). He is also the one who denied Jesus three times once Jesus was arrested (Luke 22). Simon Peter also stood and gave the first Christian sermon at the birth of the Church on Pentecost (Acts 2). Peter wrote 1 & 2 Peter and is in the background of the Gospel of Mark.

James is chosen to go with Jesus. Who is James? James is a son of Zebedee, a former fisherman, and was nicknamed Boanerges (Mark 3:17) because he was loud. I don't know if he was both loud and obnoxious, but the nickname tells us he was loud. We also know that in Acts 12:2 James was killed by King Herod as he persecuted Christians.

John is the third member of the band that goes with Jesus. Who is John? John is James' brother and also a former fisherman. He shares the nickname with James so I imagine he was also a boisterous and gregarious person. John wrote the Gospel of John, the letters of 1, 2, and 3 John and was the one to whom the Book of Revelation was revealed. As far as we know, John is the only Apostle who died of old age and was not martyred.

Several things happen on this mountaintop to which we should pay attention which these three men saw with their own eyes.

First, Jesus is transfigured before the three disciples. Mark focuses on the clothes of Jesus and he uses the Greek word which we get our English word 'metamorphosis.' The picture we get is that not just Jesus' levis change, but His whole body and all of Him shifts on the mountain.

All of Him is radiant.

All of Him is power.

All of Him transforms.

This heavenly divine transfiguration is the central miracle of this event. I cannot help but think of Revelation 19 where Jesus is described when He returns. Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and the Son of God and He not only acts like it... He looks like it!

REVELATION 19:11-16 (ESV) records for us...

"Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The One sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, and He has a Name written that no one knows but Himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the Name by which He is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following Him on white horses. 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On His robe and on his thigh He has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."

I am not sure that we would have words in any human language to adequately describe what Jesus looked like on that mountaintop. Jesus' power and nature and character and so much more are on display for the three disciples. Miraculous. Monumental. Majestic.

Second, Jesus is not alone in this miraculous event, but the three disciples see Moses and Elijah speaking with Jesus. When we look back in the Old Testament, these two men are prime examples of men of faith and they are also many times the representatives of some very important concepts and truths.

Moses is the one through whom the Old Testament Law was given and he is seen as the great law giver. Moses is the representative of the Law.

Elijah is one of the greatest... if not the greatest... prophet from the Old Testament. Many of Jesus' miracles are actually repeats of Elijah. Elijah is the representative of the Prophets.

Third, God speaks. God speaks some words that echo through eternity. Some of the Words God has spoken before. In Matthew 3:17 as Jesus comes out of the waters of baptism and as the Spirit of God lights on Him, God the Father speaks and says, "*This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased*" (ESV). In Matthew 3, God claims Jesus Christ as His Son and also lets us know that His choice to fulfill all righteousness in baptism has pleased Him.

In this passage, God the Father proclaims, "*This is My Beloved Son; listen to Him*" (9:7). In Mark 9, God claims

Jesus Christ as His Son and also commands the disciples to listen to Him. Twice God claims Jesus. Once He says He is pleased with Him. Once He commands disciples to listen to Him.

So... when we combine the metamorphosis of Jesus, the two figures that Jesus is speaking with, and the voice of God... I hope you can see that we have before us a pretty significant event. It is mind-blowing which is why we see Peter, James, and John terrified (9:6). This is an event to take notice of... which is why you can find this same event in Matthew 17 and also in Luke 9 and referenced in 2 Peter 1.

FOCUS: THREE IN THE VISION

The central part of this miraculous mind-boggling event is that Jesus is transfigured and two people come and are speaking with Him. You may not realize this or not, but both Moses and Elijah lived and died long before Jesus was born. Their bones are dust.

Moses died before entering the promised land.

DEUTERONOMY 34:5-6 (ESV)...

“So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord, 6 and He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day.”

Moses died in the land of Moab and God buried him. The ‘He’ in verse 6 is preceded by the noun ‘Lord’ referring to God in verse 5. God buried Moses and no person knows

where He is buried. That Moses is now standing before the three disciples talking with Jesus.

Elijah died long before Jesus was born.

2 KINGS 2:11-12 (ESV)...

“And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it and he cried, “My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw him no more.”

Elijah was taken by the forces of Heaven and we don't have any idea what happened to him... actually. God just took him. He's a bit like Enoch in that way. That same Elijah is now standing before the three disciples talking with Jesus.

The third person having a conversation in the midst of the power and light and flashing and bleached clothing is Jesus. In the midst of this conversation, Simon Peter pipes up about making tents for them all to stay in. In Peter's shock he is not sure how long these folks are sticking around, but they might need somewhere to stay.

God The Father breaks in and focuses Peter and the other two in the proper direction. The focus is Jesus. This entire event is meant to underscore the identity of Jesus. Who is Jesus? Simon Peter, six days before, declared Jesus was the Christ. He was correct. Now, God the Father thunders that Jesus is His Son and He should be listened to. He should be obeyed. Listen to what He teaches and follow it.

Why is this important?

Why are these two men important?

What is the big deal about these men's conversation?

Moses and Elijah are perfect representatives of God's Word and the plan of God through the generations. They are two people who looked to God, obeyed Him, and cast all their hope on Him. I suppose Jesus could have met with anyone on the mountain, but Moses and Elijah are wonderful choices that makes sense for they represent the Law and the Prophets which point to Jesus being the Christ. Every single prophecy in the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Every. Single. One.

I'd also like to point out a small truth about this conversation that is happening before the disciples and leads us to the central point of the transfiguration.

Note Mark 9:4.

9:4 says Elijah is there.

9:4 says Moses is there.

9:4 says Jesus is there.

9:4 also clearly lays out Who is in charge of the conversation. The verse says very clearly "*they*"... Moses and Elijah... were talking with Jesus. Jesus was not consulting Moses or Elijah. Moses and Elijah did not call this meeting to order on top of a mountain. Rather the Law Giver and the Great Prophet were coming before Jesus to talk with Him and came when *He called*.

Jesus was in charge of the conversation.

We have in Mark 9 this very unique miracle that involves Jesus on a mountain and Him being transfigured while talking with two faithful men who were dead. It is an event that is physical and spiritual and emotional and is meant for us to sit up and take notice that while Jesus is an ordinary human being He is also extraordinarily divine.

We have verse 7 in which God speaks and claims Jesus as His Son and commands the disciples to “*listen to Him.*” Then, like a light switch, the miracle turns off and Peter James and John look and see everything has shifted back ‘normal.’ I like how the ESV concludes this passage in verse 8: “*they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.*”

IN THE END: JESUS ONLY

Jesus only. Jesus only. Jesus only.

That two-word sentence applies to so many questions. That two-word sentence frames much of what our life should be about.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

The **Essential King Jesus** in Mark 9 is: *Jesus only.*

There are so many passages which lead us to the truth that when it comes to salvation and finding our worth and purpose and questions we have about spiritual things... the answer is always... Jesus only.

For example, JOHN 1:3 (ESV)...

“All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

Also JOHN 14:6 (ESV)...

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Then we have ACTS 4:12 (ESV)...

“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

The Apostle Paul writes to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2:5 (ESV)...

“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

APPLICATION

The Law in the Old Testament looks for a sacrifice for our sins. Who fulfills that?
Jesus only.

The Prophets in the Old Testament look for a Savior and Deliverer. Who fulfills that?
Jesus only.

Who is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords?
Jesus only.

Who came to seek and save the lost?
Jesus only.

Who has the power to forgive our sins and wipe our soul clean?

Jesus only.

Who died willingly on a cross making payment for our sins?

Jesus only.

Who promised to go and make room for us in His Father's House in Heaven?

Jesus only.

Who gives us assurance that when we die we will be taken care of by God?

Jesus only.

What is the way to God?

Jesus only.

At the end of time, in front of Whom will every knee bow and confess?

Jesus only.

Who gives hope that lasts and peace that passes understanding?

Jesus only.

Who promised to never leave you or forsake you and keeps all His promises?

Jesus only.

When we want to know what God is like, where do we look?
Jesus only.

When life gives us uncertainty with our health, what do we focus on?
Jesus only.

When culture mixes up right and wrong, what is our anchor?
Jesus only.

When politics takes over Christianity, what should be our focus?
Jesus only.

When life is ridiculously hard, where do we find a lighter burden?
Jesus only.

When life is far more stressful than it needs to be, where do we find strength?
Jesus only.



Jesus



ONLY



QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

Why is the transfiguration of Jesus important?

Why did Jesus choose these three disciples and not any other disciples?

Why is Elijah standing there speaking with Jesus important?

Why is Moses standing there speaking with Jesus important?

What feelings might you have had standing on the mountain seeing what the three disciples saw?

What do we add to Jesus (Jesus + ?) that downgrades Jesus' importance in any area?

CHAPTER 10 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

CHILDLIKE FAITH

=====

Essential King Jesus:

Jesus wants childlike faith in the Kingdom of God.

=====

The word ‘essential’ means ‘of the utmost importance.’ ‘Essential’ also means ‘basic,’ ‘indispensable,’ and ‘necessary.’ We might say that air, food, and water are essential for life. Exercise and good nutrition are essential for good health. Gas is essential for a vehicle to continue working.

My prayer has been and continues to be that as you make your way through this book that you will encounter the **Essential King Jesus** and bolster your faith or perhaps find it for the first time.

What have we found so far?

Mark 1: You cannot be part of the Kingdom of God without Jesus.

Mark 2: Jesus has all authority and all power to forgive sins.

Mark 3: Jesus came to do the will of God.

Mark 4: Jesus casts out fear.

Mark 5: Jesus breaks our chains.

Mark 6: Jesus can be rejected.

Mark 7: Jesus distastes hypocrisy.

Mark 8: Jesus is the Christ.

Mark 9: Jesus only.

CHAPTER 10

We now come to Mark 10 (out of 16 chapters). Mark 10 begins with a teaching about divorce that we are scared to talk about and scared to apply to ourselves because it does really mean what you think it means (verses 1-12) and it really does apply the way you think it applies.

A rich young man comes to Jesus and questions Him about following Him and goes away sad “*for he had great possessions*” (10:22). Jesus then teaches about wealth and faith on the heels of this man walking away (verses 23-31).

Jesus tells the disciples again that He will die and that His suffering and death is part of the plan (verses 32-34).

Jesus also heals Bartimaeus outside of Jericho (verses 46-52).

In the middle of this passage, we have four verses (13-16) where Jesus interacts with some children and leads us to our **Essential King Jesus** thought for today.

MARK 10:13-16 (ESV)

And they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” 16 And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

Jesus is in a crowd and the disciples are shewing away the kids. Jesus is annoyed and angry with the disciples and chastises them and allows the kids to come around and He blesses them. This leads us to the **Essential King Jesus** for this passage: *Jesus wants child-like faith in the Kingdom of God.*

CHILD-ISH vs. CHILD-LIKE

As I was thinking about the words presented in Mark 10 and the way we usually think about this passage, the words child-ISH and child-LIKE sprang to mind. In my own mind the words child-LIKE and child-ISH are the same word, but childlike is positive and childish negative... especially when we relate the words to faith. Childish and childlike are similar words, but have very different meanings.

Child-ISH means grouchiness, immaturity, being obnoxious, selfish, and peeing outside. Childish is the older term in English from before the 12th century. The original meaning of the word meant “of a child or typical of a child,” but soon a second more negative meaning came about. In the 1400s, “childish” became used to refer to the qualities of a child in a person who is no longer a child—and therefore should know better. The word became negative. These were seen as unpleasant qualities. For example: “another childish rant” or describing someone having “selfish and childish behavior.”

Child-LIKE means trust, joy, innocence, imagination, curiosity, wonder, forgiveness, and so on. Childlike entered the English language much later, in the mid-1500s. It, by contrast, usually means some positive quality such as innocence and trustfulness. For example: “a childlike delight in music” or “a sense of childlike wonder.”

Hopefully you can see the difference between the words and as we interpret what Jesus says in Mark 10:14-15 we are looking towards child-LIKE faith and not child-ISH faith. They are quite different and they are actually also both quite prevalent in the Church.

Some examples...

Child-ISH	Child-LIKE
God always answers my prayers.	God answers prayers with yes, no, and wait.
The closer we get to God the more perfecter we get.	The closer we get to God the more we understand our sinfulness.
I go to church to be fed.	Church isn't about me, it is about worshipping God.
I've done my part and now it's time for someone else to serve.	I am done serving when God calls me home.
I won't come to church if I have to wear a mask.	Look not only to your interests, but others too.
You hurt my feelings so I'm going to another church.	Let us pray and please sit down and work this out.
I will never forgive you for that.	I will rely on God to help me forgive you.

Childish faith overall is faith that remains immature and self-centered.

Childlike faith overall is faith that grows, matures, and is God-centered and others-centered.

MARK 10:14-15 (ESV)

14 But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

CHILD-LIKE CORE

I was doing some reading and meditating on what 'childlike faith' looks like and what the characteristics are for such faith. Jesus is pretty clear in verse 14. The Kingdom of God belongs to someone who has childlike faith. Jesus is also pretty clear in verse 15. If we desire to enter into the Kingdom of God, we should receive Jesus with childlike faith.

So... what does that look like?
How might we describe childlike faith?

I think there are 12 characteristics of what childlike faith looks like. These are ways that being a child are good and advantageous and that I can imagine relate well to the kind of faith Jesus is speaking about. I don't think there is a way to rank what I came up with, so I listed them in alphabetical order. Again, this is me thinking about kids

and faith and coming up with something that makes sense for us to consider.

This is the childlike faith core:
Ask open honest questions
Dream big dreams
Eager to learn new things
Expect miracles
Express honestly
Forgive easily and don't hold grudges
Full of love for others
Imaginative and Creative
Innocent and Pure
Laugh often and full of joy
They aren't full of doubt
Worry free and carefree

CHILDLIKE FAITH IN THE BIBLE

I honestly sat and sat and sat and prayed and thought about how to expand on this core idea of faith. I looked over my list and I think it is a fantastic list! If you want to know what *I* think childlike faith is... that is the perfect list! The qualities of childlike faith are there, but I made up that list. *Me*. That comes from me.

Honestly, we are not here to read what Troy thinks. Well, you sort of are, but let's put that aside for now. You are reading this book to meditate on the Word of God and to soak into your heart what HE has to say. It is only the Word of God that should direct us for it comes from our Father in Heaven Who loves us.

So... the question occurred to me... what does the rest of the Bible say about childlike faith?

That's where we need to spend our time! That's what we need to pay attention to! What is expressed in other Scriptures? Who cares what I think 'childlike faith looks like'... what does God think childlike faith looks like?! How does Jesus define childlike faith? What is the Holy Spirit doing in us when He is developing childlike faith? Let's look at God's Word. I don't think these passages are in any particular order, but they do move our hearts towards what it means to have faith like a child... childlike faith... not childish faith.

CHILDLIKE FAITH IS GROWING

1 PETER 2:1-3 (ESV)

“So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation — 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.”

Childlike faith is growing. It makes sense from the Scriptures that childlike faith is faith that grows, puts away child-ish sinful attitudes, and craves to understand the Bible and theology. We should want to know what and why we believe what we do. Childlike faith seeks God and wants to be in a relationship with Jesus Christ and desperately wants to grow in the fruit of the Spirit.

- Are you growing in your faith?
- Are you better today with Jesus than you were last year at this time?
- Do you crave God's Word?

A related verse on this same topic comes to us from the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:11.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:11 (ESV) says...

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

Childlike faith is growing.

CHILDLIKE FAITH PERSEVERES

PROVERBS 22:6 (ESV)

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Childlike faith is one that perseveres. It makes sense from the Scriptures that placing faith in Jesus is not a one-time event or decision, but is a lifetime of choosing Jesus daily and pursuing Him on the narrow path. We learn and then we do. We encounter Christ and when we make a decision to follow Him we do so for our whole lives. Half-heartedly following Jesus is childish.

- Are you persevering in faith or just going through the motions and faking?
- Are you discipling people around you to follow the Lord?
- Are you daily seeking the Lord even when life is harder than it needs to be?

A related verse on this same topic comes to us in 2 Timothy 3:14-15.

2 TIMOTHY 3:14-15 (ESV)...

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how

from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Childlike faith is one that perseveres.

CHILDLIKE FAITH SEEKS STRENGTH IN GOD

PSALM 8:2 (ESV)

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

Childlike faith seeks strength in God. This verse from Psalm 8 is repeated by Jesus in Matthew 21:16. I read this verse and I notice that in life we have foes to deal with and enemies and even avengers. Life is chaos. Certainly when Jesus quotes this passage in Matthew 21 there is chaos. Strength in the midst of foes and enemies and chaos comes from faith in God. Strength in the midst of chaos comes from praising God... which is what Jesus says. Strength comes from wisely praising God in all situations.

- When bad things happen, do you get angry with God or praise Him?
- When life is more than you can bear, do you go to God first for strength or last?
- How often do you spend time praising God?

Childlike faith seeks strength in God.

CHILDLIKE FAITH IS HUMBLE

MATTHEW 18:4 (ESV)

“Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus pretty much says it... childlike faith is built on a bedrock of humbleness. It is quite possible for us to get quite full of ourselves and think we are spiritually all-that-with-a-bag-of-chips. It is childish to think of ourselves first when it comes to worship services, small groups, and our preferences in Church. Church is not about us. Church is about God. It is childlike and commended by Jesus Christ to be humble in our faith.

- Are you humble in your faith or does ‘well I think...’ come across your heart often?
- Do your preferences prevent you from worship?
- Do you want your rights and your way and God takes a back seat?

Childlike faith is built on a bedrock of humbleness.

CHILDLIKE FAITH ACCEPTS DISCIPLINE

PROVERBS 22:15 (ESV)

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.

Childlike faith accepts discipline. Children are not in charge. Children accept direction. Children are prone to do things that are unwise and full of foolishness. It is the same with us and God. God is our Father in Heaven Who at times needs to discipline us because we are full of foolishness and go our own way. We must wisely accept discipline from God and move towards faithfulness.

- When bad things happen, do you get mad at God and stop coming to church?
- When God's Word points out a sin in your life do you just ignore Him?
- Do you honestly and regularly confess your sinfulness to God?

Childlike faith accepts discipline.

A related verse on this topic is Isaiah 54:13. Isaiah 54:13 tells us that when we accept lessons from God that such lessons produce peace in us. Accepting the discipline from the Lord produces peace in our hearts.

ISAIAH 54:13 (ESV) tells us...

All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.

CHILDLIKE FAITH IMITATES GOD

EPHESIANS 5:1 (ESV)

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."

Childlike faith imitates God. There is so much to do and see and be a part of in our world. There are people to look up to and heroes to read about. There are coaches to listen to and many folks who hold influence and are experts on many topics. Being a child of God means we imitate God our Heavenly Father first before we emulate or listen to anyone else. All other influences go by the wayside, but God is always our example. His Word is our foundation. Jesus' teachings are what guide us. The promptings of the Holy Spirit is Who we listen to.

Childlike faith imitates God.

SUMMARY

I found other passages like Romans 8:14; Galatians 3:26; 1 John 3:1 and 1 John 5:4 that give some input as to what childlike faith is like. There are plenty of passages which explain what that means.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS: *Jesus wants child-like faith in the Kingdom of God.*

What does God consider to be childlike faith?

Childlike faith is growing.

Childlike faith perseveres.

Childlike faith seeks strength in God.

Childlike faith is humble.

Childlike faith accepts discipline from God.

Childlike faith imitates God.

Each of those is a description of the kind of faith Jesus is talking about as He admonishes the disciples to let the children come to Him and He blesses them. Jesus is pretty clear in verse 14. The Kingdom of God belongs to someone who has childlike faith. Jesus is pretty clear in verse 15. If we desire to enter into the Kingdom of God, we should receive Jesus with childlike faith.

Childlike faith is growing.

Childlike faith perseveres.

Childlike faith seeks strength in God.

Childlike faith is humble.

Childlike faith accepts discipline from God.

Childlike faith imitates God.



QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

Do you get a sense when your faith is child-ish rather than child-like?

Is your faith is growing?

Is your faith persevering?

Is your faith seeking strength in God?

Is your faith humble?

Do you accept discipline from God?

Does your faith seek to imitate God?

VERSES TO MEMORIZE IN CHAPTERS 9-10

MARK 9:23-24 (ESV)

23 And Jesus said to him, “If You can! All things are possible for one who believes.” 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”

MARK 9:35-37 (ESV)

And He sat down and called the twelve. And He said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” 36 And He took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, 37 “Whoever receives one such child in My Name receives Me, and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.”

MARK 9:42-50 (ESV)

42 “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. 43 And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 48 ‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’ 49 For everyone will be salted with fire. 50 Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

MARK 10:11-12 (ESV)

11 And He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

MARK 10:14-15 (ESV)

14 But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

MARK 10:23-27 (ESV)

23 And Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult 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 a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." 26 And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."

MARK 10:43-45 (ESV)

43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."



CHAPTER 11 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS FLIPPIN' THEM TABLES

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*Essential King Jesus:
Jesus overturns sin to holiness.*

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They came to Jerusalem and entered the east side of the city through the Sheep Gate. It seemed that Jesus knew exactly where He was going. As He went, His hand touched sheep that were penned along the walkway. Bleating. Cattle sounds. Bird calls.

The group of thirteen entered the portico. “Exchange your coins here for a sacrifice!” was what they all heard.

“This is my least favorite part of the temple,” Thomas said to Andrew. “It always makes me feel cheated. You know those money changers are cheating travelers.”

“Exchange your foreign coin for local coin... fair rates!”

Andrew nodded, “It happens to everyone. All the time.”

The sights and sounds were busy. Men had booths set up along the walls of the portico and were selling pigeons, doves, sparrows, and small sheep. There were other men, as Thomas had rightly seen, who were moneychangers who took the foreign currency of travelers and gave them local coinage.

“Buy two doves and get a pigeon free!”

Peter and James were looking at a few of the sheep along one wall when a commotion drew their attention. It was Jesus.

Jesus had just flipped over one of the tables of the money-changers. Coins of all types spilled out onto the floor and then men were on their hands and knees trying to collect them. They yelled angrily at the Rabbi. The mood of the portico was shifting from casual excitement to upset and chaotic.

Jesus flipped another table further down the wall.

John said to Nathanael, “Remember when He did this several years ago? He warned them not to buy and sell and cheat others in the Temple.”

One of the money changers, on the ground scrabbling for his coin asked loudly, “Why do You do this?” Spittle flew from his mouth in anger. His face was beet red with frustration. His fingers tried to grip coins before others picked them up. He picked up a few coins and then dropped others.

“Trust me friend,” Matthew sort of answered him as he bent down to hand him a coin that was rolling away, “You want to follow what the Teacher says. It has gone well for me.”

Jesus rang out, His voice carried over all the other sounds in the chaos of this part of the temple: “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”

A few people further in the temple mount clapped when they heard His words and saw His actions. Jesus walked along the wall and kicked over the chairs of those who sold lame birds and half-dead sheep. He knocked over some of the cages.

The younger James and Jude made a cringing face as cage parts went everywhere. Philip picked up one of the lame pigeons and pet it on the head and made little kissy faces at the bird. Simon the Zealot smiled as he saw Jesus clearing the Temple of corruption.

Feathers flew. Several birds were strutting all over the ground. Money changers were crawling on their hands and knees even as others were quickly clearing off their tables since they were in the path of the righteously angry Rabbi.

Jesus flipped another table.

Bleating. Cattle sounds. Bird calls. Yelling. Chaos.

Peter motioned for all the disciples to follow Jesus since He was clearly done in this part of the Temple. Not one table remained of the money changers.

“Now see here... You... come back and help us clean this!” Jesus left that part of the Temple and went south to the Gentile’s court. He asked that the disciples gather around. He motioned for them to sit and recline and listen to Him. They did so. Others, drawn by His actions, joined the growing crowd to listen to the Rabbi.¹⁹

¹⁹ This fiction is taken from my time-travel fiction book ‘33’

That was a fictional account of the passage we are focusing on in this chapter. The passage we are focusing on in Mark 11 shares with us a side of Jesus that we know exists, but we don't always understand. It is the side that curses a fig tree and it withers (Mark 11). When we think of Jesus, the image of tossing tables and booting out cheating moneychangers is not the first image that comes to our mind... and yet He did it.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

The **Essential King Jesus** in Mark 11 is: *Jesus overturns sin to holiness.*

MARK 11:15-19 (ESV)

“And they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. 16 And He would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. 17 And He was teaching them and saying to them, ‘Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.” 18 And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy Him, for they feared Him, because all the crowd was astonished at His teaching. 19 And when evening came they went out of the city.”

JESUS IN JERUSALEM (VERSE 15)

Verse 16 reminds us that Jesus is in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 14 as ‘Salem’ and is the home of King Melchizedek who was also a priest of God and blessed Abraham. In Joshua 10, we find that the Israelites conquered the whole area around Jerusalem, but the city itself stayed in the hands of the Jebusites.

When David becomes King of Israel in 1 Chronicles 11, he captures the city and makes it his capitol and it became known by the nickname ‘City of David.’ The king’s palace was built in Jerusalem. King Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem as well (2 Chronicles 3).

Jerusalem has so many names and nicknames: Ariel; City of David; City of God; City of the Lord; Hephzibah; Holy City; Jebus; Mount Zion; Salem; Zion.

This place is important in the life of Jesus as well.

LUKE 9:51 (ESV)	LUKE 9:51 (NIV)	LUKE 9:51 (TLB)
<i>“When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, He set His face to go to Jerusalem.”</i>	<i>“As the time approached for Him to be taken up to Heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.”</i>	<i>“As the time drew near for His return to heaven, He moved steadily onward toward Jerusalem with an iron will.”</i>

This place is not only historically important, but important in the life of Jesus and the death of Jesus and in the plan of God for our salvation. Jerusalem is where

Jesus was to die. He knew that and accepted that He would lay His life down in Jerusalem.

FLIPPING THEM THAR TABLES (VERSES 15-16)

Jesus is very consistent. Jesus tosses out people who were buying, selling, and cheating in the Temple. I say He is consistent because He does it at the beginning of His ministry (John 2) and He does it near the end as well (Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19). It should be noted that Jesus ‘cleansed the temple’ at the beginning of His ministry and at the end of His ministry because there was no change or reforms in the middle. No one listened the first time around or changed anything. The people who were frequently in the Temple continued the abuses which Jesus rebuked.

Why did He flip them thar tables?

Jesus’ nation was under the rule of the Romans. Everyone therefore used Roman money. The Jewish law required that everyone should pay a tribute to the service of the sanctuary of “*half a shekel*” (Exodus 30:13) when worshipping. That is Jewish money and Roman money was not accepted.

In addition, Jewish folks came from all over the world with their own native coins and did not have Jewish coins for the Temple. Therefore, moneychangers set up booths to exchange money at unfair rates to make money. Changing money was a very profitable business and one that resulted in fraud and oppression of the poor because you get what you get and you don’t throw a fit.

In addition, two doves or pigeons were required to be offered in sacrifice (Leviticus 14:22). There were other animals for sacrifice as well depending on the situation. Jews lived all over the ancient world and it would be difficult to travel with animals. So, an industry grew up in the Temple selling animals to people when they arrived. The sellers gouged worshippers by charging exorbitant prices for animals not always in the best condition.

Jesus flips over tables and overturns the stalls of these businesses on His own independent authority. He did not ask anyone. He did not consult the priests. I can imagine that Jesus went to the Temple to worship and when He got there He did not find worship going on, but rather unholy things happening. He took action to stop the extortion, cheating, and the immoral nature of the buying and selling in the Temple. He did this because the foot traffic through the Temple had lost its spirit and original purpose. The purpose was to worship God and they had reduced it to a financial transaction. The Jews had lost sight of the personal devotion and the importance of the sacrifices.

I find it interesting that Jesus does not just overturn tables and walk away... but rather He teaches them and proclaims why He is doing what He is doing. Jesus quotes and combines from two passages in the Old Testament. One passage is from Isaiah and the other is from Jeremiah.

ISAIAH 56:6-7 (ESV) says...

“And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to Him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be His servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast My covenant— 7 these I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”

And then JEREMIAH 7:11 (ESV) says...

“Has this house, which is called by My Name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I Myself have seen it, declares the Lord.”

Jesus is calling them back to the original purpose of the Temple which is prayer. He proclaims that they had gotten off track in terms of the Temple and their worship. People should want to go to the Temple to worship and find peace and seek the Lord. Instead, people were self-centered and were doing the bare minimum to get by in worship.

Jesus defended the sacred.

Jesus called out that which was wicked.

Jesus refocused worshippers to prayer.

KEYWORDS: “MY HOUSE” (VERSE 17)

In verse 17, we have two words which stuck out to me. Jesus is doing this and He says, “*My house.*” The Temple was indeed God’s House. It was the place of worship. It was to be a holy place for prayer and sacrifice and getting

right with the Lord. The Temple was the symbol of the presence of God among Israel. The Holy of Holies was there. Sins were forgiven on the altar in the Temple. The folks in the Temple were off track and Jesus is setting them straight because God's House is important.

I cannot help but think of a word from the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 which makes this passage all the more personal and it applies all of this to us and relates it to our **Essential King Jesus** truth for this passage. The Apostle Paul says that because of the Holy Spirit poured out on us after the Ascension of Jesus Christ, we now are the Temple of God. He dwells in us. His Spirit dwells in us.

The Apostle Paul says in 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20 (ESV)...
“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS: *Jesus overturns sin to holiness.*

OVERTURNING SIN TO HOLINESS

Here is my thought: Jesus overturned the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple because they were making His Temple a place of selfish wickedness... how much more... will Jesus Christ overturn our lives when we commit ourselves to selfish wickedness? I am talking about being disciplined by God. Yes, He does that.

There may be times in our lives when we lose focus or bow to sin in our lives or treat God like a vending machine or bring an idol into our lives and Jesus comes into our lives and overturns the tables of life. I know it is a metaphor, but I believe it to be true. He does not do it just because, but He does it because He wants to move us from sin to holiness... just like in the Temple.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS: *Jesus overturns sin to holiness.*

Sin brings consequences. Always. God disciplines us because He loves us and He delights in us (Proverbs 3:12). It is the same reason Jesus removed the buying and selling and cheating from the Temple... He loved them and wanted to delight in the Temple. Their holiness and focus on God was more important than convenience or buying or selling.

As we are thinking about this: How can we know whether the physical, emotional, or spiritual adversity and trial and hardship we are going through is God's hand of discipline, or something else? The something else is the fact that we live in a rotten sinful world and tragedy happens. The something else could be an attack from Satan's spiritual thugs who have painted a target on you and are taking pot shots. No... not everything that happens is because we live in a sinful world and no... not everything that happens is discipline from God.

So, how do we know?

We know because we go to God in prayer and ask for spiritual discernment to know if it is a consequence of

living in a sinful world or because God is disciplining us. He will answer. We can also ask some basic prayerful thoughtful questions:

- Is there unrepentant sin in my life?
- What is God wanting to do in me through this?
- How will God get the glory in this?

There are several reasons why God disciplines us and upturns the tables of our lives when we get into a pattern of wicked selfishness. God is not random or fickle or without cause when discipline comes into our lives and some physical, emotional, or spiritual tables are flipped over. There are reasons why God disciplines us.

I could list them and expound on them page after page, but I won't do that. I won't do that because all of the reasons and facts and items of faith I would share with you boil down to one thing: He loves us.

The parent who does not discipline their child does not love them. God loves you. God disciplines us because He loves and cherishes us. He loves and cherishes us and is faithful to us even when we are faithless towards Him.

HEBREWS 12:6 (ESV) tells us clearly...

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives.”

When we are in a time of discipline from the Lord, it is because He loves us and it is not something to take lightly. It could be the circumstances we are in are because God is disciplining us out of sin and into more

holiness. Hebrews tells us not to regard it lightly, to accept when we are reprov'd by God, and to lean into the Truth that He loves us.

SUMMARY

The image of Jesus flipping over tables in the Temple is one that might seem out of place for our normal mental picture of Jesus. Yet, Jesus overturned tables and got rid of the business stalls of people who were cheating others on holy ground.

On that day in the Temple, Jesus overturned sin to holiness. To be honest, even on the cross Jesus did the same thing... Jesus overturns sin to holiness.

Jesus still does that for us today.

Yes, Jesus saves.

No, He will not leave you as you are.

Yes, Jesus offers forgiveness and grace and mercy.

No, He will not leave you as you are, but move you towards holiness.

Jesus

overturns

sin to

holiness.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

Does it surprise you that Jesus booted the moneychangers out of the temple... not once, but twice?

What does it mean for God's plan that Jesus set out resolutely for Jerusalem?

Is there unrepentant sin in your life?

BONUS CHAPTER | A QUESTION

IS HE MY SAVING KING?



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QUESTION: IS HE MY SAVING KING?

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That question is the question we will ask in this bonus chapter and I believe is a very important question. It is an essential question. To be honest, it is an important because a lot of people *say* they are Christians, but *really aren't*.

That is soul dangerous.

Before we dig into our passage and the question, we need to first talk about kings. Second, we need to talk about authority. Then we can apply this passage and this very important question.

FIRST: THE ROLE OF A KING

What is a king? In our world today, we do not have so many kings or rather, we don't really know much about them. We are not so familiar with royalty as Americans. Probably the one most often in the news is King Abdullah II of Jordan or King Elizabeth of England. Prince Harry pops in a bunch.

We are not so familiar with kings and royalty in the United States. We have Presidents, secretary of this or that, Prime Ministers, Congresses, Parliaments, and

other such titles for people and groups in the governments of the world.

As we look back in the past, we see that kings were the rulers of nations or territories that ruled an area with supremacy for as long as they lived. The government was set up so the king was the absolute ruler his whole life. In the ancient world, the king was ruler over a specific region or city and the kingship was usually inherited and kept in the same family.

All over the world of the Bible, the nations had kings. In Egypt, they had kings called pharaohs, and they were considered gods among men. A king ruled the Assyrians, Babylonians, Edomites, Ammonites, Persians and almost all the other people groups mentioned in the Old Testament.

So, when we think about a king, we think about someone who has considerable amounts of authority in many areas of life. The king is the one in charge. The king is the one who has ownership. The king is the one who has responsibility. The king is the one everyone else runs to for protection. The king is the authority and the leader.

KINGS IN ISRAEL



Israel, in the Old Testament, was supposed to be different. God who was their King ruled Israel. God was and is the Ultimate King. Israel was a religious nation that had their leadership and ruler as God, but, the people demanded a king like those nations around them (1 Samuel 8:5-22, 10:19). God would give them a king, but

He gave that king some high responsibilities. The king of Israel would be responsible to God alone. The king was God's representative on Earth of the True King of Israel—God. He was to know the Law of God and was to be the proclaimer and teacher of the law and one who judged wisely and righteously.

God did give them a king. The first one was named Saul (1 Samuel 10:21). He failed as king of Israel and the Philistines killed him along with 99% of his family. God then chose the next king of Israel and his name was David. 1 Samuel 16 specifically tells us that David was God's choice as Israel's king. God established a covenant with David (2 Samuel 7) and created a hereditary kingship in Israel like those kingships in the surrounding nations.

So, we see that the office of a king in Israel has a specific role from God with three important jobs:

- They are responsible to God and carry with them the authority of God.
- They are the proclaimer and teacher of the Law.
- They are also to be a righteous judge.

All of these are qualities that God desired and commanded for kings in Israel.

SECOND: PRINCIPLES OF AUTHORITY

As I was thinking about kings and queens and royalty, the whole subject came down to one issue: authority. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language²⁰

²⁰ The Random House Dictionary of the English Language. New York: Random House, 1971.

speaks of authority as “a power or right to direct the actions or thoughts of others. Authority is a power or right, usually because of rank or office, to issue commands and to punish for violations.”

The root idea of authority seems to be control or direction of the actions of others. This concept of authority, no matter the definition, seems to be something that causes another person to “do what you want him or her to do.”

I read a study²¹ that broke down authority and I want to share the principles about it because I think the principles help us understand Mark 11:1-10 and the surrounding passages. It also helps us ask that inevitable question.

An analysis of authority suggests it is comprised of four elements:



#1: The Authority of Competence: The more competent the other person knows a leader or possible leader to be, the more confident he or she will be that they know what they are talking about. That then leads to the likelihood they will follow orders, requests, or suggestions. They will think of the leader as an authority in the matter under consideration and will feel it risky to ignore them.

#2: The Authority of Position: Authority is often invested in a person because they hold a certain position in a nation, company, or army. A position does give a leader the right to tell someone, “Do it or else.” The direction or command has teeth because the person has the

²¹ William Oncken, Jr., *Colorado Institute of Technology Journal* 22

position to say so. “The boss wants it” is a call that can snap many in an office or shop into action.

#3: The Authority of Personality: A leader is followed at times because of their charisma, their personality, and the way that leader makes others feel. The easier it is for the workers or other people to talk to the leader, the easier they will respond. The better a person in authority listens and works with others is at times a predictor in how others will respond to them.

#4: The Authority of Character: This component of authority is the leaders’ “credit rating” with other people as to integrity, reliability, honesty, loyalty, sincerity, personal morals, and ethics. Those in authority who have respectable character often have people follow because of the trust this engenders.

So, good solid authority is based upon: competence, position, personality, and character.

THE PASSAGE: MARK 11:1-10

I would like you to keep all of these thoughts about kings and authority in mind as we read through Mark 11:1-10.

MARK 11:1-10 (ESV)

“Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of His disciples 2 and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. 3 If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing

this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’” 4 And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. 5 And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” 6 And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and He sat on it. 8 And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. 9 And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “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!”

We start out in this passage (verse 1) by seeing Jesus travel into Jerusalem. Jesus, at this time in His ministry, is very purpose driven because He knows what is going to happen and how it will take place. Jesus sends two disciples with instructions to get a colt for Him to ride on into Jerusalem. They do not understand what is going on, but they obey their leader and do as instructed.

They went and found everything as Jesus said.

The colt was there tied exactly as Jesus had said. These two disciples were taking the colt and some people there, probably the owners or relatives of the owners, wanted to know why these men were walking off with their colt. They simply had to say, “*The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.*” And the people let them go. These people let two strange men walk off with their colt all because the “Lord said so.”

We see a great deal of authority expended in this passage by Jesus. The colt and Jesus arrive in Jerusalem with fanfare. It seems like a parade to me.

The words that are said as Jesus enters Jerusalem are astounding!



"Hosanna!" is a Hebrew expression that means "Save now" or "Save I pray." These folks were praising Jesus for the saving work He had already done. He had saved many from sickness, disease, and demon possession. They wanted to see more. Little did they know that Jesus Christ would soon save them from much more than that!

"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" These folks were praising Jesus because they believed He was a prophet. A prophet is someone who comes in the name of the Lord. A prophet is God's representative. The people walking with Jesus into Jerusalem wanted to see even more prophetic teaching from Jesus.

"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!" !Here we have a key phrase! We have been talking about kings and authority. The people in the parade and those standing around the entrance to Jerusalem were talking kingship in regards to Jesus. They were talking about the kingship granted to David and his descendants. That king had God's authority, taught the Law, and was a righteous judge. Jesus had done all of that and more and the people wanted to see it.

"Hosanna in the highest!" is the same statement as before. Over and over again people were praising Jesus for the

saving work He had done and they wanted to see Him help even more.

APPLICATION



It seems to me, that Mark 11:1-10 establishes that Jesus had a whole lot of authority.

Authority of Competence: We find in this passage that Jesus showed His competence by knowing where the colt was at and where the disciples had to go to get it. They knew even if they did not understand, that Jesus knew what He was doing. In addition, the disciples all believed in Jesus because He proved His competence as the Messiah by performing miracles like feeding the 5000, walking on water, healing the deaf, and making the lame walk. He also taught them spiritual things and showed them the way of God more fully than they ever thought possible. Jesus had authority of competence.

Mark 7:37 (ESV) reminds us, *“And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”*

Authority of Position: Jesus had authority over the disciples because He was in charge of their 13-man club. Jesus was the Rabbi, Teacher, Lord, and Master. Jesus directed when, where, and how they went. Not only that, but Jesus was from the line and lineage of King David. In terms of Israel and tribes and authority, Jesus was from the line of kings that God chose. Let’s take it even one step further in faith and realize that Jesus also held the position as God’s One and only Son. Jesus held great

authority as the Divine Royal Teacher. He had authority of position.

I want you to notice that 44 times in the Gospels Jesus of Nazareth is given the title of teacher by students, religious leaders, and others. Not only that, but in John 13:13 (ESV) Jesus reminds us, *“You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.”*

Authority of Personality: Jesus Christ had authority because of His personality because He was perfect. In the Gospels, we find Jesus marked by compassion, holiness, firmness, determination, protection, and perseverance. These qualities and more marked Jesus as someone others wanted to follow. Jesus had authority of personality.

We read about the qualities of Jesus all throughout the Bible. One of the passages that always catches my attention about Jesus is Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV) which says, *“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”*²²

Authority of Character: Jesus had authority from character because He was the sinless Son of God. He was perfect and His personality and life were beyond

²² Bible nerds know this passage is called the ‘Kenotic Passage’ which comes from the Greek word ‘kenosis’ or ‘pouring out’ or ‘emptying’

reproach. People just wanted to follow Him and be near Him and learn from Him. Jesus acted for God and like God and righteously in every situation, in every conversation, and with every decision He made.

The Apostle John in John 6:66–69 (ESV) reminds us, *“After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. 67 So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” 68 Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”*

Here is my point: if we look at nothing else, but these earthly requirements for authority, Jesus Christ fulfills them as the greatest leader ever. Not only does Jesus fulfill these earthly qualities of authority, but He also fulfills the roles designed for the King of Israel as the Divine Royal Teacher. His credentials as Authority in Heaven aren't too shabby either.

CHALLENGE

Based on the evidence, Jesus as a person had all authority and was fit to be King.

Based on who He was as the Only the Son of God, He already was King.

Now we come back to the inevitable question:



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QUESTION: IS HE MY SAVING KING?

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QUESTION: IS HE MY SAVING KING?

You see, by any measure you and I would use or invent, Jesus Christ has not only been given authority over us, but He has also earned it (I even tremble at saying Jesus has to earn anything).

Jesus Christ is the Son of God and so has all authority and blessing from God to be our head. 1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 1:10, 4:15, 5:23, and Colossians 2:10 all describe Jesus as the ultimate authority in our lives.

Jesus has fulfilled every Old Testament promise about the Messiah and through His perfect life, God-led ministry, and divine miracles proved Himself competent to be our Savior. Jesus is our Ultimate Teacher that shows us the Way of Life. Jesus lived His life sinless as to be able to save us perfectly.

Now we come back to the inevitable question of this chapter. It is a question that only you can answer. To be honest, the application of that answer is two-fold.

First, have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. “Personal Lord and Savior” are words that mean “Saving King.” Accepting Jesus by faith means you believe He is the only Son of God who came to

willingly die for your sins and by accepting Him you have forgiveness of sins. Accepting Jesus means confessing Him, repenting of sin, and being immersed into Him in the waters of baptism. That public declaration means you take Jesus Christ as your “Saving King.”

Have you done that? It is the most important decision you will ever make.

Second, if you have already accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, it means His will is followed in our lives in all things. That means when the Bible says to forgive, give, speak a certain way, act a certain way... then we do it. God’s will trumps our will, our desires, our emotions, and our experience. He is King and His way goes. For those of us who accept Jesus, we live the way He says to live and we are constantly moving towards that end. Are we doing that? That is living out the faith we profess.



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QUESTION: IS HE MY SAVING KING?
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CHAPTER 12 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

YIELD HIM FRUIT

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*Essential King Jesus:
Jesus expects yielded fruit.*

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Once upon a time there was a flamingo herder who lived in a land where flamingos were the most prized animal one could own. The flamingo herder did her absolute best to provide for the flamingos. She built the flamingos a coop in the middle of a pond. The coop was painted with trees and wonderful scenes which made the flamingos feel right at home. The pond was filled with shrimp which she cultivated so no bird went hungry. What did go hungry were the local foxes and coyotes who never got any of the flamingos because the flamingo herder built a strong electric fence around the pond.

It came time... that one time a year... for the flamingos to earn their keep. The flamingo herder put on her rubber boots and marched out to the coop in the middle of the pond. She brought along a big bucket to collect the flamingo eggs which all of the local restaurants used in their cuisine. Once a year the herder would collect some eggs and sell them. The rest she would leave to grow the colony. The herder got to the coop, opened it up, and there was not one egg in the coop.

She quickly looked around for a video camera to see if she was being punked on a TV show. The herder marched

around to the other side of the coop where the flamingos were standing on one leg looking disinterested in the world. She asked where the eggs were. All the flamingos just shook their bent beaks no and squawked there would be no eggs. Flamingos could be temperamental and very self-centered.

Sometime later, after the no-egg incident, the flamingo herder came upon a business opportunity for local homeowners. A plastics maker wanted to make plastic flamingos for people's yard and wanted a model. The flamingo herder put on her rubber boots and marched out to the middle of the pond. She brought along the artist and the CEO of the plastics company. Not one flamingo was in sight. The entire colony of flamingos had either flown away or were nestled in the coop and would not come out. She banged and banged on the flamingo coop door, but all she got for her trouble was a squawk and the artist got pooped on as a stray flamingo flew over. Flamingos could be very uncooperative when they felt their rights were being violated or they felt they were being forced to do something they didn't want to do.

After the no-show-modeling incident, the flamingo herder in patience went out to the flamingo colony and decided that she could take pictures and videos and sell those on the internet to make money. The flamingo herder put on her rubber boots and marched out to the coop in the middle of the pond. She brought along her fancy-dancy camera she borrowed from a neighbor and was excited to take pictures and video. The herder got out to the coop in the middle of the pond and every single flamingo was there, but each flamingo was on one leg and

had tucked its head into its body. It was like she was looking at a pond full of pink lollipops. None of them moved. None of them flew. None of them ate or did anything flamingo-ish so she could take a picture.

She had been patient when there were no eggs. She had been kind when they refused to model. Now they were being obstinate and would not let her take pictures. The flamingo herder marched out of the pond splashing all the way.

The flamingos kept themselves tucked in, but they did hear an engine starting.

The flamingo herder hopped into her Komatsu P&H L-2350 Loader²³ and began driving towards the pond. The flamingos heard the roar of the engine and the sound of the large earthmoving machine coming closer. They all flew away as the flamingo herder bulldozed over the strong electric fence and the pond with shrimp and the nicely painted flamingo coop. She then called in the paving company and made it all a parking lot. She rented out spaces for people to park and lived happily ever after.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

Mark chapter 12 is no different than any of the other chapters in the Gospel. We are shown Jesus and we are called to believe in Him. Mark chapter 12 shares with us an important **Essential King Jesus** Truth. In Mark 12, the **Essential King Jesus** is: *Jesus expects yielded fruit.*

²³ Think Star Wars AT-AT, but with wheels

ANOTHER STORY

Once upon a time there was a Christian who sat down to read the Bible. His normal way of doing that was to read and pray and think in the morning when he woke up. That's now every week started on Monday morning.

The thing was on this particular Monday... it was a holiday so he slept in and then woke up quite rested and feeling good. Then he decided to go for a run and get some exercise in. The routine was disrupted, but the extra sleep and the exercise was very good for him. He got back from his run and noticed the Bible next to his bed. He sat down in his chair to read and sweat drops got on the page. He needed to cool off first.

A few hours later after TV and lunch, he again saw the Bible and wanted to get his reading in for the day. He sat down in his chair to read, but he smelled himself from his run. One of God's greatest gifts to mankind is the ability not to smell oneself, but that was not true on this particular day. He needed a shower. He put down his Bible and went to shower and change clothes.

He sat down after the shower and tried to begin to pray and think and read, but the phone rang. It was a telemarketer asking if the roof of his house was in good condition because they were running a new program in his area to replace it for a reduced cost. He pressed 2 to have his number removed from the robo-call for the second time in two months from the same folks. Then he had to go to the bathroom. Then he remembered he wanted to mix his peach tea so he would have something

to drink whilst reading the Bible. After he made his drink, he realized that he hadn't been on Facebook yet that day to be offended or to cause an argument and so he logged in on his phone. He fired off a few comments to some obviously stupid people and set them straight using wit and truth.

He saw the Bible next to him and put the phone down. He was about to begin... then realized he needed to be in the right frame of mind. He paused grabbed his phone and took a picture of his Bible with the tea and the peaceful setting. If it isn't instagrammed it didn't happen right? He posted it. Then he checked Twitter and then realized he had been reading the Bible and got back to it.

After about a minute or so and a few verses, his phone pinged and a game he played on his phone was notifying him his village was under attack. Such an attack had to be defended. Then he was back on Facebook. Then he decided that Bible reading could happen before he went to bed.

He picked up a book he had been reading through and dove into those pages. It was a great book about dealing with hurt from church and what to do about it. He was reading it so he could have beneficial conversations with people about being hurt by Christians and churches to try and bring healing.

The end of the day came after a dinner with family, a conversation with his aunt on the phone, and planning out the rest of his work week. Eventually he went to bed and he had not read much from the Bible.

MARK 12

We are focusing on a parable that Jesus tells us in Mark 12. It is actually not an original story by Jesus, but rather a retelling of a song written in Isaiah 5. In Isaiah 5, the Prophet Isaiah is inspired by the Holy Spirit to write a song about the children of Israel and how they treat God their Father. It is not a complementary song about Israel, but shows God's disappointment in His children whom He loves greatly and has provided for generously.

Isaiah writes...

ISAIAH 5:1-7 (ESV)

“Let me sing for my Beloved, my love song concerning His vineyard: My Beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. 2 He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; He built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; and He looked for it to yield grapes but it yielded wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard. 4 What more was there to do for My vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? 5 And now I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. 6 I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant planting; and He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!”

Jesus tells a very very similar story in His parable. The parable is about the Jews who are the Children of God. The parable is about how they have treated God's servants (the prophets) over the centuries and how they have ultimately treated Him as their Father. Jesus also injects a prophecy about how they will ultimately treat the Son of God. We should note He says they will kill Him. Let's read what Jesus tells them:

MARK 12:1-12 (ESV)

“And He began to speak to them in parables. “A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country. 2 When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 4 Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. 5 And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed. 6 He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 7 But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ 8 And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. 9 What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. 10 Have you not read this Scripture: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; 11 this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?” 12 And they were seeking to arrest Him but feared the people, for they perceived that

He had told the parable against them. So they left Him and went away.”

As we look at Jesus’ parable and keep in mind the passage in Isaiah 5, I believe we uncover some important encouragement for us, but also some truths that we should take to heart. We find in this passage the character of God; we also find abuse and rejection and distraction that leads to loss; and we find the command to yield Him fruit.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

How is God presented in Jesus’ parable?

Jesus communicates to us that God is a caring and loving Creator. The vineyard is not just planted, but there is a fence and a pit and a tower. The same is true with our God. He is a loving Creator. Not only does the vineyard owner build the vineyard in a loving manner, he also eventually sends his son to make things right. That is a complete act of love... not for the son mind you... but for the tenants. The love of the Lord for His children is one of the main points of the song written by Isaiah in Isaiah chapter 5 as well.

The Apostle Paul describes the same truth about God to folks who did not know God in Athens in Acts 17.

The Apostle Paul says in ACTS 17:24-27 (ESV)...

“The God who made the world and everything that is in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made by hands; 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He

needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, 27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might feel around for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us...”

Jesus also communicates to us that God is persistent in pursuing us. The owner of the vineyard sends servant after servant and even sent his son knowing that all the other people he sent were mistreated and killed. The persistence is key because each of the servants come away empty handed and yet the owner persists.

The same is true for God. God sent prophet after prophet and servant after servant to the people of Israel to guide and serve and preach and teach and yet many if not all were rejected. The rejection is one of the points of Isaiah’s song in Isaiah 5.

King David reflects on this persistence and watch-care of the Lord in PSALM 139:1-8 (ESV)...

“O Lord, You have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay Your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. 7 Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there!”

May you be encouraged that God the Father loves you deeply. He loves you so deeply that He sent His One and Only Son to fix what was broken.

To be honest with you, if you prayerfully examine your life, you will find God's love in your own life and not just 2,000 years ago when He sent Jesus. God's love is lavished on us.

May you also be encouraged that God pursues you with persistence and patience for your good. It is God's desire that all come to salvation and all know Jesus and all have peace and security in Him. He never gives up drawing us by His Spirit.

How is God presented in Jesus' parable?

He is presented as a loving Heavenly Father who created us in love and pursues us with patience and persistence.

ABUSE & REJECTION & DISTRACTION MEANS LOSS

How do the tenants of the vineyard act in Jesus' parable?

As we look over the response of the tenants, we do not see anything redeemable. Even in Isaiah's song in Isaiah 5 we see nothing good coming from the People of Israel.

We see that the tenants beat the servants. There is abuse. Other servants are struck and mistreated and some are ignored. There is rejection. I could not help but see the abuse and rejection were also present with the son that was sent.

In addition to the abuse and rejection, the tenants were probably distracted in many ways from their purpose. There is abuse and rejection and distraction from their purpose of working the vineyard for the loving persistent owner and producing a harvest of fruit.

The Book of Hebrews at the end of chapter 11 speaks about the mistreatment of those who over the centuries were faithful to God.

HEBREWS 11:36–38 (ESV)...

“Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— 38 of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”

So what is the point of this passage? I cannot help but think that we are to be astounded by the character of God, warned by the failure of the people of God, and encouraged to yield God fruit.

YIELD HIM FRUIT

What is the meaning of Jesus’ parable?

To answer that question, I want to first be more honest with you than I should be and then I want to read a series of passages that shed light on this passage for us.

First, some honesty. Jesus’ parable in Mark 12 is all about being astounded by the character of God, warned by the

failure of the people of God, and encouraged to yield God fruit. I continually struggle in my spirit with producing fruit and what that means. It would be wrong of me to share with you what I think because I often struggle in this area. It happens. We all struggle in faith at different times in different ways. A pastor is no different.

So, because I know I struggle in this area with this topic, let us look to the Scriptures. We should do that anyway!

Let's start in 2 KINGS 19:30-31 (ESV)...

And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. 31 For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the Lord will do this.

Bearing yielded fruit to the Lord starts with growing roots downward in the Lord and results in bearing fruit upward. Are you growing roots deep in faith in your life?

Then PSALM 92:12-15 (ESV) directs us...

The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, 15 to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Bearing yielded fruit to the Lord means we are planted in the House of God and serve Him in His courts. It looks to me like continual growth in Him and we never stop bearing fruit for Him our whole lives.

The prophet Jeremiah says in JEREMIAH 17:7-9 (ESV)...

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. 8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

Bearing yielded fruit to the Lord means trusting in Him and persevering even in the midst of trials. We are not believers in God only when life is good, but when the heat and problems come, we lean into Him and continue to be faithful.

Yielding fruit to the Lord is not only an Old Testament idea. We find the New Testament speaking to us.

MATTHEW 7:18-20 (ESV)...

A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Bearing yielded fruit to the Lord means we should be mindful of our spirits and commit to the fruit of the Spirit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control and keep the disease of sin out of our hearts as much as possible.

The Apostle John records for us JOHN 15:1-5 (ESV)...

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more

fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Bearing yielded fruit to the Lord means abiding in Christ and relying on Him because He is the vine on which our lives grow and move and have meaning.

APPLICATION

In listening to the parable of Jesus, we know He was speaking to the Jewish people sitting around Him, but He was also talking to us and we must take an account of our place in God's vineyard. Just as these tenant farmers in the parable rented land from the owner of the vineyard to do some work, God entrusts to us His Kingdom to work it and produce for Him fruit in His kingdom. God gives each of us time, talents and treasures and He will hold us accountable to how we use them. The vineyard belongs to Him.

What are we doing in God's vineyard?

Are we producing fruit for the owner of the vineyard?

Are we abusive to God's offers in our lives?

Do we reject what God wants to do in us and for us?

Are we distracted by good things or bad things that shift us from our focus on God?

SUMMARY

May you be astounded by the character of God, warned by the failure of the people of God, and encouraged to yield God fruit. Because the **Essential King Jesus** for this chapter is: *Jesus expects yielded fruit.*

Jesus
expects
yielded
fruit.

The text is surrounded by several fruit illustrations. At the top left, a bunch of grapes is partially visible. Below it, there are several citrus fruits: a whole orange, a whole lemon, a slice of orange, and a slice of lemon. To the right of these is a whole pineapple. Below the pineapple is a slice of watermelon with a strawberry on top. At the bottom right, there is a single strawberry. The word 'fruit.' is the largest and most prominent, with a period at the end.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

Do you believe Jesus expects yielded fruit?

\$20,000,000 Question: What is fruit?

What are you doing in God's vineyard?

Are you producing fruit for God?

Are you abusive to God's offers in our lives?

Do you reject what God wants to do in you and for you?

Are you distracted by good things or bad things that shift you from your focus on God?

VERSES TO MEMORIZE IN CHAPTERS 11–12

MARK 11:7–10 (ESV)

“And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and He sat on it. 8 And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. 9 And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, ‘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!’”

MARK 12:17 (ESV)

“Jesus said to them, ‘Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.’ And they marveled at Him.”

MARK 12:24–27 (ESV)

“Jesus said to them, ‘Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? 25 For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 26 And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? 27 He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong.’”

MARK 12:28–31 (ESV)

“And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that He answered them well, asked Him, ‘Which commandment is the most important of all?’ 29 Jesus answered, ‘The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord

your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

MARK 12:43-44 (ESV)

“And He called His disciples to Him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. 44 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

CHAPTER 13 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS IN CONTROL

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*Essential King Jesus:
Jesus is in control.*

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Controversy is ‘a prolonged public dispute or debate.’ Around where I live, it is also a hamburger at Happy Matt’s Food Truck. Controversy is typically played out through public channels like news media or political circles and especially on social media. Controversy can even be disagreements about religious beliefs. What perhaps most distinguishes controversy from a mere disagreement is the heated, sometimes emotional, and often diametrically opposed viewpoints that frame an issue.

As I write this, these United States of America are sharply divided along lines of debate that feel very personal, very emotional, and indeed, extremely heated. Controversy, as a concept, can refer to any number of issues that either impact large cross-sections of the American population or else move large populations to align along rigidly-defined ideological lines.

When we hear the word controversy, we may automatically think about topics like: abortion, the death penalty, or gun control. These types of topics generate organizations and sometimes political action and then other times legislation on the government level.

There are big debates and controversies going on right now that are impacting families, schools, businesses, and jobs.

I am thinking about mask wearing that is either required or suggested in many areas. I live in a community where many do not wear masks, but go to a neighboring large town and every restaurant and store requires them most of the time. Protests happen at the local high school football games because people do not want to wear masks and don't want their children to wear masks. This controversy and debate impacts the church! In the fellowship where I serve, I have people who don't and won't come to church because they believe their personal freedom is more important than worship. I also have people who don't come to church because the freedom of others not to wear a mask impacts their health. It is a controversy. It makes us feel uncomfortable and emotions run high.

I am also thinking about the vaccine mandates that are coming out in government circles and in businesses and schools and other organizations. As I write this, that is not a settled issue. This issue is very very heated and very divisive. Jobs and livelihoods are on the line. People are free with their comments on social media on how others should behave and how laws should be either followed or not followed. We have a mix of health and laws and freedoms and government and at times also religious beliefs.

I bring up controversies and debates because Mark 13, the chapter we are in for this chapter, lays out a topic that is often debated among Christians.

The topic is...

the End of Days

the End of the Age

Judgment Day

the Day of the Lord

the Book of Revelation

... any other way you want to term it.

‘What happens at the End of Time’ is a debated controversy because we get snapshot polaroid of the End Times in different passages and we desperately want to see the whole picture. We don’t get the whole picture, but some folks think and believe as though we do have the full picture.

It creates tension.

Mark 13 is one of those snapshots that fuels our wonder about the End of the Age and what will happen and who will be where and what will be happening in the world. Mark 13 is complicated. In Mark 13, half of the time Jesus is speaking about an event that would happen 40 years later in 70 AD and the other half of the time He is speaking about the Day of the Lord in which He clearly says much about it is unknown and not shared. The complicated nature of Mark 13 gives us controversy and debate!

NATURE OF BIBLE PROPHECY

Before we dig too far into Mark 13, I need to mention a few things about Bible prophecy because Bible prophecy is c-o-m-p-l-i-c-a-t-e-d. If we think that Bible prophecy is only about predicting the future, we would be incorrect and we miss most of what God does with prophecies. There is an element of predicting the future, but that is not all Biblical Prophecy entails. Many times the prophecies in the Bible have three points of truth. Think of it as a stone skipping along the surface of the water in three distinct places making ripples, but also the ripples overlap.

First, Bible prophecy usually has a meaning for the people who are literally physically hearing the message. That is true in Mark 13. Jesus says in verse 30, *“I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened”* (Mark 13:30, NIV).

Second, Bible prophecy usually has a meaning also for a future date past the lives of those who are literally hearing the message. There is truth for a future generation. That is true in Mark 13. Jesus says in verse 24 indicating a future event, *“in those days”* and in verse 26, *“at that time.”*

Thirdly Bible prophecy often has a ring of truth for the End Times. We call that the ‘Eschatological Meaning.’ ‘Eschatological’ is a fancy word meaning ‘relating to the time of the end.’ That is true in Mark 13. Jesus says in a very complicated verse about Himself (verse 32): *“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven*

nor the Son, but only the Father” and then in verse 33, “You do not know when that time will come.”

VERSE 32 SIDEBAR

Even as we think about prophecy, I just re-read verse 32 which complicates Mark 13 even more! The obvious complication is that we believe that Jesus is the Christ and Jesus is God... so then how can He not know something?!

Jesus is the One saying He doesn't know.

[insert shock and weird face]

We find in verse 32 a Divine Mystery about Jesus in that He is completely God and also completely human, but what that means exactly is not so clear. Philippians 2:6-8 helps us a little in that we know Jesus did not have all of His divinity on display or the world would have melted because of His pure glory. Jesus did not grasp onto everything that was God while He walked in His physical life.

A way of thinking of it... in a very wrong way because it is a complete Divine Mystery that I don't think we can actually explain... is that some of God was dormant while Jesus was human, but He was 100% Divine. Like I said, verse 32 is complicated.²⁴

²⁴ If thee thinks me teach heresy, twas not my intent I assure you

MARK 13

Let's dig into Mark 13 and look at the meaning for the disciples' lifetime, the terrible event in 70AD, and then the Day of the Lord. As we look at each of these three areas, I want you to keep verse 13 from Mark 13 in the background of your mind:

ESV	MSG	TLB
"And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."	"Stay with it—that's what is required. Stay with it to the end. You won't be sorry; you'll be saved."	And everyone will hate you because you are Mine. But all who endure to the end without renouncing Me shall be saved.

DISCIPLES' LIFETIME (VERSES 1-11)

MARK 13:1-11 (ESV)

And as He came out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" 2 And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." 3 And as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" 5 And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. 6 Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. 7 And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars,

do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. 8 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains. 9 “But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. 10 And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. 11 And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus does prophesy and speak to events in the disciples' lifetime. Jesus speaks about the destruction of Jerusalem, which we will get to in a moment, and the disciples are full of questions. They want to know how they will know when these things would be fulfilled (verse 4).

Part of the prophecy that Jesus lays out is that life will become difficult for believers in Him. He says that the disciples will need to be on “guard” (verse 9). They will be handed over to councils and arrested and brought to trial and people will hate them because of the faith they profess in Jesus Christ.

We know this to be true. Peter and John are brought before the Sanhedrin in Acts 4 and put on trial. The apostles are arrested and put in jail in Acts 5. Stephen, one of the first deacons, is stoned to death in Acts 7. Believers were driven from their homes and dragged to prison in Acts 8. James the son of Zebedee is killed in Acts

12 and Simon Peter was again thrown in prison at the same time.

Jesus knows this ahead of time that all this will happen to those who follow Him. He wants them to be as prepared as they can be. He tells them that they will be witnesses. They need not worry about what they will say or how they will say it because the Holy Spirit will be their Counselor and Helper and Power in trying days (verse 11).

Jesus is promising that in difficult times when our life is on the line or our faith is tested or we are stretched thin that we have power and assurance and strength from our faith in Jesus and because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to endure to the end to be delivered. The Holy Spirit encourages us to be faithful and stick with it which leads us to ultimate salvation. What a wonderful promise!

Remember, keep in mind Mark 13:13...

HCSB	AMP
<i>And you will be hated by everyone because of My Name. But the one who endures to the end will be delivered.</i>	<i>You will be hated by everyone because of [your association with] My name, but the one who [patiently perseveres empowered by the Holy Spirit and] endures to the end, he will be saved</i>

TERRIBLE EVENT IN 70AD (VERSES 1-23)

MARK 13:14-23

“But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, 16 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 17 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 18 Pray that it may not happen in winter. 19 For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. 20 And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. 21 And then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. 22 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. 23 But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.”

Jesus does prophesy and speak to events after the disciples’ lifetime that centers on a terrible event in 70AD. This is the event that Jesus speaks most about in this chapter. Jesus says in verse 2 that all of the stones of the temple in Jerusalem will be torn down and thrown down. He describes those days as being filled with persecution, false saviors grabbing the attention of the crowds, war, earthquakes, famines, betrayal in families, and quite a bit of death.

What Jesus describes happened in the year 70. About 40 years after Jesus' life, the legions of Rome marched on Jerusalem and destroyed much of it. This is a historical fact. We know it is a historical fact because of histories written at the time. We know about specific events in Jerusalem because of a man named Josephus who was a Jewish historian. He was an eyewitness.

Read what Josephus writes...

“(404) But when they [Romans] went in numbers into the lanes of the city, with their swords drawn, they slew those whom they overtook, without mercy, and set fire to the houses wither the Jews were fled, and burnt every soul in them, and laid waste a great many of the rest; (405) and when they were come to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead men, and the upper rooms full of dead corpses, that is of such as died by the famine; they then stood in a horror at this sight, and went out without touching anything. (406) But although they had this commiseration for such as were destroyed in that manner, yet had they not the same for those that were still alive, but they ran every one through whom they met with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men's blood. (407) And truly so it happened, that though the slayers left off at the evening, yet did the fire greatly prevail in the night, and as all was burning, came that eighth day of the month [Elul] upon Jerusalem.”²⁵

²⁵ Josephus: The Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 8

We understand from this eye witness account that Rome laid siege to Jerusalem and many people starved to death. Those that did not starve to death or kill each other in their homes were killed by Roman soldiers.

I want you to make sure you caught that there was so much blood that it put out some of the fires.

Eventually, much of the city either was destroyed or burned down including the temple which still has not been rebuilt even today.

I want you to read one other passage from his history that shares how many people died in Jerusalem.

Josephus writes:

“(420) Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand, as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand, (421) the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation [with the citizens of Jerusalem], but not belonging to the city itself; for they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army, which, at the very first, occasioned so great a traitness among them that there came a pestilential destruction upon them, and soon afterward such a famine, as destroyed them more suddenly.”²⁶

Just so you know, 1100 x 1000 is 1.1 million. 97,000 Jews were taken into slavery and captivity and over 1 million people were killed by either famine or by the sword. It is

²⁶ Josephus: The Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 9

astounding to think of that much death. From what I can tell, it might be about like everyone in Dallas, Texas dying at one time.

Jesus knows this ahead of time that all this will happen and He wants those who follow Him to flee (verse 14). Jesus knows the death and destruction that will come and He tells them to leave and not to be caught up in those days that were unequalled (verse 19). He wants them to be as prepared as they can be and commands them again to be on “guard” (verse 23).

Notice that Jesus is promising that in times in history when the days are unequalled in violence or death or sickness or hardship and when our faith is tested or we are stretched thin that we have power and assurance and strength from our faith in Jesus and because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to endure through to the end to be delivered. The Holy Spirit encourages us to be faithful and stick with it which leads us to ultimate salvation. What a wonderful promise!

Remember, keep in mind Mark 13:13...

NASB	KJV
<i>And you will be hated by everyone because of My Name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.</i>	<i>And ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.</i>

THE DAY OF THE LORD (VERSES 24-37)

MARK 13:24-37 (ESV)...

24 “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. 28 “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 30 Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 32 “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. 34 It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. 35 Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— 36 lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. 37 And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

Jesus does prophesy and speak to events after the disciples' lifetime and after the events of 70AD to the End Times and the Day of the Lord. We do have snapshots of

the End of Time in the Bible in books like Isaiah and Daniel in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New Testament. These looks in on the end of the world show it to be a terrible time for people, governments, cities, animals, and even the planet itself.

The dreadful days of the End Times bring about many wars and government against government. Jesus even quotes from Isaiah 13 when He says the “*sun will be darkened*” and the whole heavens will be “*shaken*” (verses 24-25). There will be so much unrest on the planet that nothing of what we consider to be civilization survives. It all falls. It is all shaken.

The dreadful days of the End Times also bring about false teachers and false Christs and delusions and lies that tempt faithful people away from God. It is not like these false prophets offer nothing! Verse 22 tells us that these false teachers will produce signs and wonders to deceive even the most faithful of people!

The Son of the Most High God knows this ahead of time that all this will happen and He wants those who follow Him to understand that He is coming back! In the midst of those terrible says, Jesus makes a promise.

He says specifically in **MARK 13:26-27...**

“And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then He will send out the angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.”

Jesus knows the death and destruction that will come and He tells all believers that whether they are alive or dead that He will collect those who are faithful to Him with power and with glory. He will take us to be with Him. He wants us to be as prepared as we can be and commands us to “*be on guard*” (verse 33), “*keep watch*” (verse 34) and “*keep watch*” (verse 35) and to “*watch*” (verse 37).

Christ is promising that in the Day of the Lord He will come for us. He will come and we need to be ready when He does. We will have assurance and strength from our faith in Jesus and because of the presence of the Holy Spirit we will be able to endure in faithfulness. The Holy Spirit enables us to endure through to the end to be saved. The Holy Spirit encourages us to be faithful and stick with it which leads us to ultimate salvation. What a wonderful promise!

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

The **Essential King Jesus** for Mark 13: *Jesus is in control.*

Jesus is in control when believers are arrested for simply believing in Jesus.

Jesus is in control when the home of the Jews is flattened by the Romans.

Jesus is in control at the End of the World.

Jesus calls us to be faithful to the end because He is in control.

Jesus is in control when we get a diagnosis of cancer.

Jesus is in control when we have a house fire and we lose all our worldly possessions.

Jesus is in control when we get a huge bill and we don't have the finances to pay it.

Jesus calls us to be faithful to the end because He is in control.

Jesus is in control when you have to get a vaccine to keep your job.

Jesus is in control when you refuse to get a vaccine and you get fired.

Jesus is in control as we navigate making decisions for our families.

Jesus calls us to be faithful to the end because He is in control.

ME AND YOU RIGHT NOW

We read about terrible times for the disciples. We read about the terrible event in 70AD. We read and thought briefly about the end of the world. No matter what trial or terrible event or test or happenstance we must endure, Jesus calls us to be faithful to the end because He is in control.

Endure to the end and be saved.



**Jesus
is in
control.**

QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

What is a controversy that you feel strongly about that puts you in tension with other people in your life?

What tension about what topic have you seen recently on social media?

How do you deal with people with whom you disagree?

What questions do you have about 70AD?

What questions do you have about Judgment Day?

Why do we not doubt that God is in control when good things happen?

Why do we doubt God is in control when bad things happen?

Is there anything to be fearful of when the world ends?

Is there anything to be fearful of when the world ends if we believe Jesus is in control?

CHAPTER 14 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

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*Essential King Jesus:
Jesus is the blood of the covenant.*

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There once was a man who had a dream where he died. In his dream, this man stood in front of the throne of God and it was Judgement Day. All people from all tongues and tribes and nations were being judged. He wasn't sure how long he stood there because it is hard to tell time in eternity. All sorts of books were opened before him. Angels were flipping pages to places in the books where it mentioned his life. Some had small entries. Some had entries about him that went from page to page to page. Gabriel, the messenger of God, was also there.

Once all the books were opened, Satan the Accuser arrived on the scene. In his dream, Satan did not look like he expected with hooves and such, but looked like a red dragon in a very nice three-piece pin-stripe suit. He looked very dapper and was smoking a very large cigar which smelled horrible. It smelled like death.

Satan the Accuser began to accuse the man for misdeeds, sins, errors, mistakes, omissions, offenses, and everything that had been wrong in his life. The man wanted to refute the charges, but each of them was absolutely true and were confirmed specifically in the books laid out before him.

“Most High God,” Satan began, “The sins of this man, if I were to list them all, would take an eternity to recount. So, if you don’t mind, I will just hit the highlights and allow him to answer?”

Satan the Accuser looked up at God for an affirmation that the highlights would be good enough. He could not process unless permission was given. Satan wasn’t in charge. Satan is never in charge.

God nodded. Permission was given.

The man hung his head in shame as Satan the Accuser spouted off the shameful secret things of his life along with the public things of his life that were mistakes.

“When this man was a teenager and even far into his adulthood,” Satan said at one point, “he liked to talk about himself often. When social media came along, those computer applications did nothing but feed his ego. Life was all about him. Every post about him. Every picture about him. Every decision this man made, even though he had a wife and children, was always about him.” Then Satan looked straight at the man and said, “Do you deny this?”

The man shook his head no. He could not deny it.

Then, Satan the Accuser asked a very important question of the man: “How will this sin be paid for?”

The man thought back on his brief life of around 60 years and came up with an idea. He spoke up and told Satan

the Accuser, Gabriel, God, and all beings that could hear him about the time that he emptied his closet of all the clothes that did not fit him and gave the clothes to a thrift store. He did not even ask for a tax-deductible receipt. Some of them even had the price tags on them. Boom. Sacrifice. Come to think of it, he did this several times in his life and never once ran out of clothes. Surely this good deed gets him some amount of forgiveness.

Satan the Accuser looked at the man with a large smile and at God and asked, “Does giving clothes away as a good deed, or for that matter any amount of good deeds make up for the sin of self-absorption? Does any good deed or any amount of good deeds pay for sin?”

Gabriel, whose job it is to be God’s messenger, spoke for God, “No. No forgiveness.”

The man hung his head again in shame as Satan the Accuser spouted off more shameful highlights in his life:

“When this man was alive, he made having money his top priority. He skipped giving tips at restaurants. He padded his expense account at work to get a little more money. He took half of the birthday money sent to his kids from relatives and spent it on himself. Once he saw a guy drop his wallet right in front of him, took the money out of it, and then caught up to the man and acted like a hero giving him back his wallet. One time he used the business credit card for something personal. Oh wait, it was way more than once. And not to bring up too much, but when he was ten, he stole candy bars from a store by

his house every week for two months.” Then Satan looked straight at the man and said, “Do you deny this?”

The man shook his head no.

Then Satan the Accuser asked a very important question of the man: “How will all this sin be paid for?”

The man thought back on his brief life of around 60 years and came up with an idea. He spoke up and told Satan the Accuser, Gabriel, God, and all beings that could hear him about some of the ways he spent his money. He told about the time he gave towards hurricane relief in Haiti. He gave to the Red Cross. He put change in the bucket at Christmas time for the Salvation Army. Then there was some sponsored kid his wife and kids had over in Ecuador. That was money spent in a good place. Several times while downtown he bought a homeless guy a meal. Also, how could he forget, one time he helped pay for the funeral expenses of a co-worker that died suddenly!

Satan the Accuser looked at the man with a large smile and asked God, “Does spending money in good ways or charitable giving make up for the sin of stealing? Can money or any amount of money pay for sin?”

Gabriel, whose job it is to be God’s messenger, spoke for God, “No. No forgiveness.”

The man hung his head again in shame as Satan the Accuser spouted off more shameful highlights in his life. Satan listed off just the highlights of the man’s life that were errors:

Adultery and Lust
Bad Language and Cursing
Coveting what all his buddies had
Drunkenness

The list went on and on from A-Z and this was just the highlights!

Every single time Satan the Accuser was finished, he would look straight at the man and ask, “Do you deny this?” The man would always shake his head no. Not only did he somehow remember the sins, but the items were all written down in the books in front of him. There was a record.

Every single time, Satan the Accuser asked a very important question of the man: “How will this sin be paid for?” Every single time the man came up with a way that the sin could be forgiven. Good deeds. Money paid. A change of heart. A lesson learned and then taught to others. New Year’s Resolutions not just made, but made and kept! Someone offered forgiveness to him and let the offense go. Over and over again he offered reasons and excuses and logical arguments and extenuating circumstances and alternatives as to why he should not be guilty.

Every single time, Gabriel, whose job it is to be God’s messenger, spoke for God and always said, “No. No forgiveness.” No excuse was good enough. No action was good enough. No amount of reasoning changed the verdict of guilty.

No Forgiveness.
No Forgiveness.
No Forgiveness.
No Forgiveness.
No Forgiveness.
No Forgiveness.

The man grew angrier and angrier and finally shouted at the top of his lungs, “What gets forgiveness?!”

As soon as he yelled, he woke up. He was covered in sweat. He must have been very restless in bed because the sheets were in knots as was his stomach and his heart. For a minute, he forgot where he was. It was a hotel room. His memory was foggy. He turned on the light. He took a sip of water. The same words kept ringing in his head:

No Forgiveness.
No Forgiveness.
No Forgiveness.

He opened up the nightstand beside the bed and there in the drawer was a book. Not just any book mind you, but a Bible.

He stared at the Bible.
He felt like the Bible was staring at him.

He picked up the Bible in the early morning hours and the pages flopped open to where someone had placed a bookmark. He expected something mundane to be marked like John 3:16 or some kind of famous verse like

that. It was not John 3:16. Marked on one of the pages were a few verses from a book called Mark.

MARK 14:22-24 (ESV)

And as they were eating, He took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is My body." 23 And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. 24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

It was that last verse, Mark 14:24 that caught his attention in that hotel room.

MARK 14:24b (ESV)

"This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

The Bible was in his hands and he noticed another bookmark. He expected something mundane to be marked like John 3:16 or some kind of famous verse like that. It was not John 3:16. He turned to the new bookmark and marked on one of the pages were a few verses from a book called Hebrews.

HEBREWS 9:20-22 (ESV)...

"This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." 21 And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. 22 Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Blood.

Shedding of Blood.

Shedding of Blood Cleanses.

Shedding of Blood Cleanses Sin.

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Jesus is the Blood of the Covenant that cleanses and forgives sins!

He said those words aloud in his hotel room, “Jesus is the Blood of the Covenant that cleanses and forgives sins!”

The man heard laughing in the hotel room. It was not nice laughing, but a mean, deep, and evil laughter. He smelled cigar smoke that reminded him of death. He knew he was not in his hotel room alone. Was he in a hotel? He turned to see Satan the Accuser looking like a red dragon in a very nice three-piece pin-stripe suit.

Satan pointed at the man and told him: “Do you remember this night? You were in the hotel room. You woke up from a dream. You took a sip of water. You read some verses from that dreaded book of God’s Word which shared the Truth with you. God Almighty through His Word told you the way of salvation. He told you the way of forgiveness.”

The man said those words aloud again in his hotel room, “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

“Yes,” Satan the Accuser said, “the shedding of blood provides forgiveness. The blood of Jesus provides

forgiveness. Jesus Christ is the blood of the new covenant between God and humanity. You. Never. Accepted. Him. His blood does not cover you. Therefore, for you, there is no forgiveness.”

No Forgiveness.

No Forgiveness.

No Forgiveness.

ESSENTIAL KING JESUS

Each chapter in this book I want to share with you one essential truth that is important for us to believe and then also communicate to others about Jesus. We are focusing on the **Essential King Jesus**. Mark 14 shares with us so many truths in the 72 verses of the chapter. I picked one. The **Essential King Jesus** for Mark 14: *Jesus is the blood of the covenant*.

FOCUS OF THE PASSAGE

This passage has as its focus the Passover meal that became what we know as the Last Supper. During this Last Supper, Jesus washed His disciples' feet, Judas Iscariot went out to betray Jesus, and Jesus gave His disciples a specific way of remembering Him. With prayers and important words, Jesus focused His followers on everything He was about to do for them and for us. A New Covenant in His blood was promised on this night. It is quite a significant event.

The next steps for the disciples would come immediately after His death. His death was not the end, but the

beginning of so much for them... and by extension for us! Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper so that all disciples would remember the critical point of faith in Him. The Christian faith has as a foundational belief that Jesus' body and blood literally, figuratively, and spiritually took on sin for us to provide forgiveness.

The bread focuses the disciples on the body of Jesus which would suffer for them. Jesus of Nazareth was an actual person who made the choice to suffer that we might have forgiveness.

The "fruit of the vine" in the cup focuses the disciples on the blood of Jesus which would be shed to provide forgiveness. Jesus of Nazareth actually bled in payment for wrongs *we have done*. Jesus was eager for the disciples to move forward in faith based on His death and share the news with others.

MARK 14:24b (ESV)

"This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

JESUS COMPLETED MUCH

I imagine Jesus reclining at the table with eagerness and fear and excitement and perseverance and stress and joy about everything that is about to happen. There is much that is about to change to usher in the Kingdom of God for His followers and for all those who would follow Him after them as faith in Him grew deep and wide. I imagine Jesus reclining at the table also looking back on the cross. He can do that... He is after all the Eternal God. Jesus

talks about the “New Covenant” poured out in His blood and so much is completed and finished because of what happens on the cross.

What is finished because of Jesus’ blood?

COMPLETED: REDEEMING LOVE

I believe we look back and see that in Jesus we have completed work of redeeming love. All throughout history God has been working and weaving His will to show us how much He loves us by redeeming us. His redeeming love is evident as we look back. The primary motivator for Jesus shedding His blood on the cross was love.

The Apostle John says in 1 JOHN 3:1a (ESV)...

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

COMPLETED: MEANING OF PASSOVER

I believe we look back and see that everything that the Passover foreshadowed in the Old Testament in Exodus came true in Jesus Christ. It is no accident that Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper at Passover. He had Passover on His mind for good reason.

God tells Moses in EXODUS 12:22–24 (ESV)...

Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. 23 For the Lord will pass through to

strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. 24 You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever.

The reason Passover was a lasting ordinance is because it foreshadows what Jesus would do for us. In Exodus 12, those marked by blood were passed over by death. For us, those marked by the blood of Jesus are also passed over by death and offered eternal life. Looking back, we see the connections between Christ, the Last Supper, and Passover.

COMPLETED: LAMB OF GOD

I believe we look back and see that the lamb of God was slain. John the Baptist pointed the way as Jesus began His ministry.

John^{#1} says about John^{#2} in JOHN 1:29 (ESV)...

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!"

We look back and see that Jesus' perfect spotless life was offered like a lamb to the slaughter. The purpose of what Jesus did is made very clear. It was clear even in the mind of John the Baptist: "*takes away the sin of the world.*" We look back and see that true lasting forgiveness is accomplished in Christ by the shedding of His blood for us in the new covenant.

COMPLETED: KINGDOM OF GOD

We look back and see that the way into the Kingdom of God is open. Forgiveness, rightness with God, righteous living, abundant life, a firm foundation for life, and grace are all provided for us through Christ Jesus. He is the only way into the Kingdom of God that He was eagerly awaiting. Jesus unlocks all of that for us with His blood of the covenant.

John records Jesus' words in JOHN 14:6 (ESV)...

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

SUMMARY

I imagine Jesus reclining at the table with all of salvific history about to take a divine turning point. The **Essential King Jesus** for Mark 14: *Jesus is the blood of the covenant*. Jesus' blood makes a way for redeeming love, salvation, payment for sin, and entrance into the Kingdom of God. Only the blood of Jesus accomplishes this. The **Essential King Jesus** for Mark 14: *Jesus is the blood of the covenant*.

THE GOSPEL

Read carefully.

I am about to explain the Gospel to you and you will have no excuse later that you never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I am going to be very clear about this greatest news I could ever share with you. I am going to use an

acronym to share with you why Jesus is so important and why Jesus matters. It is also a way, if you are already a believer, to share the Gospel with someone else.

The word I'll use is blood. B-L-O-O-D.

Because we are sinners, we are separated from God.

Lost, alone without God.

Only blood pays for sin.

Only the blood of Jesus Christ pays for all our sin.

Deliverance from sin only happens through Christ.

**Jesus is
the blood
of the
covenant**

A decorative graphic consisting of numerous grey teardrop shapes of varying sizes, falling from the right side of the text and cascading downwards. The teardrops are semi-transparent and overlap each other, creating a sense of movement and depth. They are positioned to the right of the main text, starting from the level of 'Jesus is' and extending down to the level of 'covenant'.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

If you were to die today, is thy heart right with God?

Why does Jesus point out both His body and His blood at the Last Supper?

How often do you take communion to honor and remember Jesus?

How often do you take communion without stopping to remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ properly?

Because we are sinners, we are separated from God.

Can you talk about this with someone?

What one thing is important to say?

Lost, alone without God.

Can you talk about this with someone?

What one thing is important to say?

Only blood pays for sin.

Can you talk about this with someone?

What one thing is important to say?

Only the blood of Jesus Christ pays for all our sin.

Can you talk about this with someone?

What one thing is important to say?

Deliverance from sin only happens through Christ.

Can you talk about this with someone?

What one thing is important to say?

VERSES TO MEMORIZE IN CHAPTERS 13-14

MARK 13:9-11 (ESV)

“But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, to bear witness before them. 10 And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. 11 And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.”

MARK 13:21-23 (ESV)

“And then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. 22 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. 23 But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.”

MARK 13:33 (ESV)

“Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.”

MARK 14:22-25 (ESV)

“ And as they were eating, He took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is My body.” 23 And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. 24 And He said to them, “This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

MARK 14:36 (ESV)

“And He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will.”

MARK 14:60–62 (ESV)

“And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” 61 But He remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked Him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” 62 And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

CHAPTER 15 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS FORSAKEN

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*Essential King Jesus:
Jesus is the forsaken.*

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We have been reading and meditating and praying our way through the Gospel of Mark for 15 chapters at this point. You are almost at the end!

Each chapter we have looked at one passage in a chapter. We are focusing on the **Essential King Jesus**. I want to review the truth we have found thus far so that we get these truths written on our hearts so we know what we believe and so we can share properly with others! I'll even preview the next chapter for you.

- Mark 1: You cannot be part of the Kingdom of God without Jesus.
- Mark 2: Jesus has all authority and all power to forgive sins.
- Mark 3: Jesus came to do the will of God.
- Mark 4: Jesus casts out fear.
- Mark 5: Jesus breaks our chains.
- Mark 6: Jesus can be rejected.
- Mark 7: Jesus distastes hypocrisy.
- Mark 8: Jesus is the Christ.
- Mark 9: Jesus only.
- Mark 10: Jesus wants child-like faith in the Kingdom of God.
- Mark 11: Jesus overturns sin to holiness.
- Mark 12: Jesus expects yielded fruit.
- Mark 13: Jesus is in control.
- Mark 14: Jesus is the blood of the covenant.
- Mark 15: Jesus is the forsaken.
- Mark 16: Jesus is the resurrection.

Mark 15 shares with us so many truths about Jesus Christ as the passage recounts the death of Jesus. The **Essential King Jesus** for Mark 15: *Jesus is the forsaken*.

MARK 15:33-39 (ESV)

“And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?” 35 And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “Behold, He is calling Elijah.” 36 And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to Him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down.” 37 And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last. 38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood facing Him, saw that in this way He breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!”

QUESTIONS

When I read this passage from Mark 15, there are so many questions that come to mind. Maybe you have them as well:

- What does the word “*forsaken*” mean?
- How could God forsake Himself?
- Why would God forsake Jesus on the cross at the time when He needed Him the most?!
- What is happening to Jesus on the cross that this abandonment is happening?
- Is God in the habit of forsaking people?

- Didn't Jesus already know why God was turning His back on Him?
- What does the Forsaken One do for us?

FORSAKE

'*Forsake*' is a very strong word in my opinion. It means to "abandon." It means "to cast aside or to completely turn your back on something." It is a word of complete separation.

The scene is the African savannah. The tall grasses sway in the wind. The sun is high in the sky. The sounds of elephants and all kinds of animals can be heard over the breeze. Two lions are sitting amidst the grass watching the herds go by. The herds are unaware that two Kings of the Jungle are ready to hunt and eat them.

One lion is named Leo. One lion is named Lionel.

A nice juicy zebra with junk in the trunk walks by the hiding place of the two lions. Lionel looks at Leo and says, "Are you ready to go get that one?" Leo pulls out a large carrot stick and begins to munch on it and says, "No."

A few minutes go by and a limp gazelle with babies goes by the lions' hiding place. "Ooo Ooo," says Lionel with excitement, "Limp and with young ones! This has to be it!" By this time, Leo has a nice fruit salad in front of him. There were apples, oranges, bananas, and grapes all chopped nicely together for a healthy mix of food. Leo is

about half-way done with the fruit salad. With cheeks full of fruit, Leo says 'No' in a very disinterested fashion.

Lionel doesn't know what to think. They are lions. They are fierce. They are hunters. They are meat eaters extraordinaire. They are the Kings of the Jungle that instill fear into prey. Lionel wasn't feeling like Leo wanted to be a lion anymore. Just then, a fat pig walked by and would be easy prey. Lionel gets ready and says, "Ok let's go! Bacon for Breakfast!" Leo says, "No" as he finishes off a bag of pretzels.

Lionel loses his mind and decides to confront his hunting partner. "Leo," he says in a very frustrated growl, "You let a zebra, a limp gazelle with babies, and now a perfectly good pig by and we didn't hunt any of them! What is wrong with you?"

Leo looks at Lionel. "It is my New Year's Resolution, Lionel. I am going to be a vegetarian. I have turned my back on all things meat. It is so cruel to the lesser animals to eat them. I was reading online the other day, on PrideBook, and then on Jitter, that other animals don't like us very much because we eat them all the time. And we sleep all day. And we make our ladies do most of the hunting."

Lionel almost fainted. "You turned your back... you completely turned your back on everything that you are... all that you used to do... all that it means to be a lion. You have forsaken being a lion?"

Leo responded as he began to dip his pita into hummus, “‘I, Leo the Lion, forsake being a Lion.’ That was my New Year’s Resolution. I turn my back on hunting meat. I turn my back on instilling fear into all animals that see me. Yes, Lionel, I turned my back.”

With that, Lionel turned his back and walked stealthily towards a herd of baby elephants.

Forsake is not just a word for vegetarian lions, but a word used in the Old Testament as well. Moses writes in the Old Testament in DEUTERONOMY 31:15-18 (ESV)...

“And the Lord appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud. And the pillar of cloud stood over the entrance of the tent. 16 And the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant that I have made with them. 17 Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they will be devoured. And many evils and troubles will come upon them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?’ 18 And I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil that they have done, because they have turned to other gods.”

Forsake is a very strong word. What words are associated with ‘forsake’ in Deuteronomy 31? These words show us that ‘forsake’ is indeed a strong word heavy with meaning:

Break.

Anger.

Hide.

Destruction.

Disasters.

Difficulties.

God is not with us.

We find, when ‘forsake’ relates to God, sin is always involved. We see over and over in the Bible that God turns His back on sin (Joshua 7, 24, 2 Kings 21, Ezra 8, Isaiah 1, Jeremiah 12, 23, Lamentations 5, Ezekiel 8, 9).

His love does not stop.

He does not forget us.

His will does not stop.

His discipline does not stop.

But most certainly when sin infects something, God turns away from the sinful for He is only righteous, holy, just, and perfect.

Israel did exactly as God told Moses they would do in Deuteronomy 31. In future generations, Israel went after idols and put them in the place of God and turned their own backs on God.

We see this in the Prophet Samuel’s writing in JUDGES 2:12-14 (ESV)...

“And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger. 13 They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. 14 So the anger of the Lord was

kindled against Israel, and He gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And He sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.”

God does not forsake. God is not in the habit of forsaking anyone, but our sinful choices do have a real impact on our relationship with God. It has been that way from the beginning. Discipline happens. In a small way, separation happens because God is holy and we are filled with sin.

FEELINGS OF BEING FORSAKEN

Imagine if you will a large store. The whole place is filled with shoppers. Carts are going here and there and everywhere. There are aisles fill with toys and clothes and groceries and tools. It is a one stop shop for all things. In this large store, is a mom and son doing some shopping. The mom pushes the cart and the son is about 10 years old. He wants to ride on the side of the cart, but it is too hard to steer with him hanging on so he is walking by himself next to her. They walk around the store and mom puts various things in the cart... toilet paper, paper plates, milk, and broccoli (yuck!).

The mom and son walk into an aisle and there is a little box about waist high with a pole on it. On top of the pole is a blue light. As soon as mom and son ‘round the corner, an employee turns on the blue light and an announcement is made all over the store. This aisle has t-shirts. They are all buy one get two free. People come from every place and start grabbing shirts three at a time.

People are pushing and shoving. Some elderly woman is whacking others with her walker to protect her stash of 12 shirts. The blue light was like a call for craziness and people came from every crazy corner of the store to this one spot.

In the midst of the mayhem, the mother and son got separated. People didn't care; they wanted their three shirts. The boy didn't see his mother. He called out. He did not hear her call back. All he saw was a man beaten down by an old lady's walker and the store employee holding onto the light pole for dear life. The little boy walked around and called for his mother. He did not find her. Where did she go? Had she left him?

At that moment, walking down an aisle filled with trash cans and storage bins, a feeling of dread came over this little boy. He felt fear. He felt forsaken. How would he get home? Would he have to live in the store in a box or something? Would they arrest him and take him to jail? Fear. Despair. Lostness.

He was separated from his mother and he did not know where she was. This was the first time his little brain could remember not being with his mom. He was always with her. She was always with him. Now, he called out. She did not answer. Disconnected. Tears began to flow down his face as he walked.

The feelings that come with being forsaken are quite strong. Fear, despair, and a great sense of being lost seem to top the list as we think about it. Giving up is a real option. These are not mild emotions, but strong ones

that shake us to our core. None of them are good feelings either. 'Forsaken' is not a good word, but one that denotes a hard-emotional trial that twists our hearts and minds.

What was happening to Jesus on the cross as we read Mark 15 was accident. God knew this would happen. Jesus also knew this would happen for He laid down His life for us and all that went with it.

This emotionally hard forsaking was predicted in the Old Testament in several places. One place in particular comes to mind because Jesus uses the exact words from the Psalm while He is on the cross. Jesus is not necessarily asking a question on the cross, but rather is expressing the harshness of what is going on inside Him and around Him. What is happening to Jesus is soul wrenching and it is cruel and grueling and awful. Jesus wants us to know that God's plan of atonement is moving forward.

King David prophesies in PSALM 22:1-19 (NIV)...

"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Why are You so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? 2 O my God, I cry out by day, but You do not answer, by night, and am not silent. 3 Yet You are enthroned as the Holy One; You are the praise of Israel. 4 In You our fathers put their trust; they trusted and You delivered them. 5 They cried to You and were saved; in You they trusted and were not disappointed. 6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. 7 All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: 8 "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let Him deliver him, since He delights in him." 9 Yet You brought me out of the womb; You made me trust in You even at

my mother's breast. 10 From birth I was cast upon You; from my mother's womb You have been my God. 11 Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. 12 Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. 13 Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; You lay me in the dust of death. 16 Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. 18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing. 19 But You, O LORD, be not far off; O my Strength, come quickly to help me.”

CONFIRMATION IN THE REST OF THE BIBLE

Jesus Christ was and is the Son of the Living God. Jesus Christ was without sin. The writer of HEBREWS affirmed that “*we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin*” (4:15, ESV).

Jesus was “*holy, blameless, [and] pure*” (HEBREWS 7:26, ESV). He was One “*who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth*” (1 PETER 2:22, ESV).

Judas Iscariot, after betraying Jesus said, “*I have sinned by betraying innocent blood*” (MATTHEW 27:4, ESV). A hardened Roman soldier cried out, “*Certainly this was a righteous man*” (LUKE 23:47).

The apostle Peter affirmed that we are redeemed not “with perishable things like silver or gold...but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 PETER 1:18–19, ESV). The Apostle John said, “You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin” (1 JOHN 3:5, ESV).

We see from Scripture after Scripture that Jesus rejected the sin nature and followed God perfectly. Please don’t miss this truth: Jesus’ full obedience allowed Him to be the perfect sacrifice for us. Fully obedient Jesus soaked up our sin and died because we are full of disobedience.

The Apostle Paul instructs us in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 (ESV)...

“For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

While Jesus Christ never committed a sin personally, He was made to be sin for us substitutionally. Jesus took on our punishment voluntarily. The whole redemptive plan of God is one of substitution and without His substitution there is no salvation.

It was by His utterly selfless sacrificial death on the cross that our sinless Savior—the unblemished Lamb of God—paid the penalty for our sins and thereby canceled the debt of sin against us, thus wondrously making possible our reconciliation with God.

Jesus became forsaken.

Jesus willingly became separated from God.

God turned His back on His Son so that all our sins might be paid for.

Jesus and God are disconnected so that our relationship with God might be restored.

In His anguish, Jesus calls out to God who is loving us by turning His back on His Son.

FORSAKEN FOR US

What does the Forsaken One do for us?

Saves Us.

Forgives Us.

Provides atonement for us.

Offers a clean slate to those that believe.

Gives us life because He is the Author of Life.

Please re-read **MARK 15:33-39 (MSG)** and praise the One Who was forsaken for us...

“At noon the sky became extremely dark. The darkness lasted three hours. At three o’clock, Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” 35-36 Some of the bystanders who heard him said, “Listen, he’s calling for Elijah.” Someone ran off, soaked a sponge in sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down.” 37-39 But Jesus, with a loud cry, gave his last breath. At that moment the Temple curtain ripped right down the middle. When the Roman captain standing guard in front of him saw that

he had quit breathing, he said, “This has to be the Son of God!”

Essential King Jesus: Jesus is the forsaken.

**Jesus
is
the
forsaken**

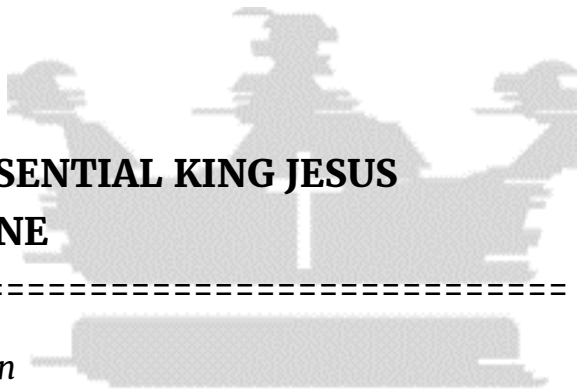


QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

What questions do you have about the death of Jesus?

Why does it not make sense when we talk about God 'forsaking' that it is also true that His love or will or watchfulness over us does not stop?

Why did Jesus call out to God the Father on the cross?



CHAPTER 16 | ESSENTIAL KING JESUS RESURRECTED ONE

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Essential King Jesus:
Jesus is the resurrection
=====

And here we are in the last chapter of this book... and the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark. Spoiler alert... Jesus does not stay dead, but raises from the dead and is seen by bunches of folks. Not only is He seen by bunches of folks, but the religious leaders at the time have to lie and pay soldiers off because there is no other explanation other than Jesus rose.

MARK 16:1-8 (ESV)...

“When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” 4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. 5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. 6 And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” 8 And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and

astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”

What is the **Essential King Jesus** that we find in this passage? The **Essential King Jesus** must be that *Jesus is the resurrection.*

RESURRECTION: CHRIST AROSE

The absolute best hymn ever put together about the resurrection of Jesus was written in 1874 by Robert Lowry who also wrote “I Need Thee Every Hour”, “Nothing but the Blood”, and “Shall we Gather at the River.” Robert Lowry was a Baptist minister for 51 years who lived and ministered with churches in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. His hymn focuses us on the promise of Easter Morning and the meaning that Easter Morning brings.

What song is it?

“Christ Arose” or as most of us probably call it “Up from the grave He Arose”²⁷

Verse 1:

Low in the grave He lay, Jesus my Savior, Waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord!

As we begin to look at these verses, I cannot help but note that over and over in the three verses of the song; Jesus is referred to as “Savior” and “Lord.”

Why is Jesus called “Savior?”

²⁷ Public Domain

Jesus is called Savior because it is Jesus Christ that provides forgiveness and salvation from our sins. Jesus is the source of eternal life for us. Jesus was the One who willingly suffered and died on our behalf to be the substitute for our sins. We could not and did not earn salvation, it is a gift of God called grace.

The Apostle Paul writes to Titus in TITUS 3:4-7 telling us plainly...

“But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life..”

Why is Jesus called “Lord?”

To be honest, Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is God. That makes Jesus the Sovereign Infinite Everlasting Creator God of the Universe and He is in charge.

In JOHN 13:13 (NIV) Jesus says...

“You call Me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord’, and rightly so, for that is what I am.” Being “Lord” is Jesus’ identity. Being Lord means He is the Son of God. Being Lord means He has all things under His power.

It was this “Savior” and “Lord” that was willingly crucified on Friday and now lay low in the grave... waiting for the coming day when He would rise from the dead. I

cannot imagine how much Jesus endured on the cross knowing that with a minor thought He could have changed it all.

Verse 2: Vainly they watch His bed, Jesus my Savior; Vainly they seal the dead, Jesus my Lord!

The verse of the song speaks of two things that “vainly” happened while Jesus was in the tomb. The word “vain” has two basic meanings. First, it means “one has an excessively high opinion of themselves.” That’s not what it means here. Second, it means “to do something that produces no result.” In this verse of the song, “vainly” refers both times to the Roman guards and religious leaders that wanted Him dead and got their wish, but in the end what they wanted would not come to fulfillment. Jesus would not stay dead!

The religious leaders and guards vainly watched the tomb to make nothing was amiss. The plain fact was... Jesus was dead. They had killed Him on purpose and now He was dead. The disciples fled. No one would come to take His body or do anything... Jesus was dead! They could watch the bed all they wanted, but at the appropriate time, Jesus would rise from it. They could do nothing to stop it.

The religious leaders and guards also sealed the tomb in vain. We know that once Jesus rose from the dead, nothing would keep Him inside. Jesus would come out of the tomb and it would be earth-shaking... both literally and figuratively.

The Apostle Matthew writes to us in MATTHEW 28:1-4 (NIV)...

“After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. 2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.”

They could stand guard and try to keep the stone in place, but the stone would roll away and show the whole world that Jesus had risen.

Verse 3: Death cannot keep its Prey, Jesus my Savior; He tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord!

Verse three of this classic hymn tells us of the complete victory that Jesus, our Lord and Savior, won that Easter Morning.

First, we have victory over death. We who are believers have nothing to fear the hour we take our last breath. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has already been dead and prepared a place for us.

ROMANS 8:2 (NIV) says, *“Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:56-57 (NIV) tells us, *“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Death for the believer is not something that victimizes us or hunts us, but rather death for the believer is victory shared in Christ.

Second, we have victory over eternal prison. ROMANS 6:23 (NIV) promises us, “*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” In death for believers, there is no constriction or bars or hurtfulness, but complete freedom in God. Eternal life in God is freedom and goodness and plenty and peace.

Usually, we sing these three wonderful verses based on truths in Scripture in church. These truths are put forth as beautiful poetry in this hymn. We then come to the chorus and because of the truth of what Jesus Christ has done, you and I can sing loud and proud and boisterous and confidently with strength of heart and hope in our spirits.

Chorus/Refrain:

Up from the grave He arose, With a mighty triumph o'er His foes, He arose a Victor from the dark domain, And He lives forever, with His saints to reign. He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

As I think about those words, one question comes to mind: what ‘foes’ were defeated when Jesus Christ rose from the dead? That is a worthy question I think. When Jesus rose from the dead, what did He defeat?

Death was defeated.
Satan was defeated.
Sin was defeated.

Guilt was defeated.
Chaos was defeated.
Darkness was defeated.
Evil was defeated.

Jesus did not just die for you, but He rose victorious over anything that would chain us away from God the Father. To put it very simply, the **Essential King Jesus** truth is that *Jesus is the resurrection*.

Jesus is the resurrection



QUESTIONS TO THINK ON

What about the resurrection of Jesus is hard to believe?

Is Jesus your Savior? Does anyone else know?

Is Jesus your Lord? Does anyone else know?

How would you explain to someone that Jesus is Savior and Lord?

What surprises you the most about Jesus returning to life?

What alternative explanations to the resurrection of Jesus have you heard?

Why might someone not care that a Guy died for them 2,000 years ago and came back to life?

Who in your life do you need to actively pray for that you might have an opportunity to share the Gospel?

VERSES TO MEMORIZE IN CHAPTERS 15-16

MARK 15:13-15 (ESV)

“And they cried out again, “Crucify Him.” 14 And Pilate said to them, “Why? What evil has He done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify Him.” 15 So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.”

MARK 15:37-39 (ESV)

“And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last. 38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood facing Him, saw that in this way He breathed his last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!”

MARK 16:6-7 (ESV)

“And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. 7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.”

MARK 16:15-16 (ESV)

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

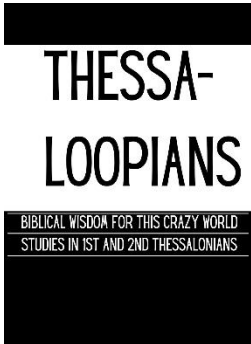
CONCLUDING AUTHOR'S NOTE

It is my hope that this book through the Gospel of Mark has strengthened your faith. I pray you understand God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit a little more.

I pray Jesus is your King.

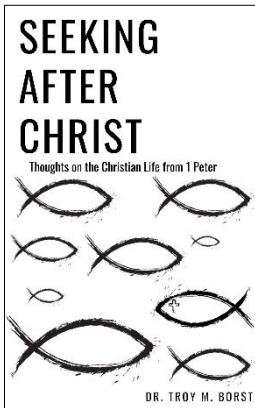
- *Troy*

OTHER BOOKS AUTHORED OR CO-AUTHORED BY TROY BORST

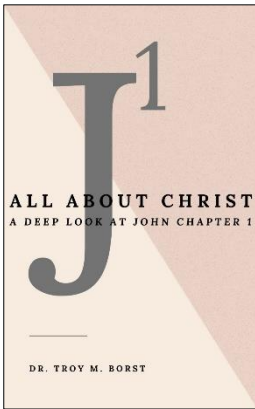


DR. TROY M. BORST

If you don't think this world is crazy, then you probably are off-your-rocker delirious with visions of little green gnomes flying around in airplanes made of cheese. Our hope in this life is to trust in Jesus Christ and Him crucified and to abide in Him daily to guard our hearts and minds while we live each day. Based on sermons from Cincinnati Christian Church in Bloomfield, IN.

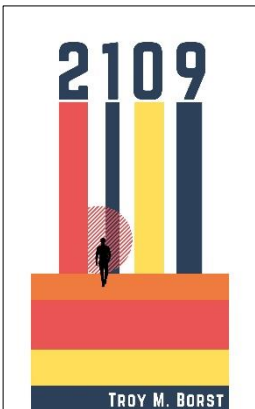


Either you seek after Christ or you don't. Dive into 1 Peter and study to discover the wisdom from the Apostle Simon Peter who wanted believers after him to seek after Christ. He also wants us to remain faithful to Jesus Christ in a world that wants believers to bend and break in different directions. You bending?
You breaking?



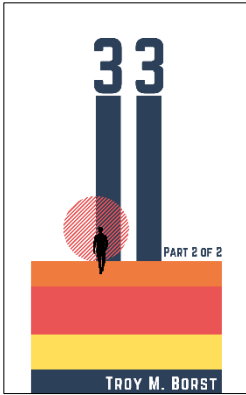
John Chapter 1 is a passage of Scripture rich with theology and language that introduces us to Jesus Christ. This book digs section by section of one chapter of Scripture. Each passage reveals a little more about Jesus Christ. This book is all about Jesus.

This book was developed from a sermon series preached at Cincinnati Christian Church in Bloomfield, Indiana.



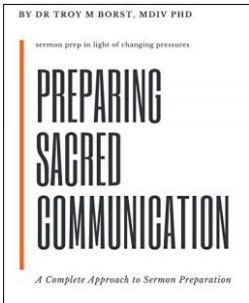
When Dr. Tak Briar suffers a catastrophic time-travelling accident, he finds himself stuck 4,000 years in the past. While he waits in the distant past, Tak finds Abram, Sarai, Lot, Hagar, Melchizedek, and other historical Biblical people as he makes his way home. This fast-paced Christian fictional story covers the events of Genesis 13-14.

This fictional story also presents some theological Truth that God is good and His will in our lives always works for good.

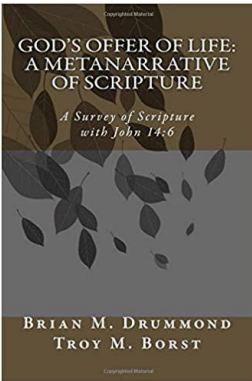


Follow the adventure of Dr. Tak Briar as he navigates a time-traveling adventure to fix a time-altering mistake he made in the distant past. His fix? Ask Jesus of Nazareth for help. He not only faces terrorists and becomes a horse thief, but tries desperately to meet Jesus to make a request.

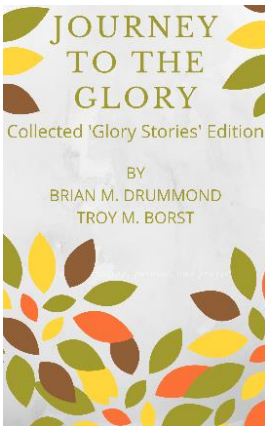
This fast-paced Christian fictional story covers the events of Jesus' Last Week in the Gospels. This fictional story also presents some theological Truth that Jesus is about life, resurrection, and salvation.



“Preparing Sacred Communication” is focused on a comprehensive step-by-step process of preparing a sermon which takes into consideration solid academic research, proven practice, and technological advances. This book refines the sermon preparation process for any sacred communicator.

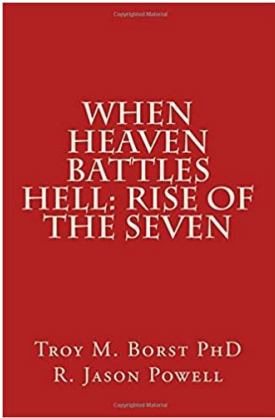


“God’s Offer of Life” is a theological treatise looking at Genesis–Revelation in light of John 14:6. You will find much theology and Scripture as well as hand-drawn illustrations, stories, poems, and questions to think about in order to drive home the point of the correct thoughts about God contained within this book.



“Journey to the Glory” is an allegory that takes place in a fictional world centered on two main areas: Receding and the Land of Hashem. This work follows the journey of one person from Receding to Hashem in which he discovers what God is like which encourages him to imitate those qualities.

This edition collects short stories which are ‘further adventures.’



“When Heaven Battles Hell” is Christian Historical Science-Fiction work which relates a Biblically-based good vs. evil tale. Satan will seek to carry out the end of the world by bringing forth his Four Horsemen before the prophesied time, but God has already made plans to counter the evil of Satan by raising up seven chosen warriors to battle the armies of Hell behind the scenes in history.

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Website to which the author contributes regularly:
www.dwellingsinscripture.com
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About the author:

Troy M. Borst is a 20+ year veteran of local Christian church ministry in Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Indiana. He has taught on the post-secondary level in the areas of public speaking, preaching, and worldview. He enjoys martial arts, science fiction, SEC College Football, and the Tampa Bay Lightning (NHL). He lives in Indiana with his wife and three teenage children.

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