

Mark Notes

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Introduction:

Mark is written to the Romans and therefore serves as a perfect introduction of the life of Christ to any who have limited understand of Jewish culture and customs.

This Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark who was a young man through Jesus' lifetime; likely about 12 years old at the time of Jesus' crucifixion.

1. Born to a woman of strong faith. (Acts 12:12)
 - Made that faith his own and became a follower of Christ at a young age.
2. Converted by Peter. (1 Peter 5:13)
 - Church tradition says Mark was mentored by Peter and wrote this gospel from much of Peter's experience.
3. This believer had a problem. (Mark 14:51,52)
 - Follower of Jesus bagged Jesus when things got real tough, as all disciples did...and do. Mark was more embarrassed of Jesus than of running away naked.
 - Later, traveling with Paul and Barnabas, his uncle (Col. 4:10), Mark skipped out on them in their first missionary journey as they headed into Asia. (Acts 12:25; 13:13)
4. Barnabas gave him a second chance. (Acts 15:38)
 - Paul accepted Mark back later. (2 Tim. 4:11)
 - Apart from writing this gospel, early church tradition...Mark served as the first missionary in Egypt. "So great were his converts, both in number and sincerity of commitment, says Eusebius, that the great Jewish philosopher, Philo, was amazed." (Nelson's Dict. 802)

Mark's Theme: Jesus the Servant (Mark 10:45)

- But this isn't just any servant; this is the Son of God making Himself the servant of all. (1:1)

Chapter 1:

1:1-11 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 3:1-17 and Luke 3:1-22.

- 1:1 - "gospel of Jesus Christ" – There is no genealogy given. Mark jumps right into it.
- Mark pictures Jesus as a servant, and a servant's genealogy was considered unimportant.
 - "gospel" – means "good news." It is not a debate or discussion; it's an announcement!
 - "the Son of God" – Mark wrote his book about the very Son of God who came from heaven to die for the sins of the world. (Mark 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 12:1-11; 13:32; 14:61-62; 15:39)

1:2-3 – The gospel begins in the OT. (Mal. 3:1 and Isa. 40:3)

- "Prepare the way of the Lord" – This was John the Baptist's mission.
- "Make His paths straight" – This is more than talking or thinking. It requires a work that affects a change.

1:4 – “repentance” – (Greek “metanoia”) – Lit. “to make a U-turn, go in the other direction.”
Repentance speaks of a change of direction, not a sorrow of the heart.

- John prepared the way of the Messiah by teaching repentance.
- There was great anticipation of the Messiah (from Malachi 3:1.) Scholars agree there were likely 200,000 – 500,000 people baptized in his brief ministry.

1:5 – “the Jordan River” – Located 20 miles from Jerusalem.

- “sins” – Jesus’ purpose from the start was to be a Savior. (Matt. 1:21)

1:6 – “John” – John the Baptist was an interesting PR man. He never did a miracle, he came with a tough message, and yet he attracted great crowds. Jesus would say that John was the greatest of the prophets. That was only due to the clarity of his message. (John 10:41)

- Mark 6:17-28 will detail the end of John’s life.
- “camel’s hair” – This made a coarse fabric, like burlap.
- “leather belt” – This would keep his robe close to the body.
- “locusts” – They were kosher. (Lev. 11:21)
 - John was an ascetic. He gave up the Jewish priesthood to live like this in the desert.

1:7 – “There comes One after me” – John’s main message wasn’t, ‘You’re a sinner, you need to repent.’ John’s main message was, ‘The Messiah is coming, do what you need to do to prepare for His appearing.’ The call to repentance was the response to the news that the Messiah was coming.

- John pointed to Jesus, not to himself.
- “sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose” – A Jewish servant was not permitted to touch the sandals of their Jewish master. This was too humiliating a task to make a servant do.

1:8 – “baptize” – Lit. “to be placed under, to be placed into.”

1:10-11 – The Trinity is seen here.

1:10 – “immediately” – This word is used over 40 times in Mark.

- “He saw” – John saw this as well. (John 1:32)
- “heavens parting” – Lit. “they were torn open.”
- “upon” – (Greek “epi”) The idea is “to overflow.” The Holy Spirit empowers for service.
 - This is the only thing that signified that Christ was the Messiah, otherwise he looked just like the rest of them.

1:11 – “I am well pleased” – Lit. “I am already well pleased.”

- Jesus is a Jewish carpenter (the main bread-winner of the family) from Nazareth. Raised primarily by his mother, who was considered immoral by the community.
- Jesus spent 30 years doing carpentry, and only 3 years in public ministry.

1:12-13 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13.

1:12 – “the Spirit drove Him” – Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden. (Gen. 3:24)

- The temptation of Christ does not do Him in, but shows Him off.

1:13 – “forty days, tempted” – The Greek implies He was tempted throughout that time.
- “with the wild beasts” – The first Adam fell into sin in an environment that was perfect and harmonious. The last Adam maintained His sinlessness in an environment that was hostile.

1:14-20 – The parallel passage is found in Matt. 4:12-22.
- There is about 1 year of Jesus ministry that Mark does not include. It is the year He primarily served in Judea and is recorded by John.

1:14 – “preaching” – (Greek “kerusso”) Lit. “declaring.”
- And this is in the power of the Holy Spirit.

1:15 – “at hand” – Lit. “present or imminent.”
- Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us.
- “Repent” – (Greek “metanoeo”) Jesus is picking up where John left off. (Mark 1:4)

1:16 – “Peter” – He had met Jesus a year earlier while in Judea. (John 1:35-4:54)
- “net” – These are the round nets with weights.

1:17 – “come after me” – It is a command.
- The call to discipleship is definite and demands a total commitment.
- “make you to become” – This indicates a process.
- It is Jesus’ work to make us what He wants us to be. Our responsibility is to simply follow Him.

1:18 – “left their nets” – That was their old life.

1:21-39 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 3:23-25; 8:14-17 and Luke 4:31-44.

1:21 – “Capernaum” – means “the village of Nahum.”

1:22 – “having authority” – Jesus taught with authority. The religious leaders of His day taught from authority.
- Jesus backed up what He taught with how He lived. There was a reality behind His words.
- Jesus’ authority came from speaking the words that His Father gave Him. (John 5:19)
- “authority” – (Greek “exousia”) Lit. “the power bestowed from a king to act as you will.”
- “not as the scribes” – The scribes were famous for quoting the scholars of their day. They based their teaching more on tradition and the words of men than on the Word of God.
- Must be true corporately (wine and wineskins) and individually (not teach what has not been worked in me) for our witness to not be entirely hollow.

1:23 – “an unclean spirit” – Singular.

1:24 – “what have we to do with you” – Indicating that they have nothing in common.
- “us” – The one demon is speaking on behalf of the rest of the kingdom of darkness.
- “I know who you are” – It is possible for one to recognize the power of Jesus and acclaim that Jesus is the Son of God, and still not be changed. (James 2:19) On the other hand, salvation is a life-changing experience as you believe into the relationship with Jesus.

1:25 – “hold thy peace” – Lit. “be muzzled.” Shut up!

1:26 – “cried out with a loud voice” – This is an intense scene.

- There were Jewish exorcists that practiced elaborate incantations and ceremonial practices (Acts 19:13). The crowds are amazed at Jesus’ simple power.

1:28 – “Galilee” – With numerous trade routes, the Galilee region was heavily travelled and populated.

1:29 – “the house of Simon” – We do not often think of the normal things of life that would be affected by Simon’s decision to follow Jesus. Here we see he has a home, a wife, and a mother-in-law to care for. (1 Cor. 9:5)

1:30 – “a fever” – Luke calls this a “high fever.” (Luke 4:38)

1:31 – “took her by the hand” – Mark repeatedly notes the touches of Jesus, especially upon those most in that society would not touch.

- Jesus not only taught, but touched.
- “served” – (Greek “diakoneo”) Lit. “to take instructions in service.” Without rehab or convalescence, she gets right to work.
- Service should be the fruit of His touch in our lives as well.

1:32 – “At evening” – As the Sabbath day comes to a close.

- “they brought to Him” – Lit. “they kept on bring to Him.” It must have been a very late night.
- “all who were sick” – “H.V. Morton, in his excellent volume, ‘In the Steps of the Master’ has an interesting bit of information for us on this point. He speaks of hot mineral waters containing curative properties, that were the center of the most famous spa in the country. This was located at the city of Tiberius which was ten miles from Capernaum. He says that in the time of our Lord these baths attracted the sick from every part of the country. And so it was that in the midst of a great health resort country, the Great Physician ministered to the ailments of multitudes.” (Quoted by Kenneth Wuest in “Word Studies in the Greek New Testament” pp. 37-38)

1:34 – “sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons” – The Scriptures draw a distinction between common illness and the work of demons.

1:35 – “before daylight” – This is very early in the morning and comes after a very long day.

- “prayed” – God the Son speaking with God the Father.
- If Jesus needed communion with the Father, how much more do we? (Isa. 50:4)

1:37-38 – “everyone is looking for You...Let us go” – Jesus served people at the direction of the Father, not at the will of the people.

1:37 – “everyone is looking for You” – The people are surrounding the home Jesus stayed in very early in the morning.

1:38 – “towns” – Lit. “small, unwallled villages.”

- “that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come” – The clear emphasis in Jesus’ ministry was on preaching. The healings and miracles were always secondary to the preaching.

1:40-45 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 8:1-4 and Luke 5:12-16.

- The Sermon on the Mount comes just before this scene.

1:40 – “imploring” – Lit. “begging.” His need drives him to a desperate plea.

- “If you are willing” – Not questioning Jesus’ ability, but His heart.
 - There was a social stigma attached to leprosy. It was called “the finger of God,” because many thought that a person got leprosy as a punishment to some sin in their lives.
- “You can make me clean” – In the people’s minds, leprosy was incurable.
 - As far as we know, Jesus never healed a leper before.

1:41 – “compassion” – Lit. “moved in the bowels.” The idea is “touched His heart.”

- Luke tells us this man was full of leprosy (Luke 5:12). Leprosy attacks the nervous system and ultimately kills by deadening the sense of pain.
- “I am willing” – Jesus willed this illness away.

1:44 – “say nothing” – Jesus apparently did not intend for His miracles to be the material that promoted His ministry. He refused to use people and their illness to promote Himself that way.

- Jesus heals everybody and doesn’t tell anybody. The guys on TV heal nobody and tell everybody.
- Jesus, perhaps, was looking for a little freedom of movement. The crowds so often get unruly, pushing and shoving.
- “for a testimony unto them” – Lev. 13 and 14 made provision for a cleansed leper.
 - This would have been an amazing testimony to the religious leaders.

1:45 – “spread the matter” – Those touched by Jesus do not need a program to tell others about Him.

Chapter 2:

2:1-12 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 9:1-8 and Luke 5:17-26.

2:1 – “the house” – This is likely Peter’s house. (Mark 1:29)

- Luke 5:17 speaks of the scribes and Pharisees that had come to hear and watch Jesus.

2:2 – “not even near the door” – The house was so full, they couldn’t pass through the doorway.

- “preached” – (Greek “laleo”) Lit. “talking.” The common word for conversation.
- “the word” – (Greek “logos”) Jesus’ priority is teaching the word, even more than performing miracles.
 - If you are going to share with someone, should have something of value to say.
 - “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the Word of God.” (Rom. 10:17)

2:3 – “paralytic” – The early church tradition was that he had contracted syphilis.

- It is not told us whether this man wanted his friends to carry him to Jesus or not.

- 2:4 – “uncovered” – Lit. “to dig out.” Luke speaks of the tiles they had to move or navigate to get the man through the rook.
- These guys are persistent in getting their friend to Jesus.
 - “the roof” – The roof was usually accessible by means of an outside stairway and was made of thatch, dirt, or tile laid over beams.
- 2:5 – “their faith” – Referring to the faith of the man’s friends.
- “Son” – Lit. “child.” It is an endearing term.
 - “sins are forgiven” – This is His purpose in coming to earth.
 - Matt. 1:21 says that His name is Jesus because He will “save His people from their sins.”
 - 1 Tim. 1:15 says that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”
 - “forgiven” – Lit. “sent away.”
 - Our sins are not just covered, they are removed.
- 2:7 – “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” – This is a true statement from the religious leaders.
- 2:8 – “reasoned” – Lit. “argued.”
- “in your hearts” – Jesus is dealing with what they are processing on the inside.
 - Jesus addresses the Pharisees according to their thoughts. He seems to be addressing the man according to his thoughts too. (The man is never heard from.)
 - We can assume that the friends did not bring the man to Jesus to have his sins forgiven, but to have him physically restored to health.
- 2:9 – “Which is easier?” – Only the physical healing could be presently verified.
- 2:10 – “But that you may know” – Jesus will heal this man to prove that He has forgiven his sin.
- “the Son of Man” – A reference from Dan. 7:13-14. This phrase is used 14 times in Mark. (Mark 2:10,28; 8:31,38; 9:9,12,31; 10:33,45; 13:26,34; 14:21,41,62)
 - “power on earth to forgive sins” – Jesus does not back down to this challenge of His deity.
 - “power” – (Greek “exsousia”) Lit. “authority granted by a king.”
 - “When a person delegates someone to do something for him and in his name, he is in a sense in that person, doing that very thing which he asked the other one to do.” (Wuest, “Word Studies in the Greek New Testament,” p. 50)
- 2:12 – “Immediately” – No time or rehab needed to regain his strength.
- “took up the bed” – “The bed had borne the man: now the man bore the bed.” (Bengel, quoted in Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, p. 142)
- 2:13-22 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 9:9-17 and Luke 5:27-39.
- 2:13 – “He taught them” – Lit. “He kept on teaching them.”
- 2:14 – “He saw Levi” – Matthew’s account of this simply says, “He saw a man.” (Matt. 9:9)
- Matthew was raised a Levite, but turned away from the religious system to work with the Romans against his own people.
 - John the Baptist had a similar heritage and disregard for the Jewish religious systems. But whereas Matthew turned to the world to get from it what he could, John turned away from it and was set apart for God’s purposes.
 - “Follow Me” – Matthew’s calling was only 2 words.

- 2:15 – “Levi’s house” – Levi is going to introduce others from his circle of influence to the Savior he is now following. (Luke 5:29)
- “tax collectors” – Jewish tax collectors were considered traitors and extortioners by their fellow Jews. They were not permitted to serve as witnesses or judges in court and were even expelled from the synagogue.
- 2:17 – “Those who are well have no need of a physician” – Jesus vindicates the use of medical professionals to treat illness.
- “sinners” – Jesus isn’t uncomfortable with sinners and they’re not uncomfortable with Him.
 - “to repentance” – It is not just calling sinners, but calling them to repentance.
- 2:18 – “fasting” – The only fast required in the OT law was on Yom Kippor.
- Fasting can help to bring our flesh under control, give us more time for the Lord, or help us to know more of our own natures. But it is not for spiritual or religious pride.
 - If only we were as faithful in feeding the Spirit as we are in feeding the bodies.
- 2:19 – “while the bridegroom is with them” – Everyone looks forward to the reception of the wedding.
- The Jewish Talmud said that the only time the Jews were absolved from their religious duties was at a wedding feast.
- 2:20 – “in those days” – Speaking of the time after the crucifixion and before His second coming.
- 2:22 – “new wine into old wineskins” – Can’t put a new move of the Spirit into an old religious structure. God isn’t going to waste His resources by putting them in a system that cannot hold them.
- When God changes us, He works inside out. And both change!
 - “Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be broken” – Chuck Smith.
- 2:23-28 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 12:1-8 and Luke 6:1-5.
- 2:23 – “pluck the heads of grain” – Wheat grains actually form a kind of gum that can be chewed for a long time.
- 2:24 – “lawful” – Deut. 23:24-25 permitted eating from another’s field like this.
- The religious tradition of the day called this harvesting and threshing.
 - The disciples are not embarrassed or convicted to do this in front of Jesus.
 - “Sabbath” – The Church is no longer required to observe a weekly Sabbath. (Col. 2:16)
- 2:25 – “he was in need” – Human need takes precedence over the religious duty.
- 2:26 – “Abiathar the high priest” – David met Ahimelech the priest in 1 Sam. 21. Here Abiathar, his son, is referred to as the priest.
- 2:27 – “Sabbath was made for man” – God made everything with man in view, including the Sabbath.
- 2:28 – “Lord of the Sabbath” – Lit. “Lord Sabboath.” To date, this is the most radical claim of Christ to his deity.
- This may be why Jesus’ mother and brothers come to take Him away in Mark. 3:31.

Chapter 3:

3:1-12 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 12:9-21 and Luke 6:6-11.

3:1 – “withered” – Greek indicates “had withered.” He wasn’t born this way.

3:2 – “watched Him” – They know Jesus would want to heal this person.

- Jesus is often drawn to the greatest need.
- “whether He would heal him” – The pervading idea of the day limited the role of doctors on the Sabbath to preserving life. They were not allowed to act to begin the healing process.

3:4 – “do good or do evil” – Evil doesn’t take a day off – neither should good.

- “or to kill?” – Does Jesus already know they are planning to kill Him? (v. 6)
- “they kept silent” – They couldn’t, or wouldn’t, answer this question.

3:5 – “with anger” – Jesus got angry. Anger itself isn’t sin. (Eph. 4:26)

- Love w/o anger is impotent.
- “the hardness of their hearts” – They, because of their religious tradition, would keep this man from experiencing the power of God in his life.
- “stretch forth thine hand” – This man must, by faith, attempt the impossible.
- “restored as whole” – Within the command to stretch out the hand is the power to heal and perform the impossible. God’s instructions are God’s enablements.
 - It is only as we, in faith, attempt to obey the commands of God that are humanly impossible that we see God perform the greatest miracles in our lives.

3:6 – “destroy Him” – Jesus heals on the Sabbath, they plan to kill Him on the Sabbath.

- The antagonism between the old religious system of the Jews and this new work of God in Christ is escalating rapidly. (Mark 2:22)
- It’s interesting how angry we get when someone crosses our religious traditions.
- Religion will actually seek to destroy that which is genuinely helping people.

3:7 – “Jesus withdrew” – Jesus is avoiding to immediate threat at this time.

3:8 – “a great multitude” – Scholars feel there could be up to 40,000 people following Jesus at this time.

- The regions mentioned included virtually all of Israel and its surrounding neighbors.

3:9 – “a small boat should be kept ready” – Jesus is maintain an emergency exit plan.

3:10 – “pressed about Him” – Lit. “jostling to touch Him.” This is a chaotic scene as the sick are seeking a healing from Jesus with little concern for Jesus Himself.

- Had Jesus been a celebrity and not a servant, He would have catered to the crowds and tried to please them. (Matt. 11:7-15)

3:11 – “evil spirits” – “Even the demons believe...” (James 2:19)

3:12 – “not make Him known” – Jesus does not want advertising from the enemy.

- Christians need to avoid demon obsession as the world should avoid demon possession.

3:13-19 – The parallel passage is found in Luke 6:12-19.

3:13 – “called to Him” – Effective ministry is due to the calling of Christ on a person. Anything good is initiated by God.

- Luke tells us Jesus prayed all night before he made this decision.
- “those He wanted” – Better to be wanted by Christ than to be used by Christ.

3:14 – “He appointed twelve” – For three reasons: 1. to be with Him, 2. to preach, 3. to heal sicknesses and cast out demons.

- A preacher will only be useful to Jesus to the extent that He has “been with” Jesus. There is little done for eternal good by those who preach without having a real, personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- “to preach” – (Greek “kerusso”) Lit. “to make a public proclamation with such gravity, formality, and authority as must be heeded.”

3:15 – “power” – (Greek “exsousia”) – Lit. “royal right, the authority of a king granted to an emissary.”

- The Church has “dynamous,” the strength or power that comes from inside (Acts 1:8). The next person to have “exsousia” will be the Anti-Christ, “all power, signs, and lying wonders.” (2 Thess. 2:9)
- These are “uneducated and untrained men” that “had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13)

3:17 – “Sons of Thunder” – The early church called John, “The Great Voice.”

3:18 – “Cananite” – That is, a “Zealot.” The radical party that fought for Jewish independence.

3:19 – “Iscariot” – Judas’ surname probably indicates that he was a man from Kerioth. He thus seems to have been the only Judean among the twelve.

3:20-30 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 12:22-37 and Luke 11:14-26.

3:21 – “His own people” – Specifically, His family. (v. 31)

- “out of his mind” – We say “beside himself.” That is schizophrenic or insane.
- It is possible that they are more concerned with the pressure of the crowd than with Jesus’ own doctrine at this time.

3:22 – “He has Beelzebub” – The implication is that Beelzebub is possessing Christ and is using Him as his agent.

- “By the ruler of demons He casts out demons” – They can’t deny the miracles, they have to try to disclaim them.

3:27 – “binds the strong man” – Jesus is the one who binds the strong man.

3:28 – “all sins will be forgiven” – “Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world, especially of those who believe.” (1 Tim. 4:10)

3:29 – “blasphemes” – Present tense – this is not something you do once and can never change. It is instead, those with the conviction of the Spirit in their heart and yet make the decision to fully and finally resist coming to Jesus. They are sinning against great light.

- Sin doesn’t keep you out of heaven, rejecting Christ does.

- They saw Christ and His work...and killed Him anyway.
- “subject to eternal condemnation” – Jesus now changes His tone. Thus far He has reasoned with the scribes; now He solemnly warns them.

3:31-35 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 12:46-50 and Luke 8:19-21.

3:31 – “His brothers and His mother” – Even Jesus’ family is trying to figure out who He is.

- Nazareth is 30 miles away from Capernaum.
- “His brothers” – This obliterates the perpetual virginity of Mary.

3:33 – “Who is my mother?” – Jesus isn’t being cruel. He is simply taking the opportunity to teach His disciples about the nature of the kingdom of God.

3:35 – “whoever does the will of God is My brother” – The family of God is not established through blood, but through our obedience to the will of God.

- We are born into the family of God by the new birth. One cannot join it any other way.
- There is a bond in the family of God that is deeper than the bond of a human family.

Chapter 4:

Being a part of the family of God (Mark 3:35) means receiving the Word of God. The theme of Mark 4 is the Word of God.

4:1-29 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 13:1-23,31-32 and Luke 8:4-18.

4:1 – “a boat” – This is a different, and bigger, boat than in Mark 3:9.

- “on the sea” – The water would serve as an amplification system and the shoreline would be an excellent amphitheater.

4:2 – “parables” – Lit. “to cast alongside.” Putting spiritual truths alongside natural ones.

- Parables either reveal truth to the open heart or conceal truth to the hardened heart.

4:3 – “Listen! Behold” – Lit. “Listen; Consider this.” It is in the imperative. Jesus is pleading.

- “to sow” – Farmers would sow by broadcasting and then plow the furrows over the seed.

4:4 – “the wayside” – The footpaths used by the people to cut through the fields.

4:7 – “thorns” – They are always there. They don’t need to be sown by the farmer.

- It takes 60 lbs. of seed to sow 1 acre. But in that acre that are already 1½ tons of weed seeds.

4:11 – “mystery” – (Greek “mysterion”) Lit. “a truth hidden in times past, but now revealed and made known to us.”

4:12 – “Seeing...hearing...understand” – What God wants from people: 1. perception, 2. hearing, and 3. understanding.

- Jesus does not force His truth upon men, He gives everyone the option.
- The crowd does not judge the parables; the parables judge the crowd.
- “hear and not understand” – Jesus gives people a choice. He will not force His will on people, but presents the truth in a way that allows people to choose what they wish.
- “turn” – Jesus is seeking genuine conversion.

4:13 – “How then will you understand all the parables?” – The Parable of the Sower holds the keys to all parables. Expository constancy.

4:14-20 – Jesus interprets the Parable of the Sower. The farmer is the Son of Man. The seed is the Word of God. The field is the world (people). The birds are the evil one (devil). The thorns are the cares of this world.

- The interpretation calls attention to the response to the Word of God that Jesus has been preaching. “However faithful the preacher, and how pure soever his message, the effect of the preaching of the word depends upon the state of the hearer’s heart.” (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, p. 145)
- Each of the three fruitless hearts is influenced by a different enemy. In the hard heart, the devil himself snatches the seed. In the shallow heart, the flesh counterfeits religious feelings. And in the crowded heart, the things of the earth smother the growth and prevent a harvest. These are the three great enemies of the Christian: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

4:15 – “the wayside” – This is the hardened heart. The ground is hard because it’s been walked on by people. Therefore the Word cannot penetrate to the heart.

- Hard hearts must be plowed up before they can receive the seed, and this can be a painful experience. (Jer. 4:3; Hosea 10:12)

4:16-17 – “stony ground” – This is the shallow heart. There is a small layer of soil over a ledge of bedrock; hence rocky soil. This person can have an emotional experience with immediate results, but because they have no depth, they dry up quickly.

- Any Christian that is born of mere excitement will dry up when the excitement is over.
- “tribulation” – Lit. “pressure.”
- “persecution” – This is a part of the Christian life.
- “stumble” – or “offended.” Lit. “scandalized.” Hit by something they didn’t expect.

4:18-19 – “among thorns” – This is the crowded heart. Three different pressures make a life “become unfruitful.”

- “cares” – (Greek “mirimna”) Lit. “pulled in different directions.”
- “this world” – Lit. “this age,” as opposed to the age to come.
- “deceitfulness of riches” – Money appears as something that it isn’t and tricks people.
 - “The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” (1 Tim. 6:10)
- “desires” – or “lusts.”
- “choke” – Lit. “press in to squish.” Translated “crush” in Mark 3:9.
- “becomes unfruitful” – Luke 8:14 says “brings no fruit to maturity.” The materialism cuts in on the fruit-bearing of some lives.

4:20 – “good ground” – This is the soft and deep heart. Good soil is tilled, fertilized, and weeded, and then produces much fruit.

- The goodness of this last soil consists in its qualities being precisely the reverse of the other three soils.
- “thirtyfold...sixty...hundred” – There are varying degrees of fruitfulness.
- We are told that a typical yield is 8 to 1. Even Jesus’ thirtyfold is astronomical.

4:21 – “a lamp” – A candle is lit to give light, not to hide. Hiding it ruins both the candle and the bowl you hid it under.

- “True to His uniform teaching that privileges are to be used for the benefit of others, Jesus tells His disciples that if they have more insight than the multitude, they must employ it for the common benefit.” (Expositors Commentary, quoted by Wuest)

4:22 – “nothing hid” – Jesus is the one to reveal. He fully discloses.

- “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (Heb. 4:13)

4:23 – “let him hear” – “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. 2:14)

4:24 – “Take heed what you hear” – From music, media, teaching, gossip, friends, etc.

- Christians should be careful to put themselves under good teachers, teaching the whole counsel of God’s Word.
- What you hear influences what you think and what you do. (1 Cor. 15:33)

4:25 – “whoever has” – Refers back to the Word of God. If the attitude of our heart is to hear the Word of God.

4:26-29 – “a man” – Not just the sower from v. 3.

- “not know how” – Growth depends on the seed’s ability, not the understanding of the man.
- In the seed itself is all that seed needs to bring forth life. It is merely waiting for the right condition of heart to be planted in so it can grow.
- The Word of God works invisibly within us.
- This is an important lesson for ministry or church growth. It is not a matter of worrying, over handling, or manipulating that true growth happens. (John 17:17)
- “crops by itself” – (Greek “automate”) Genuine growth is not the result of the farmer’s effort. (Isa. 55:11)
- “harvest” – The harvest was a common figure for the consummation of God’s kingdom. (Joel 3:13; Rev. 14:14-20)

4:30-32 – Parable of the Mustard Seed

- It becomes a tree. Usually they only grow to 3-4 ft.
- “birds” – Those of Satan who find shade and refuge in the results of the seed.

4:33 – “as they were able” – He doesn’t bury or break us. He gives the kingdom one piece at a time so we can get as much as we desire.

4:35-5:20 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 8:23-34 and Luke 8:22-39.

4:35 – “the same day” – After teaching comes testing. This scene comes on the heels of the parables. Jesus is checking their hearing. (Rom. 10:17)

- Jesus knows the storm is coming and says “pass over to the other side” anyway.
- “cross over” – His commandments are always His enablements.
 - The Sea of Galilee is 13 miles long at its longest, and 8 miles wide at its widest. At this particular part it was about 5 miles across.

4:36 – “they took him” – The sailors take charge.

- “other little boats” – Peter’s eyewitness accounts note the others that were following.

4:37 – “it was already filling” – Their boat was taking on water.

4:38 – “asleep” – Jesus must have been extremely tired.

- “pillow” – The oarsman’s pillow in the back of the ship.
- “do you not care” – They wake Him up to complain not knowing the miracle to come.
 - It was not a request to Him to do anything; but a protest against His apparent indifference.
- “we are perishing” – This must be an intense storm to generate this response from these seasoned fishermen.
 - They are in the middle of God’s will...going through a storm.

4:39 – “be still” – Lit. be muzzled.” This could perhaps be translated “shut up!” This is what Jesus said to the demons in Mark 1:25.

- “great calm” – It would usually take hours for the sea to settle after a storm.

4:40 – “How is it?” – Lit. “How is it yet?”

4:41 – “feared exceedingly” – They are more afraid of the calm, than of the storm.

- Jesus is the king of storms. The Word of God still holds through the storms.
- “said to one another” – They question among themselves.
- “Who can this be?” – Jesus reveals something of Himself in the storm that we couldn’t have seen of Him on the shore.

Chapter 5:

5:1-20 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 8:28-34 and Luke 8:26-39.

5:1 – “came to the other side” – Jesus and the disciples have just come through the storm.

- “Gadarenes” – Possibly named from the tribe of Gad which took their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan.

5:2 – “a man with an unclean spirit” – We are not told how this man came to be demon possessed.

- This man is a desecration of a human body. He has been used and abused by the enemy.
- Satan desires to kill human beings before they would come to Christ, so we are locked into hell forever.
- Matthew says there are two men; one is the spokesman.

5:6 – “worshipped” – Lit. “bowed in the dust.”

- 5:7 – “Jesus, Son of the Most High God” – This answers the disciples question from Mark 4:41.
 - “do not torment me” – Matthew adds “before our time.” Satan has a time limit.
- 5:8 – “Come out of the man” – Jesus’ command is why the demon was screaming at Him.
- 5:9 – “Legion” – There were over 6,000 soldiers in a Roman legion.
 - Jesus seems to be talking to the man, not the demons. Jesus does not need the name of the demon to cast out the demon.
- 5:11 – “a large herd of swine” – About 2,000 of them. (v. 13)
- 5:12 – “Send us to the swine” – The demons have to get permission to enter the pigs.
 - Why would Jesus send the pigs to their death? Like Satan with Job, this demonstrates Satan’s propensity to insanity; to steal, kill, and destroy.
 - Funny monikers: Deviled Ham, Sui-cide, Swine Lake, Pigging Out.
- 5:14 – “fled” – The idea is “in fear.”
 - They are more afraid when the man is sane and the pigs are dead, then when the man was possessed and carrying on in the graveyard.
 - “to see” – Lit. “to observe, to study.”
- 5:15 – “sitting and clothed and in his right mind” – Jesus gave him peace. He can do that for any person in any condition.
- 5:17 – “depart from their region” – They are evidently more concerned with the swine business (which was an unclean occupation for the Jews), than with a man possessed by demons.
 - Do the demons know that killing the pigs would motivate the people to send Jesus away? Death is their ultimate goal – eternal death and separation from Jesus.
- 5:19 – “Jesus did not permit him” – This guy is the only one who doesn’t get his request answered. (Mark 6:53)
 - “friends” – When was the last time this guy interacted with his friends?
- 5:20 – “Decapolis” – means “Ten Cities.” The Ten consisted of Scythopolis (located on the west side of the Jordan), Pella, Dion, Gerasa, Philadelphia, Gadara, Raphana, Kanatha, Hippos, and Damascus.
 - The next time Jesus enters the Decapolis, people will come to Him. (Mark 7:31)
- 5:21-43 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 9:18-26 and Luke 8:40-56.
- 5:21 – “Jesus had crossed over” – They are back in Capernaum.

5:22 – “rulers of the synagogue” – A ruler of the synagogue was a layman whose responsibilities were administrative and included such things as looking after the building and supervising the worship.

- “Jairus...fell at His feet” – Jews associated with Jesus risked excommunication. (John 9:22)
 - It was at the synagogue in Capernaum that Jesus healed the man with the withered hand. (Mark 3:1-6) It is possible that Jairus had been with those plotting the death of Jesus.
- “Jairus” – means “Jehovah enlightens.”

5:23 – “begged Him earnestly” – He is, no doubt, broken and weeping.

- Possibly the easiest way to get to the heart of a man is through His children.
- “little daughter” – She is 12 years old.
 - Jairus’ daughter was born in the same year as the afflicted woman’s blood flow started.

5:24 – “thronged Him” – Lit. “to press in to squish.” The scene is chaotic in Capernaum.

5:25 – “flow of blood” – Women were considered unclean during their blood flow. (Lev. 15)
She would be continuously unclean for 12 years!

- She lost her family and her esteem, while doctors took all her money and inflicted all kinds of odd treatments upon her that didn’t help.
- The Talmud ascribed an extended blood flow to immorality.

5:27 – “in the crowd” – She is risking the making of everyone here unclean.

5:28 – “she said” – Greek indicates “she was saying,” in her heart.

- “touch” – Lit. “grasp.”

5:29 – “fountain of her blood” – Not just stopped the bleeding, but healed the body.

- “felt” – (Greek “gnosis”) Lit. “knew.”

5:31 – “Who touched Me?” – Many pressing, one touching.

5:32 – “to see her” – Jesus is not some supernatural force to draw upon for healing. He is a person in search of relationship with His redeemed sons and daughters.

5:33 – “told Him the whole truth” – She tells the entire story to Jesus in the face of this crowd.

5:34 – “daughter” – Lit. “my little daughter.” Only time in NT Jesus uses this term.

- This is the same word Jairus used for his daughter.
- “Go in peace” – Lit. “Go into peace.” Jesus sends her away with a benediction that extends far beyond a mere physical healing.
- “healed” – The Greek word could also be translated “saved.” (Mark 2:1-12; 3:1-6)

5:36 – “Do not be afraid” – Lit. “stop being afraid.”

- “only believe” – Lit. “keep on believing.”
 - Faith combats fear.
 - We will not be hurt because God is blessing someone else. The Lord is working with infinite resources and is not working on a first-come, first-serve basis.

5:38 – “those who wept and wailed” – The professional mourners were already at the house.
- They bury bodies quickly in that part of the world.

5:39 – “sleeping” – This is the same word as is used in 1 Cor. 15 to speak of the death of believers.

5:40 – “ridiculed” – Luke adds “because they knew she was dead.”
- “He had put them all outside” – Jesus physically removes them from the premises.
- Before Jesus will do the miracle, the mockers must be put outside.

5:41 – “Talitha, cumi” – Aramaic for “little lamb, arise.”
- Her spirit comes back from somewhere.

5:43 – “commanded them strictly that no one should know it” – Jesus is not willing to make the little girl a sideshow freak.
- There is no pattern or formula to Jesus’ healings. It is not due to anyone’s faith, but as a result of the Savior Himself.

Chapter 6:

6:1-6 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 13:54-58 and Luke 4:16-30.

6:1 – “own country” – Nazareth.
- This is likely not His first trip to Nazareth. (Luke 4:16-30)
- “His disciples” – Probably included more than the twelve.

6:2 – “mighty works” – (Greek “dunamis”) Lit. “power.”
- Jesus healed a few in Nazareth. (v. 5)

6:3 – “son of Mary” – Typically, a man would be referred to by his father’s name, but they are implying that they do not know His father. They were accusing Jesus of being born of adultery. (John 8:41)
- The Talmud refers to Jesus as the illegitimate son of Mary.
- The fact that He is referred to as the Son of Mary would indicate that Joseph was already dead. Chances are that Joseph died rather early, and that Jesus stayed until He was 30 to provide for the family.
- “brother...sisters” – This destroys the perpetual virginity of Mary.
- “offended” – (Greek “scandalizo”) Lit. “scandalized.” Jesus acted unexpectedly.
- They were so familiar with Jesus that they couldn’t see past their perception of Him.
- “Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.” (2 Cor. 5:16)

6:4 – “prophet” – “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Rev. 19:10)

6:5 – “could do no mighty work” – Because they wouldn’t come to Him.
- Jesus knew better than to throw pearls to swine. (Matt. 7:6)
- “mighty work” – (Greek “dunamis”) Lit. “power.”

6:6 – “marveled” – Jesus also marveled at the faith of the Centurion. (Luke 7:9)
- “unbelief” – We can limit God because of our unbelief. (Ps. 78)

6:7-13 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 10:1,5-15; and Luke 9:1-6.

6:7 – “send them out” – (Greek “apostello”) Lit. “to send out as an ambassador.”

- “power” – (Greek “exsousia”) – lit. “the authority of a king.”
 - Even Judas received this power at this time.

6:7-8 – “power...take nothing” – It is interesting how in God’s kingdom power and simplicity often go together.

- “take nothing for the journey” – No packing, no buying new clothes, just go the way you are. This is urgent!
 - They had to trust the Lord for everything if they didn’t take much with them. If the preacher doesn’t trust God, how can he tell others to trust Him?
 - In general, these directions are against luxury in equipment, and also against providing themselves with what they could procure from the hospitality of others.
- “no bag” – (Greek “pera”) The scrip. This was the beggar’s bag used to collect money.

6:10 – “stay there till you depart from that place” – This would keep the disciples from a “restless and dissatisfied manner, and to take pains in choosing a home.” (Robertson)

6:11 – “shake off the dust” – Not fight with them. Just move on.

- Jews would commonly shake the dust off their feet when leaving Gentile territory. Here Jesus is telling His disciples to treat an unbelieving Jew like a Gentile.
- “more tolerable” – Jesus does seem to refer to differing degrees of judgment.
- “day of judgment” – There will be a day of judgment.

6:12 – “repent” – (Greek “metanoia”) Lit. “to make a u-turn.” Turn back to God.

6:13 – “anointed with oil” – Medicinal. Oil was typically used internally as an elixir or externally as a balm. (Isa. 1:6; Luke 10:34; James 5:14)

- “many who were sick” – This verse makes a distinction between demon possession and common sickness. Not all sickness is directly caused by a demon.

6:14-29 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 14:1-12 and Luke 9:7-9.

6:14 – “King Herod” – Herod Antipas. He was one of the sons of Herod the Great and was a Roman ruler of Galilee at this time. (Luke 23:6-7)

- In 39 AD, Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:1), nephew of Herod Antipas, denounced his uncle to the Roman emperor and Antipas was exiled to Gaul where he and Herodias committed suicide.
- “His name had become well known” – A ministry is effective if Jesus’ name becomes more well known, rather than the minister or the ministry becoming more well know.
- “John the Baptist is risen” – Spoken from a guilty conscience. (v. 16)

6:17 – “Herodias” – Being the daughter of Aristobulus, the brother of Herod Agrippa and Philip, she would have also been Herod Agrippa’s niece.

6:18 – “not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife” – John wasn’t interested in being politically correct.

- The Pharisees conveniently avoided this issue.

- 6:19 – “held it against him” – The idea is, “she had it in for him.”
- 6:20 – “Herod feared John” – Antipas put John in the prison, Machaerus, to appease Herodias.
- Machaerus was located in Perea adjoining the Dead Sea on the eastern side.
 - “he did many things” – Lit. “he was in perplexity about many things.”
- 6:22 – “daughter” – Josephus said her name was Salome, a daughter of Herodias and Philip.
- Herodias is using her daughter to seductively manipulate her husband in an effort to kill John the Baptist.
 - “danced” – The solo dances done by women in those days were very sensual and usually only done by prostitutes.
 - “the girl” – The same word spoken of the 12 year-old girl Christ raised from the dead. (Luke 5:41)
- 6:26 – “because of the oaths” – He had repeated this oath over and over.
- “because of those who sat with him” – His pride wouldn’t allow him to admit this was a mistake.
- 6:27 – “beheaded him in prison” – Jesus called John the greatest of the OT prophets...and this is how his life ends. You cannot measure heaven’s esteem by earth’s response.
- 6:30-56 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 14:13-36; Luke 9:10-17; and John 6:1-24.
- 6:30 – “gathered to Jesus” – Jesus’ disciples come to Jesus as John’s disciples tell of John’s death.
- 6:31 – “Come aside” – We must either “come apart” or we will “fall apart.”
- “rest a while” – Jesus knows when it is time to work, and He knows when it is time to rest.
 - Resting is a part of the working. If we do not rest well, we will not work well.
 - “rest” – (Greek “anapauo”) Lit. “to cause or permit one to cease from labor in order to recover and collect his strength.”
- 6:32 – “in the boat” – They are crossing the Sea of Galilee, which is 15 miles long and 7 miles wide.
- 6:33 – “the multitudes” – 5,000-15,000 people are chasing Jesus’ boat around to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. And in the crowd is a little boy with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fishes.
- 6:34 – “compassion” – Lit. “moved in the bowels.”
- Jesus never takes a break from compassion.
 - “teach them” – A shepherd’s work.
 - Jesus focusses on meeting the most important need.
- 6:35 – “His disciples came to Him” – The disciples form a committee and come to Jesus making a joint request.
- Many times, committees are merely individuals who aren’t doing anything getting together and deciding that nothing can be done.

6:37 – “You give them something” – Jesus is making them check their resources.

- Whatever ministry we have is dependent on heaven’s resources. We aren’t the manufacturers, we are only the distributors.
- “two hundred denarii” – His disciples saw the problem and not the potential.
 - Too many times in the Christian work do the ministers immediately evaluate the problem from a financial perspective and then quickly assume nothing can be done without the proper funding.
 - They have no money – “silver and gold have I none...” (Acts 3:6) But God has resources we know nothing about.

6:39 – “make them all sit” – Jesus gives the disciples a job they can do.

- “groups” – This word is sometimes used of flowerbeds. It is an interesting picture, all these groups on the green grass.
 - This meal is conducted very orderly and peacefully.

6:41 – “blessed” – Jesus is praying for the meal that hasn’t arrived yet.

- There are stories of times when George Muller and the many orphans in his care would actually pray before a meal without the necessary food on premises to even prepare that particular meal. And God would sovereignly deliver bread or milk at just the right time to supply for that meal.
- “broke the loaves, and gave” – Lit. “He brake and kept on giving.” The multiplication evidently took place in Christ’s hands, between the acts of breaking and giving.
 - Instead of despising the little we have, we can put it into the hands of God.
 - Jesus would not turn stones into bread for His own use, but for the multitudes He would distribute abundantly.
- “gave them to His disciples to set before them” – God’s method to feed this lost world is often to bless His disciples and then ask them to distribute that blessing to the hungry multitudes.
 - The ministry principle is, blessing and breaking come before giving and feeding.

6:42 – “filled” – Lit. “glutted.”

6:43 – “baskets” – The small, individual basket. They each have their own basket.

- The lesson for disciples: This is better rest than if they had been alone all day.
- The rest of Christ is a rest of relationship even more than ideal circumstances. (Heb. 4)

6:45 – “He made His disciples get into the boat” – The people want to make Jesus king by force. (John 6:15)

- This scene occurs during Passover season, when Israel would have a heightened sense of a deliver to free them from Roman tyranny.
- “to the other side” – The disciples will be better off in a storm, than on the shore with the wrong perspective of Jesus. He does not want them to think that He is here merely to meet their physical needs.

6:46 – “to pray” – This is where Jesus found His rest.

- 6:48 – “He saw them” – Jesus sees them from 3½ miles away in the dark at 3-6 am.
- The disciples seem to have been on the Sea of Galilee 8-9 hours by this time.
 - “walking on the sea” – Jesus walks down the mountain, onto the shore, and then directly out on the water.
 - “would have passed them by” – No doubt, this is Peter’s impression.
 - The first storm they faced while Jesus was on the boat with them. (Mark 4:35-41)
 - This storm they face without the physical presence of Jesus.
- 6:51 – “He went up into the boat” – Mark does not include the scene of Peter walking on the water.
- Matthew 14:33 – “they worshipped Him.”
 - John 6:21 – “they immediately arrive on shore.”
- 6:52 – “they had not understood about the loaves” – They still don’t have a clear picture of who Christ is yet. And there is something about the feeding of the 5,000+ that should have prepared the disciples for the storm.
- Jesus protects as well as provides. He is the God of Storms as well as God of Bread.
- 6:53 – “When they had crossed over” – This is a long day of 30-40 hours of continual action.
- Jesus doesn’t get peopled-out.
- 6:56 – “hem of His garment” – (Greek “kraspedon”) Lit. “the fringe of a garment, a little appendage hanging down from the edge of the mantle or cloak.”

Chapter 7:

7:1-23 – The parallel passage is found in Matt. 15:1-20.

- 7:1 – “coming from Jerusalem” – They have travelled nearly 100 miles to question Jesus.
- 7:2 – “bread” – Lit. “the bread.” They are probably referencing the bread left over from the feeding of the 5,000.
- “defiled...hands” – Not unwashed hands, but ceremonially unclean.
 - The Jewish Rabbi Jose said, “He sinneth as much as who eateth with unwashen hands, as he who lieth with an harlot.” (Trapp, quoted by David Guzik)
 - “found fault” – It is what legalists are good at.
- 7:5 – “the tradition of the elders” – They believed and taught that the tradition of the elders took precedent over the Word of God.
- They are enforcing the non-essential over and above the essential.
 - The Jews called their tradition “The fence of the Law.” It was not the law that protected the tradition, but the tradition that protected the law.
- 7:6 – “hypocrites” – Lit. “to wear the mask.” These were the Greek play actors.
- Hypocrites are defined here by 2 things. 1. They honor God with their words, but have no heart. There is no reality backing up what they say. And 2. They embrace the teaching of men over the Word of God.
 - The leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians is both personal and corporate.
 - For us, Church doctrine is that which was taught by Jesus, practiced in Acts, and expounded in the epistles.

7:7 – “in vain” – (Greek “maten”) Lit. “fruitlessly, without fruit.”

7:9 – “you reject the commandment of God” – It is very difficult to maintain a lot of tradition while still abiding by the Word of God. Eventually, many times the tradition wins out and the Word is sacrificed and lost.

7:10 – “Honor your father and mother” – This includes taking care of them in their old age.

7:11 – “Corban” – This is one example of how the religious leaders used their tradition to annul the Word of God. By pronouncing Corban over some earnings, they were no longer expected to use that in support of their parents. But there was also no expectation that the money would be used for religious purposes either.

- “a gift of God” – No doubt, the religious leaders benefitted financially from this practice.

7:13 – “of no effect” – Following traditions can remove the power from the Word.

- Administrating without the rule of the Scriptures causes one to error in both extremes, either by allowing things that ought not to be done or by not permitting things that the Scriptures allow.

7:14 – “called all the multitude to Himself” – Jesus wants to clarify for all something that the religious leaders have made very confusing to the people.

7:17 – “His disciples asked Him” – Matthew tells us that Peter is the spokesman here.

7:19 – “purifying all foods” – The defilement of the dietary law is that it went against God’s statutes, not that the food itself made someone distant from God. It was meant to teach a lesson.

- Earlier in Jewish history, under the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes, many Jews chose to be executed rather than eat swine. That is how seriously the Jews took the dietary law.
- Jesus anticipated the time when under the New Covenant all foods would be declared kosher. (Acts 10:9-16; 11:1-10; Rom. 14:17)

7:21 – “the heart of men” – What comes out of us gives us a clearer picture of our hearts than does what goes into us. But clearly the greater concern in both instances is our hearts.

- The problem with these sins is that they come from a heart of Sin that resides in us.
- These sins are not in the heart of God.

7:24-37 – The parallel passage is found in Matt. 15:21-31.

7:24 – “He arose and went” – After the conflict with the religious leaders, Jesus withdraws into Gentile territory.

- “went to the region of Tyre and Sidon” – That is some 40-50 miles north of Capernaum.
 - The previous incident shows Jesus wiping out the distinction between clean and unclean foods. It seems here we have Him wiping out the difference between clean and unclean people.
- “He entered a house” – Did Jesus know this person previous to this trip?

7:26 – “kept asking” – She is begging.

- Matt. 15 says she called Him “Son of David,” recognizing Him as the Messiah.
- “daughter” – Lit. “little daughter.”

- 7:27 – “Jesus said to her” – Matt. 15:24 indicates that Jesus spoke to the disciples concerning the woman first.
- “children be filled first” – Jesus seems to indicate that the Gentiles will be filled too. But He will maintain the proper order of “to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles.” (Rom. 1:16; 2:9-10)
 - Jesus is evoking faith from the woman as well as teaching the disciples the difference between clean and unclean.
 - “little dogs” – Lit. “little puppies.” These were the pets of the house. (Not the “goyim.”)
 - “Nothing appealed to our blessed Lord more than faith coupled with humility” – Ironside.
- 7:28 – “Yes, Lord, yet” – The woman accepts her place as a Gentile, yet it doesn’t keep her from coming to Jesus.
- A demon-possessed child needs a mom as faithful and persistent as this one.
 - “crumbs” – Lit. “little morsels.” It seems she is implying that the children are benevolently feeding the little dogs from their own portions.
- 7:29 – “the demon has gone out of your daughter” – Crumbs are enough to heal this young girl.
- 7:31 – “Decapolis” – Where Jesus had been previously run out of their presence. (Mark 5:18-20)
- 7:32 – “impediment in his speech” – His tongue was bound. He may not be completely dumb, but his speech is unintelligible.
- “put His hand on him” – They may already be developing a pattern in which they expect Christ to work.
 - There is no method by which the work of God is done. God works in many different ways and refuses to be reduced to a mere method or a single pattern. It is far better to trust in Jesus than to rely on a proven method or pattern of His work.
- 7:33-34 – “took him aside” – Jesus is not doing this for the crowd.
- “spit” – A sign of utter disdain.
 - Jesus is communicating with this man.
 - “sighed” – or “groaned.”
 - “Ephphatha” – Lit. “be thoroughly opened.”
 - Jesus gets this guy alone, communicates with him, and makes this man be honest with Him. He doesn’t make this man a side-show exhibit.
- 7:36 – “tell no one” – Jesus would not allow these miracles to be the basis of His presentation to the nation that He was in fact the Messiah.

Chapter 8:

8:1-26 – The parallel passage is found in Matt. 15:32-16:12.

8:1 – “In those days” – While in the Decapolis. (Mark 7:31)

- 8:2 – “three days” – Jesus wanted to heal more than their physical conditions. He wanted to heal them spiritually and eternally. So He takes the extended time to teach them.
- How many people today would continue with Jesus to hear the Word for three days even though there is no food? They are desperate enough to follow Jesus in this way.
 - “nothing to eat” – Jesus taught first, then met needs. This is the opposite of what often happens modern missions, where natural resources are used as bait to draw people in so the evangelical message can be shared.
- 8:3 – “they will faint on the way” – Jesus provides the resources necessary to keep us from fainting.
- 8:4 – “How can one satisfy these people?” – Are they doubting Jesus? Or are they hinting that they know Jesus can feed these people if He desires to do so?
- 8:8 – “filled” – Lit. “glutted.”
- Jesus is willing to demonstrate the same lesson twice. (v. 22-26)
 - Jesus would not use His miraculous power in order to take care of His own physical need. But when it comes to the physical needs of others, He was then willing to use that miraculous power.
 - “seven baskets” – The large Gentile baskets would hold 50 loaves of bread. (Acts 9:25)
 - At the end of the meal, the disciples gathered more bread than they had to begin with.
- 8:11 – “sign” – Feeding 4,000 people with 7 loaves of bread wasn’t enough.
- Jesus did not perform miracles just to satisfy the curiosity of the crowd. The purpose of His miracles were always the helping of the helpless.
 - Matthew includes the message that the only sign Jesus would give these religious leaders was the “sign of the prophet Jonah.” (Matt. 12:39)
 - “testing” – could also be translated “tempting.” The Pharisees are clearly trying to trip Jesus up.
 - “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17)
 - This world is scheduled to be deceived by the Antichrist doing signs. (2 Thess. 2:9-10)
- 8:12 – “sighed deeply” – Lit. “to groan in oneself.”
- “Why?” – This request elicits a question from the Son of God.
- 8:13 – “left them” – Lit. “abandoned them.” A forceful term.
- 8:15 – “Take heed, beware” – Lit. “constantly take heed, constantly beware.”
- 8:16 – “reasoned among themselves” – They are pooling their ignorance.
- They should just go and ask Jesus.
 - “because we have no bread” – They think Jesus is talking in parables.
- 8:18 – “remember” – A good memory is essential to a life of faith.
- 8:21 – “So He said” – Tense is “Jesus kept on saying to them...” (Matt. 16:12)
- The leaven of Pharisees is adding to the Word of God.
 - The leaven of Herod is mixing the Word of God with worldliness/politics.
 - The leaven of Sadducees (from Matthew) is taking away from the Word of God.

8:22 – “Bethsaida” – There are two Bethsaidas. (Matt. 11:21-24)

8:23 – “led him out of the town” – Jesus is getting this man alone.

- “spit on his eyes” – “It is likely that this was done merely to separate the eyelids; as, in certain cases of blindness, they are found always gummed together.” (Adam Clarke) If that is the case, it would be much like a mother licking her thumb to clean something off her child’s face.
- In the Talmud, it says the spit of a sage was considered medicinal.
- “asked him if he saw anything” – Jesus is making this man realize that He is healing him.
- Jesus may be assessing the severity of this man’s blindness once the eyes were unsealed by the spit.

8:25 – “again” – I am thankful that Jesus is willing to deal with a blindness in my life more than once if need be.

- “clearly” – This word comes from two Greek words meaning “afar” and “radiantly.”
- Jesus seems to be demonstrating to the disciples the state of non-clarity that they are living in.
- Also, sometimes Jesus works in steps and not always all at once. But a gradual healing is still a miracle.
- The first thing this man will see clearly in his life is the face of Jesus.

8:27-38 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 16:13-27 and Luke 9:18-26.

8:27 – “Caesarea Philippi” – 25 miles north of Bethsaida/Galilee, at the foot of Mt. Herman. This is Gentile country.

- “saying” – Lit. “kept saying.” He asked repeatedly.
- “men” – Lit. “the men.” He is likely referencing the crowds they have now separated from.

8:28 – “John the Baptist” – Mark 6:16.

- “Elijah” – Malachi 4:5.

8:29 – “who do you say that I am?” – The most important question of our lives.

- “the Christ” – or “the Messiah.” They know that He is the Messiah, but they don’t have the right idea of what the Messiah is to be like. So Jesus will describe His Messiahship.
- Jesus will reveal Himself to His disciples before He reveals Himself to this world.

8:30 – “tell no one about Him” – Because the disciples still had the wrong idea of the Messiah. They were looking for a king, rather than a savior.

8:31 – “He began to teach them” – Jesus taught them of His suffering only after they recognized who He was.

8:32 – “openly” – Lit. “plainly, clearly.”

- “Peter took him aside” – No doubt, this is out of love.

8:33 – “looked at His disciples” – They could all be swayed by Peter’s rebuke.

- “Get thee behind me, Satan” – Any attempt at glory without a cross is of Satan.
- “The man who loves Jesus, but shuns God’s method, is a stumbling block to Him” – G. Campbell Morgan.

- 8:34 – “desires” – This is the greatest determining factor in a life that walks with Jesus.
- Fellowship & discipleship with Jesus comes this way: 1. deny yourself, 2. take up your cross, 3. follow me. (The first 2 are ‘once and for all.’ The third is continual.)
 - “deny himself” – Denying self is not the same as self-denial. We practice self-denial when, for a good purpose, we occasionally give up things or activities. But we deny self when we surrender ourselves to Christ and determine to obey His will.
 - “follow Me” – (Greek “akoloutheo”) Lit. “to take the same road as another does.” The idea is not that of following behind another, but that of accompanying the other person, taking the same road that he takes and fellowshiping along the way.

- 8:35 – “for My sake and the gospel’s” – Note the true motivation of a servant.
- “lose it...save it” – It is the difference between investing your life or spending your life. Only one yields great returns.
 - One yields an endless hope; the other a hopeless end.

8:37 – “exchange for his soul” – What is our price?

- 8:38 – “ashamed of Me” – We are to deny ourselves, take our cross, and follow Jesus publically as well as privately.
- “the glory of His Father” – Jesus is mindful of the things of God (v. 33). He is looking to eternity and the kingdom to come.

Chapter 9:

9:1-13 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 16:28-17:13 and Luke 9:27-36.

9:1 – “with power” – Speaking of the transfiguration or His resurrection, both of which some of the disciples saw.

- Jesus was just talking about being crucified. He was encouraging His followers to bear their own crosses as well. Now they are given a small glimpse as to the glory that follows the cross. It was for the joy set before Him that Jesus bore the cross. (Heb. 12:2)

9:2 – “after six days” – Jesus has nearly a week to dialog with His disciples regarding the cross and the corresponding appearance of the kingdom of God.

- “high mountain” – Likely Mount Hermon or Mount Tabor.
- “transfigured” – Lit. “metamorphosized.” He is displaying light from the inside-out.
- Jesus had veiled His glory in human flesh. Here the disciples get a glimpse.

9:3 – “white, like snow” – Matthew, Mark, and Luke all mention the brightness of the light.

- It may have been God’s plan for all created and sinless humans to be clothed in light, but that was forfeited by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

9:4 – “Elijah appeared to them with Moses” – The OT Law and the Prophets. (Rev. 11:3-13)

- Somehow the disciples knew them to be Elijah and Moses.
- “talking with Jesus” – Concerning His decease, exodus, and resurrection. (Luke 9:31)
- Answers the question: Who do you say that I am? All the O.T., the Law and the Prophets are in keeping with Christ’s death and resurrection.

- 9:5 – “good for us to be here” – Brash thing to say. Peter wants to enshrine this experience.
- “three tabernacles” – Peter is putting Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah.
 - “tabernacles” – (Greek “skene”) Lit. “tent.”
- 9:6 – “he did not know what to say” – The rule is: when you don’t know what to say, don’t say anything at all.
- “greatly afraid” – Peter had to tell mark that he was afraid.
- 9:7 – “a cloud” – The cloud of God’s shekinah glory.
- “hear him” – Lit. “be ye constantly hearing him.” Jesus carries greater weight than the Law and the Prophets.
 - This incident stuck with Peter the rest of his life. (2 Pet. 1:16-18)
- 9:8 – “saw no one any more, but only Jesus” – Finally, things are in the right perspective.
- 9:10 – “kept that saying” – Carries the idea “in complete obedience to Jesus’ request.”
- “rising from the dead” – (Greek “ecnecron”) Lit. “rising out from among the dead.”
 - The Jews believed in a general resurrection, but Jesus speaks of two resurrections.
- 9:11 – “scribes say that Elijah must come first” – This was prophesied in Mal. 4:5-6.
- 9:13 – “has also come” – In Matt. 11:14, our Lord identifies John the Baptist as Elijah, because he came in the spirit and power of Elijah. However, before the second coming of Christ, Elijah himself will appear to precede His coming.
- 9:14-32 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 17:14-23 and Luke 9:37-45.
- 9:14 – “disputing” – It seems that demonic encounters often follow the mountaintop experiences.
- 9:15 – “greatly amazed” – Could Jesus be maintaining some of the light from His transfiguration as Moses had from the presence of God? (Exod. 34:30)
- 9:16 – “asked the Scribes” – Greek implies “forcefully.” They are getting on Jesus’ disciples for their inability to heal this boy.
- 9:18 – “gnashes his teeth” – (Greek “trizo”) Lit. “to squeak, utter a shrill cry.” When used in connection with the teeth, it means “to grind or gnash the teeth.”
- “becomes rigid” – The boys is seizing up.
 - “could not” – Previously, Jesus had given the disciples power to cast out demons, but now they are ineffective. (Mark 6:7,13)
- 9:19 – “faithless generation” – Jesus seems to be talking to the entire crowd: scribes, disciples, father, spectators, and demon.
- 9:20 – “when he saw Him” – The demon recognizes Jesus and sends him reeling.
- “wallowed” – (Greek “kulio”) Lit. “to be rolled.” The picture is that of the boy being rolled on the ground by the convulsion.

- 9:21 – “So He asked his father” – When Jesus sees the boys go into convulsions, He first takes the time to talk to the boy’s father. It is almost as if the work of drawing faith out of this man is more urgent to Jesus than is casting out the demon from the boy.
- “From childhood” – This has been happening to this boy nearly his entire life.
 - Jesus makes the father recount the entire story to Him as the boy is writhing on the ground.
- 9:22 – “help us” – The father uses the plural pronoun “us.” It is very touching. He is identifying himself with the misery of his son.
- 9:23 – “If you can believe” – Jesus is reacting to the man’s statement “If you can do anything” from v. 22.
- 9:24 – “cried out” – Expositors says of the cry that it was an “eager, fear-stricken cry.” Swete says “his strength of feeling shows itself in a cry as piercing as that of the demoniac son.”
- 9:25 – “unclean” – (Greek “akatharos”) Lit. “the inability to cleanse the poison from a body.”
- “I command you” – This is a military term and stands as an absolute command.
 - “enter no more” – Jesus takes care of the past, present and future.
- 9:26 – “He is dead” – Only Mark gives this detail.
- 9:27 – “Jesus took him by the hand” – The touch of Christ completes the healing.
- 9:29 – “this kind” – (Greek “genos”) Lit. “race or type.” There are different types of demons. (Eph. 6:12)
- “prayer and fasting” – Indicates a lifestyle of prayer and fasting.
 - Prayer and fasting are ways to deepen our trust in and fellowship with Jesus. This man brought his boy to see Jesus (v. 17), but the disciples didn’t take the man and the boy to Jesus. They tried to take care of the problem themselves. And this over-dependence on themselves is an indication of a lack of prayer and fasting in their personal lives.
 - “But since the Lord Himself says that His disciples could not fast while He was with them, perhaps this was designed for their guidance – unless we take it as but a definite way of expressing a general truth, that great and difficult duties require special preparation and self-denial.” (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, p. 174)
 - Personal walk comes before public ministry.
- 9:30 – “passed through Galilee” – Jesus is beginning the journey to Jerusalem.
- 9:31 – “and said” – Lit. “kept saying.”
- “betrayed” – This is a new concept to the disciples. And nobody suspects Judas.
- 9:33-50 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 18:1-9 and Luke 9:46-50.
- Jesus keys to greatness: 1. Treat all men equally (v. 37), 2. Be as gracious as possible (v. 40), 3. Handle others with sensitivity (v. 42), 4. Deal with yourself radically (v. 43), and 5. Live with all people peaceably (v. 49).

- 9:33 – “He asked them” – Not because He needs to know, but because He wants to elicit a conversation with the disciples on their idea of who is the greatest.
- “disputed” – The Greek indicates a heated argument.
 - Jesus is teaching of His crucifixion and they’re arguing about who’s the greatest?!
- 9:34 – “kept silent” – The disciples seem to be embarrassed by the pettiness of the discussion.
- 9:35 – “sat down” – As a teacher. Jesus is explaining, not condemning.
- Instead of condemning the disciples for the desire to be the greatest, He rather tells them what it takes to be great in the kingdom of God.
 - “last of all and servant of all” – Jesus is the greatest of the kingdom, therefore this is a description of His own character.
 - “servant” – Gayle Erwin defines a servant as “one who makes life better for the people around them.”
- 9:36 – “little child” – In that culture, little children were considered more property than persons.
- “taken him in His arms” – Affectionately hugged him.
- 9:37 – “receives one of these little children” – Something as simple and as non-glamorous as taking care of children receives preeminence in the economy of God. And kids can be so demanding, selfish, and consuming.
- 9:38 – “casting out demons” – It had to frustrate Jesus’ disciples that these other followers of Jesus successfully cast out demons when they had just failed to do so. (v. 18)
- “does not follow us” – He is not part of their group or denomination.
 - Since when did Jesus join them?
 - “For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” (1 Cor. 3:3)
 - “I am convinced that the more spiritual a man becomes the less denominational he becomes” – G. Campbell Morgan.
- 9:40 – “us” – Jesus answers with them.
- Heb. 11:16 – “Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God.”
 - There is no middle or neutral ground, but the distinguishing factor is not us, but Jesus. What matters is whether or not people are serving Him.
- 9:41 – “gives you a cup of water” – In that day, the servant of the house would wash the feet of the guests and give them a drink of water.
- Jesus is saying that heaven takes note and that no ministry for Christ goes unnoticed. Nobody is encroaching on their chance to serve; there is plenty of opportunity.
- 9:42 – “one of these little ones who believe in Me” – This is applicable to parents, teachers, or anyone who deals with children.
- “millstone” – This is the larger millstone often turned by a donkey to grind the grain. (Matt. 18:6)
 - “thrown into the sea” – Nothing goes unnoticed on the negative side either. Heaven takes notes here and acts accordingly in punishment.
 - God is a good father. He takes care of His kids and will not overlook harm done to them.

9:43-47 – “hand...foot...eye” – This covers all we do, everywhere we go, and all we see.

- If things are slowing down your walk with the Lord or limiting you in your work for the Lord, cut them out. The context here is not salvation, but greatness in the kingdom of God.

9:43 – “your hand” – There is an idiom where some would say, “I’d give my right arm for that.” These are the most valuable things in our lives.

- “life” – Lit. “the life.” Speaking of eternal life.
- “hell” – (Greek “gehenna”) The place of the rubbish dump from Jerusalem. Fires burned their continually to consume the junk dumped there.
- “never” – Eternal hell.

9:44 – “their worm” – These are a picture of the continual remorse and furious reflection of the soul upon its own willful folly and now woeful misery.

- “fire is not quenched” – Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. Humans must be fitted with bodies that can burn continually but never be consumed.
- Hell is a place of internal and external torture.

9:49 – “fire” – Fire reveals what something is made of.

- “salt” – Salt was used to preserve and season meat. It was also used in some of the OT sacrifices. (Lev. 2)
- “You are the salt of the earth.” (Matt. 5:13)

9:50 – “salt loses its flavor” – Salt was mined at the Dead Sea and from the Mediterranean Sea. But if it came into contact with water on the way to market, the salt would wash out leaving only sand and stone that the salt was previously attached to.

Chapter 10:

10:1-12 – The parallel passage is found in Matt. 19:1-12.

10:1 – “came to the region of Judea” – Jesus is leaving Galilee for the last time before His crucifixion. He is traveling east of the Jordan. (Luke 9:51)

10:2 – “asked him” – Lit. “kept asking Him.”

- It was a common spiritual debate of the day with political ramifications as in the case of Herod Antipas.
- “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” – Matthew includes the phrase “for just any reason.” (Matt. 19:3) They knew divorce was permitted, but they didn’t know what the acceptable reasons were.
- The Law did not give adultery as grounds for divorce, for in Israel the adulterer and the adulteress were to be stoned to death. (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22)

- 10:4 – “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce” – In Deut. 24:1-4, divorce was permitted for “some uncleanness.” Some religious leaders of Jesus’ day took this as an encouragement or even an obligation to divorce for many insignificant reasons.
- William Barclay said the permitted reasons for divorce were “if the wife spoiled the dish, if she spun in the streets, or she talked to a strange man, if she spoke disrespectfully of her husband’s relations in his hearing, if she was a brawling woman whose voice could be heard in the streets, or even if a man found a woman who was fairer in his eyes than his wife was.” (Quoted from David Guzik)
- 10:5 – “hardness” – (Greek “sclerosis”)
- 10:6 – “from the beginning of the creation” – Jesus goes back to the original design of the One who created marriage.
- “male and female” – The unique sexuality of each partner contributes to the marriage union.
- 10:7 – “man shall leave” – This culturally applies to both the man and the woman.
- “joined” – Lit. “glued to, to cleave closely, to stick to” and carries the idea of “woven into.”
 - “wife” – This is one man with one woman. This excludes homosexual unions, bestiality, adultery, open marriage, and polygamy.
- 10:8 – “one flesh” – This refers to the sexual union, which is to follow the leaving and joining in marriage.
- 10:9 – “joined together” – Lit. “to fasten to one yoke, to yoke together.”
- 10:11 – “Whoever divorces his wife” – Matt. 5:32 & 19:9 include the phrase “except for sexual immorality.”
- “divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery” – That is because if the marriage was dissolved for any reason other than the sexual immorality of the other partner, then God sees the original couple as still married.
- 10:12 – “if a woman divorces her husband” – Mark, who is writing to Gentiles, includes the possibility of a woman divorcing her husband.
- Hebrew women didn’t have the legal right to divorce their husbands.
- 10:13-16 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 19:13-15 and Luke 18:15-17.
- 10:13 – “they” – This includes some fathers for the word is in the masculine gender.
- “brought” – (Greek “prosphero”) The Greek word suggests bringing the children to Jesus for dedication. The word is commonly used of sacrifices.
 - “touch them” – The idea is to lay hands on to bless them.
- 10:14 – “greatly displeased” – Lit. “had indignation toward.”
- The only time Jesus had indignation toward His disciples was when they kept the kids from coming to Him.
- 10:15 – “as a little child” – That is child-like, not childish. Children are typically accepting, sincere, humble, and willing to receive what they do not deserve. They embrace their dependent position in their relationship with their parents.

10:17-31 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 19:16-30 and Luke 18:18-30.

10:17 – “came one running” – He sees something in the way Jesus is treating the children.

- “Good Teacher” – This title was never used of other rabbis in Jesus’ day, it was only ever used to refer to God.
- “what shall I do?” – This is this man’s problem. He wants to earn His own way.
- “inherit eternal life” – He is searching for the right thing.

10:18 – “No one is good but One” – Jesus is trying to clarify this man’s thinking. Either Jesus is a man, and therefore not good; or He is good because He is God.

- There can be no dealings with mere men that result in inheriting eternal life. That is a gift that can only be given by God Himself.

10:19 – “the commandments” – Jesus deals with the second table of the Law which deals with human relationships.

10:20 – “all these things I have kept” – No doubt, this man answered Jesus sincerely. But he did not understand that the Law dealt with more than outward behaviors, it spoke to the motivations of the heart. And Jesus will expose his covetous heart with the following command.

- Jesus does not argue that this man has kept the commands as he understood them.

10:21 – “looking at him” – Lit. “staring into him.”

- “loved him” – Jesus sees past this man’s power and position to see the true man.
- “One thing you lack” – This young, wealthy, religious man knew he still lacked.
- “go...sell...give” – This is the incidental command. It is not imperative to all.
- “follow me” – This is the universal command. He may not ask us to make to the same sacrifice, but it will be of the same magnitude.

10:22 – “went away grieved” – Jesus didn’t chase him or change the requirements.

- We don’t know if this man ever came to follow Jesus.

10:23 – “riches” – Money can be a great tool to use for God, but it can also be a cruel master.

- The deceitfulness of riches can choke the living Word of God in our lives. (Mark 4:19)
- In the Bible, 490 verses deal with faith, a little over 500 verses deal with prayer, and over 2,000 verses deal with money.

10:24 – “trust in riches” – “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” (1 Tim. 6:10)

- Believers are not to give to get, but we get to give. Much of Christian fundraising contradicts this Biblical doctrine.

10:25 – “camel” – The largest mammal is Israel.

- “needle” – Lit. “sewing needle.” (And they didn’t have blenders.)

10:26 – “greatly astonished” – Lit. “staggered.”

- The Jews typically attributed wealth as God’s blessing.

10:27 – “with God” – The key is in being with God.

10:28 – “left all” – Peter and the others had decided to leave all behind to follow Christ.

- 10:30 – “receive a hundredfold now...and in the age to come” – God will be a debtor to no man!
- This is a process of trading the temporal and earthly for the eternal and heavenly.
 - “with persecutions” – That is a part of this too.
- 10:32-45 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 20:17-28 and Luke 18:31-34.
- 10:32 – “up to Jerusalem” – Jerusalem sat 2500 ft. above sea level. (Jericho is about 1000 ft. below sea level.)
- “Jesus was going before them” – Jesus is charging into Jerusalem.
 - “Therefore I have set My face like a flint.” (Isa. 50:7)
- 10:33 – “Behold” – Lit. “consider this.” It is what Jesus was considering.
- “the Son of Man” – The One prophesied about in the OT. (Dan. 7:13; Isa. 50:6-7)
 - “deliver Him to the Gentiles” – About 20 years earlier, Rome took the right of capital punishment away from the Jews. Therefore the means of execution will not be stoning, but crucifixion.
- 10:35 – “James and John” – Matthew tells us that their mother, Salome, is the spokesperson. (Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:41)
- “do for us whatever we ask” – Like little children, they want permission to get whatever they want.
- 10:38 – “the cup that I drink” – Lit. “the cup that I am drinking.”
- Jesus is headed to the cross. The price is already being paid in His heart.
 - Jesus, too, traded the temporal and earthly for the eternal and heavenly.
- 10:39 – “We are able” – James would be the first disciple martyred. (Acts 12:2) John would be tortured and then exiled to a work-camp in his old age.
- 10:40 – “it is prepared” – It has already been prepared and Jesus hasn’t gone to the cross yet.
- 10:41 – “displeased with James and John” – The other disciples are upset because they didn’t think of it first.
- 10:42 – “Jesus called them to Himself” – Jesus is answering the request of James and John to all the disciples.
- “authority” – Can also be translated “dominion.” (2 Cor. 1:24)
- 10:43 – “servant” – (Greek “diaconos”) A servant is one who makes life better for those around them.
- True servants act like servants even when they are being treated like servants. Servants need no recognition.
- 10:44 – “slave” – (Greek “doulos”) Lit. “a slave with no rights.”
- “slave of all” – This is the position Jesus took.

10:45 – “ransom” – (Greek “lutron”) Lit. “to pay the price of redemption.”
- “for” – (Greek “anti”) Lit. “instead of.” This speaks of a substitutionary atonement.
- “many” – “We trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.” (1 Tim. 4:10)

10:46-52 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 20:29-34 and Luke 18:35-43.

10:46 – “out of Jericho” – Luke says He was going into Jericho. There were two Jerichos, the Jewish and the Roman. Both accounts are correct.

- Dr. James Bailey says Jericho at the time of Jesus was the heaviest travelled intersection in the world.
- “Bartimaeus” – means “son of the unclean one.”
- Matthew says there were two blind men, but apparently only one spoke.

10:47 – “heard” – The blind man cannot see, but his hearing seems superb.

- “son of David” – Acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah. This is a rebuke to the religious leaders, who could see but still couldn’t perceive the truth about Him.

10:48 – “warned him to be quiet” – The crowd, apparently including the disciples, works to silence Bartimaeus.

- “mercy” – He is not calling out for money, but for mercy.
- Bartimaeus did not approach Jesus as if he deserved to be healed.

10:49 – “Jesus stood still” – Jesus responds to one voice above all the crowd.

- “Be of good cheer” – The disciples change their tone when they see Jesus’ response.

10:50 – “garment” – The large outer garment was a beggar’s most prized possession.

- This garment was a beggar’s apparel and he wouldn’t be needing it anymore.

10:51 – “What do you want Me to do for you?” – Jesus wants Bartimaeus to voice his request.

- “Rabboni” – Lit. “my Master.” The only other person in the Gospels that uses this title was Mary. (John 20:16)

10:52 – “your faith” – This is what Jesus saw in this man.

- This is the last healing miracle recorded in Mark.
- “followed Jesus” – If the first thing you saw in the world was the face of Jesus, where else would you go?

Chapter 11:

11:1-11 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 21:1-9; Luke 19:29-40; and John 12:12-19.

11:1 – “Bethany” – Located 2½ miles from Jerusalem.

11:3 – “the Lord has need of it” – It is interesting to see the Lord need something.

11:4 – “by the door outside on the street” – It could be Mark gets his details from Peter, who could have been one of the two disciples. (v. 1)

- 11:6 – “as Jesus commanded” – Jesus is arranging to be recognized as the Messiah.
- The 10th of Nisan. The day people were to present their sacrifices to the priests. (The Passover happens on the 14th of Nisan.)
 - o Luke 19:42 – “this your day.” Many prophecies fulfilled this day.
 - o Zech. 9:9 – “your king is coming to you...lowly and riding on a donkey.”
 - o Psalm 118:24 – “This is the day the Lord has made.”
 - o Dan. 9:24-27 – “Until Messiah the Prince.” From the command to rebuild Jerusalem (on March 14, 445 BC) to this day (April 6, 32 AD) was exactly 173,880 days (or 483 years of 360 days).
- 11:7 – “the colt” – Matthew also tells us that they brought the mother of this colt.
- This unbroken donkey will recognize and submit to its Maker.
- 11:9 – “Hosanna” – means “Save now.”
- Rabbinic tradition said that if Israel was ready, the Messiah would come to the city on a horse. But if Israel was not ready, He would come riding on a donkey.
 - Luke tells us that Jesus weeps (lit. “convulses”) over the city.
- 11:11 – “into the Temple” – Jesus presents Himself as the Passover lamb.
- Jesus is also assessing the Jewish worship at this time. (Mal. 3:1-3)
 - “the hour was already late” – Jesus will address the injustices introduced into the Jewish worship tomorrow.
- 11:12-26 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 21:12-22 and Luke 19:45-48.
- 11:12 – “he was hungry” – Jesus was looking for something from the nation that was represented in this fig tree.
- Jesus had food to eat they knew not of. (John 4:32)
- 11:13 – “a fig tree” – Israel was often typified as a fig tree. (Micah 7:1-6; Judges 9:10; Isa. 5; Joel 1; Nahum)
- “time of figs was not yet” – But the early figs preceded the leaves.
 - This tree, like the nation on the whole, had the appearance of fruit without any actual fruit.
- 11:14 – “Let no one eat fruit from you” – Matthew relates that the fig tree withered on the spot. Mark seems to imply that the disciples didn’t recognize it until the next day.
- This is the only time in the Gospels that Jesus uses His power to curse.
- 11:15 – “the temple” – The Temple mount covers an area of roughly 3 football fields by three football fields, or 25 acres. Here one Man is throwing everyone out of that entire area!
- They had set up this business in the court of the Gentiles.
 - “sold doves” – This was God’s provision for the poor. They are taking advantage of the poor.
- 11:16 – “carry wares through the temple” – The people are using the Temple as a shortcut from one side of the city to the other.
- This shortcut made life easier for the people, but it destroyed the true purpose of the temple.

11:17 – “My house” – Jesus is owning this building built by Herod the Great as His house.

- “for all nations” – God put Israel on the earth as a priest nation to testify of Him to the rest of the peoples of the world.
- “den of thieves” – Jesus is angered over leaders making merchandise of God’s people.
 - A den is the place where thieves run when they want to hide. The chief priests and scribes were using the temple and its religious services to cover up their sin and hypocrisy.

11:22 – “Jesus answered” – Jesus is not concerning Himself with teaching the disciples to curse fig trees. His concern is the faith and fruitfulness of His followers.

- “faith in God” – This stands in contrast to Israel and the religious leaders who demonstrated almost no faith in God at all.
 - “Faith works by love.” (Gal. 5:6)
 - Faith in God is not a mere faith in faith.

11:23 – “believe” – Lit. “believe and continue to believe, or constantly trust.”

- The context for this verse is Jesus cleaning out the worship that has turned God and His people into a money making endeavor. And yet the health and wealth teachers of this day do the same thing in this verse.
- “whatever he says” – In other places, Jesus limits this to prayers “in His name.”
 - This is a broad promise for prayer, but given to cross-carrying disciples.

11:24 – “ask” – This also translated “desire.” What do I desire when I pray?

11:25 – “stand praying” – There is no one specific posture for prayer.

- “forgive him” – The kind of forgiveness that will get me into heaven is the kind of forgiveness that will get anyone into heaven.
 - The forgiving spirit is one of the signs that I am truly a child of God.

11:27-33 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 21:23-27 and Luke 20:1-8.

11:28 – “authority” – They recognize His authority.

- The anointing and ordination come from God, which is the only authority worth anything.
- The authority you walk in corresponds to the throne you bow your knee to.

11:29 – “I also will ask you one question” – Jesus wants these men to be sincere.

11:33 – “Neither will I tell you” – Giving them an answer will do no good. (Matt. 7:6)

Chapter 12:

12:1-12 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 21:33-46 and Luke 20:9-18.

12:1 – “a vineyard” – The vineyard served as a picture of the nation of Israel. (Isa. 5:1-7)

12:2 – “the fruit of the vineyard” – God is looking for fruit from His people.

- This is similar to Jesus with the fig tree. (Mark 11:12-14)

12:3 – “beat him” – This is how they have treated God’s prophets.

- 12:6 – “one son, his beloved” – Jesus is speaking of Himself.
- 12:7 – “This is the heir” – They know who they are planning to kill.
- Jesus is exposing the hearts of the religious leaders.
 - Jewish law provided that a piece of property unclaimed by an heir would be declared “ownerless” and could be claimed by anyone.
- 12:9 – “destroy the vinedressers” – Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD by Titus Vespasian and the Roman army. 1.1 million Jews were killed and 900,000 were dispersed throughout the Roman empire.
- 12:10-11 – “chief cornerstone” – Jesus is referencing the psalm the people were proclaiming over Him at the Triumphal Entry. (Ps. 118:22-23; Mark 11:9-10; see also Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:7)
- Jesus will either be to us the cornerstone, the stumbling stone, or the smiting stone.
 - Tradition says that in the building of Solomon’s Temple, the cornerstone was cut in a quarry and sent to the Temple Mount. But when it arrived, the workers didn’t know where it fit and so cast it off to the side. It was only later when they needed it that they remembered they had set it aside and misplaced it for a while.
- 12:13-40 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 22:15-46 and Luke 20:20-47.
- 12:13 – “Pharisees and the Herodians” – This is a strange alliance. The Pharisees held to the traditional keeping of the Law, and therefore greatly resisted Roman rule. The Herodians chose to work with Rome to advance the Jewish people. They have put aside all other differences to confront Christ. (Mark 3:6)
- “to catch him” – Lit. “to trap or ensnare him.”
- 12:14 – “You are true” – They are buttering Him up.
- “or not” – They are giving Him an either-or question. They think they have Him either way.
- 12:16 – “they brought it” – It was an indictment against them that they had one.
- This is all in front of the crowds on a jammed Temple mount.
 - “Caesar’s” – Caesar Tiberius was ruling at this time.
 - Our money days Federal Reserve Note, as it is merely on loan to the public as a medium of exchange.
- 12:17 – “render” – (Greek “appododomi.”) Lit. “to give back.” (Rom. 13:6-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-17)
- 12:18 – “Sadducees” – These were the powerful and wealthy leaders of the Sanhedrin. They were materialists and did not believe in the resurrection, angels, or spirits. (Acts 23:7-8)
- The Sadducees only considered the first 5 books of the Law as Holy Scripture.
 - Deut. 25 outlines the practice of Levirate marriage.
- 12:19 – “Teacher” – Jesus isn’t their teacher.

- 12:22 – “the seven had her” – This is a ridiculous scenario made up to make the resurrection look stupid.
- In much the same way, the modern new-age movement has their ridiculous questions that they use to try to make Biblical truth look ridiculous.
 - Contrary to what your teacher has told you...there are stupid questions.
- 12:24 – “mistaken” – They have made two mistakes: 1) they didn’t really know the Scriptures, and 2) they didn’t really know God’s power.
- The Word of God and the God of the Word.
 - “The greatest threat to the Church is ‘Dead Orthodoxy’” – Alan Redpath.
- 12:25 – “like angels in heaven” – Jesus directly refers to the spiritual realm.
- 12:26 – “have you not read in the book of Moses” – Jesus is digging here. Most Sadducees had the books of Moses memorized.
- “I am” – He didn’t say “I was.” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive.
- 12:27 – “the God of the living” – Jesus affirms the resurrection.
- 12:28 – “perceiving that He had answered them well” – This scribe seems more sincere than the others.
- “Which is the first commandment of all?” – The idea of the question is, “Of which sort are the most important commandments?”
- 12:29-31 – Matthew adds “on these hang all the Law and the Prophets.”
- In Jesus’ day, they had turned the 10 Commandments into a series of 613 laws or precepts, 365 were negative and 248 were positive. But in so doing, they turned the Law into something they could keep.
 - “Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Gal. 3:24)
- 12:29-30 – Jesus quotes the Shema from Deut. 6:4-5. Religious Jews would quote this 3 times a day.
- “Shema” means “hear.”
 - “the Lord” – Yahweh
 - What in Hebrew is Yahweh, is often translated into the Greek “kurios,” a title often used to refer to Jesus.
 - “our God” – Elohim.
 - “one Lord” – The Hebrew is “echad Yahweh.” “Echad” is a compound unity. It is one thing made up of more than one thing.
 - In this, there is an OT inference to the Trinity.
 - The most important and most basic thing is to know the true and loving God.
 - “love the Lord” – As the greatest commandment, this shows what God most wants from us. (1 Cor. 13; Gal. 5:22)
 - This command makes God very personal.
 - “We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)
- 12:31 – “love your neighbor” – Jesus quoted Lev. 19:18. (Rom. 13:8-10)
- You cannot properly love anyone else until you first love God.

12:33 – “more than all the whole burnt offerings” – Without love for God, the entire sacrificial system is meaningless.

12:35 – “the Son of David” – It was common knowledge that the Messiah would be of the line of David.

- Jesus focused on the most important question, “Who is the Messiah?”

12:36 – “David said by the Holy Spirit” – Jesus is quoting from Ps. 110.

- Jesus acknowledges that the psalms of David were divinely inspired.
- “the LORD” – Yahweh.
- “my Lord” – Adonai.

12:37 – “David himself calls Him ‘Lord’” – In a patriarchal system, no father would call his son, Lord.

- “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” (Rev. 21:16)
- Jesus is God.

12:38 – “Beware” – Lit. “constantly beware.”

- “long robes” – Keeping up the appearance of spirituality.
- “greetings” – They loved the recognition.

12:40 – “devour widows’ houses” – The Scribes were the lawyers of the day. So when they made out wills for widows, they wrote them up in such a way as to get a large portion for themselves or the Temple.

- “greater condemnation” – There seem to be different magnitudes of punishment in hell.

12:41-44 – The parallel passage is found in Luke 21:1-4.

12:41 – “how” – It doesn’t say “how much.” (2 Cor. 9:6-7)

- “the treasury” – On one wall of the court of women were 13 trumpet-shaped coffers.
- Josephus said the court of women could hold 15,000 people.

12:42 – “poor” – The word for “destitute.”

- “quadrans” – Some estimate this to be 1/64 of a denarii.

12:43 – “more than all” – Jesus said she gave more than all the others combined that day.

12:44 – “out of her poverty” – But she gave in faith. She somehow thought it was better to give that money to God than to use it for herself.

- This woman stands in stark contrast to the wealthy who only approach Jesus critically.

Chapter 13:

13:1-37 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 24:1-51 and Luke 21:5-36.

13:1 – “the temple” – The Temple was originally rebuilt by Zerubbabel and Ezra (Ezra 6:15), but greatly expanded and improved by Herod the Great.

- “see what manner of stones and what buildings” – In Matt. 23:38, Jesus ends the previous discourse to the religious leaders by saying, “See, your house is left to you desolate.” The disciples fixate on that, and so proceed to ask Jesus about the Temple.
 - The disciples do not believe that the Temple could fall.
 - Jesus had already given His estimation of the Temple in Mark 11:15-17.

13:2 – “these buildings” – Herod’s Temple stood over 12 stories tall and covered 25 acres. It was made of white marble stone from Rome, some 37’ long x 12’ high x 18’ wide (weighing well over 200 tons.) No mortar was used between the stones and the dome and doorways were covered with gold. It has been estimated, that over \$2 billion worth of gold was used in the Temple.

- “not one stone shall be left upon another” – In 70 AD, the Roman armies under Titus Vespasian burnt the Temple.
 - The Temple itself was the strongest building in the city. And so, many of the Jews fled to the Temple in order to hold off the Roman legion from within the Temple. Titus ordered that they not destroy the Temple, but to leave it intact. However, some of the Roman soldiers, drunken, began to fire flaming arrows at the Temple. And the Temple caught fire and the Jews inside were cremated. But the intense heat of the fire melted the gold of the dome. And it, being melted, came on down and filled the cracks of the stones. And so then, the Roman troops, in order to loot the gold, took the Temple down stone from stone, until the prophecy of Jesus was literally fulfilled.

13:4 – “when will these things be...what will be the sign” – The disciples believe that if the Temple falls, then it must mean the end of the age.

13:5 – “Take heed” – Used 4 times in this message. (v. 5, 9, 23, 33)

- “no one deceives you” – The Church is repeatedly warned of deceivers throughout the NT.

13:6 – “I am the Christ” – Many will claim to be the Messiah. Wherever there is political upheaval, there is a rise in false Christs and false prophets.

- When Jesus comes back the sun and moon will go dark and He will shine like lightning. There will be no confusion.
 - Important note: Israel is God’s time clock – Daniel’s 70th week. All Biblical prophecy works from Israel in the land. Our generation is closer than any other to Jesus’ second coming. (Warnings of last days: 2 Pet. 2, 1 Tim. 4, 2 Tim. 3, and Jude)

13:8 – “kingdom against kingdom” – These are worldwide states of war.

- “troubles” – Luke includes “pestilences.”
- “sorrows” – Lit. “birth pains.” These will be increasing in frequency and intensity.
 - Four things signal the coming of the last days: 1. religious deception (v. 5-6), 2. nations in conflict (v. 7-8), 3. natural disasters (v. 8), and 4. religious persecution (v. 13).

- 13:9 – “deliver you up to councils” – Religious persecution.
- “synagogues” – This is primarily a Jewish context. (v. 14, 15, 20, 22)
 - “brought before rulers and kings” – Political persecution.
- 13:10 – “published among all nations” – This is not something that is presently inhibiting the return of Christ. In Col. 1:6, Paul said the Gospel had reached the entire world. And in Rev. 14, we are told an angel will finish the job of evangelizing the world before the end of it all.
- 13:11 – “when they arrest you” – This persecution will reach to “all nations” as well. (v. 10)
- “do not worry” – Like Stephen in the book of Acts. (Acts 6-7)
 - “do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak” – Here Jesus spoke of the inspiration that comes at a moment of persecution, not of teaching in the church.
- 13:13 – “endures” – (Greek “hupomone”) Lit. “to bear up under pressure.”
- “saved” – Lit. “preserved, delivered.” We’re not saved by enduring, but salvation is marked by endurance.
- 13:14 – “the abomination of desolation” – [The man of sin] opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (2 Thess. 2:4; see also Dan. 11:31)
- “standing where it ought not” – Matt. 24:15 says, “standing in the holy place.”
 - “to the mountains” – Surviving Jews will flee to Petra. (Rev. 12, Isa. 16)
 - The mark of the beast comes at this time when the Anti-Christ sets Himself up as god, making the taking the mark a sign of Satan worship. (Rev. 13)
- 13:18 – “in winter” – The time when heavy rains caused streams to become swollen and impossible to cross, preventing many from reaching a place of refuge.
- 13:19 – “tribulation, such as has not been” – The Great Tribulation.
- “God created” – Jesus was a creationist, not an evolutionist.
- 13:20 – “the elect’s sake” – Speaking of the people converted during the Tribulation, largely of the nation of Israel.
- 13:22 – “signs and wonders” – These are the same words spoken of the miracles of Jesus. The Antichrist will also receive “exousia” for a time. (2 Thess. 2:9)
- Just because there are signs and wonders doesn’t mean that God is there (ie. the Egyptian magicians.) But are they pointing you to Christ?
- 13:23 – “told you all things” – Jesus is telling this ahead of time to solidify the life of His followers, to keep them from falling into deception, and to give them hope.
- 13:24 – “after that tribulation” – Immediately concluding the final 7 years of the nation of Israel.
- “sun will be darkened” – This kind of cosmic calamity is also described in Isa. 13:9-11; Ezek. 32:7-9; Joel 2:30-31; Amos 8:9-10; and Zeph. 1:14-15.
- 13:26 – “they will see the Son of Man coming” – Jesus’ appearance is the clearest sign of His coming.

13:27 – “gather together His elect” – Specifically referring to the redeemed of Israel. (Deut. 30; Isa. 11; Ezek. 5:10; Zech. 2:6; Rom. 11)

- “the four winds” – The four corners of a compass.

13:28 – “fig tree” – Israel. (Jer. 24:1-6, Hosea 9:10-11, Joel 1:6-7; Mark 11:12-14)

- The key that unlocks this entire prophecy is Israel regathered to its land.

13:29 – “know” – Jesus told us these things so that we would know and be ready.

13:30 – “generation” – (Greek “genos”) Lit. “race.”

- When the fig tree buds, know that summer is near. When Israel takes form, know that these things are ready to take place. (May 14, 1948)

13:32 – “no one knows” – We may know the times and seasons, but we cannot know the day or the hour.

- “nor the Son” – In His humiliation, Jesus limited Himself in this knowledge before His death and resurrection.

13:33 – “watch” – This is the theme of the last section, used 4 times in last 5 verses.

- This means to be watching for Jesus, not just watching for the fulfillment of these prophecies. Jesus wants us to live expecting His soon return.
- A Roman soldier who fell asleep on duty could be executed.

13:35 – “in the morning” – However late it may seem, we are to keep watch.

13:36 – “sleeping” – Like the foolish bridesmaids in Matt. 25:1-13.

- Sleeping in the light may be a reference to a life of compromise.

Chapter 14:

14:1-11 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 26:1-16; Luke 22:1-6; and John 12:1-11.

14:1 – “After two days” – Lit. “2 days ahead of them.”

14:2 – “Not during the feast” – The leaders want to kill Jesus privately to avoid the crowds who back Jesus.

- Jesus was “killed according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” (Acts 2:23)
- “the people” – The crowds of Jerusalem swelled from about 600,000 to over 2.5 million during the Passover. And the crowds would be looking for Messiah and His deliverance during this Feast.
- The world still largely persecutes the followers of Jesus in secret.

14:3 – “being in Bethany” – This event took place 6 days before Passover, which would put it on the Friday before the Triumphal Entry. (John 12:1)

- “Simon the leper” – This is a man who had been healed by Jesus.
- “a woman” – Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. (John 12:3)
- “alabaster box” – A cruse, hollowed out of alabaster with a thin neck sealed at the top. The cruse was designed to be used all at one time.

14:4 – “wasted” – Lit. “perdition.” This is the same word spoken of Judas being “the son of perdition.” (John 17:12)

14:5 – “three hundred denarii” – About a year’s wages.

- “given to the poor” – It was a Jewish custom to give gifts to the poor on the evening of the Passover.
- “spikenard” – Oil squeezed out of the root of a plant found in the Himalayas of India.
 - This was the most valuable thing in Mary’s life, usually used on a wedding day. Mary had not used it on Lazarus at his death and burial.

14:5 – “they criticized her” – The disciples criticize Mary led by Judas in particular.

- Judas was the treasurer of the disciples and often stole from the purse. (John 12:6)

14:6 – “let her alone” – She gives her best to Him, and He then He defends her.

14:7 – “the poor with you always” – The answer to poverty is not in economics or politics, but in the change of the heart of man.

- “Me you do not have always” – Speaking in a physical sense.

14:8 – “She has done what she could” – She has not done merely what she was commanded.

- Mary knew Jesus was going to die. The disciples don’t get it, but Mary does. (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:17-37)
- “All cannot do great things for Christ, but it is well if each one does what he can as unto the Lord Himself” – H. Ironside.

14:9 – “a memorial to her” – This is the only memorial established on the love and devotion of a follower of Jesus. Jesus makes it clear that nothing given to God is a waste.

- Could Jesus still smell the spikenard a few days later on the cross?
- When we serve the Church, we too are anointing the Body of Christ.

14:10 – “to betray Him” – The scene with Mary anointing Jesus with the spikenard is the impetus that finally moves Judas to betray Jesus.

14:11 – “give him money” – Judas betrays Christ for 30 pieces of silver, while Mary poured out a year’s wages all at one time.

- “conveniently” – If we only ever serve the Lord when it is convenient, then we will be much like Judas. Mary’s worship, on the other hand, was far from convenient; it was extravagant.

14:12-26 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 26:17-30; Luke 22:7-23,39; and John 13:21-30.

14:13 – “two of his disciples” – Luke tells us it is Peter and John.

- Jesus didn’t disclose the location so Judas wouldn’t know where to get Him.
- Gethsemane was a regular meeting place for Jesus, so Judas knew to check there for him.
- “man carrying a pitcher of water” – This was usually a woman’s job.

14:14 – “guest room” – Hospitality was very important during the Feast days.

- 14:15 – “large upper room” – Many believe this is the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, and later the location of the prayer meeting of Pentecost.
- 14:16 – “prepared the Passover” – None of the gospels mention the disciples eating a lamb at the Passover meal.
- 14:19 – “Is it I?” – They are questioning themselves. Still nobody suspects Judas.
- 14:21 – “written of him” – Jesus knows. There are no surprises.
- “if he had never been born” – It is better for any human being to never have been born than to reject Christ.
- 14:22 – “blessed” – Jesus is thanking God for His broken body.
- “broke it” – Not of bone of Jesus was broken, but His body was.
- 14:24 – “new covenant” – The old covenant was a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. (Gal. 3:24)
- 14:25 – “until that day when I drink it new” – The next time Jesus breaks bread, we will be with Him at the feast.
- 14:26 – “sung a hymn” – They sang Ps. 113-114 before the Passover meal and Ps. 115-118 after.
- Jesus is singing as He walks over the Kidron Valley to Gethsemane.
- 14:27-31 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 26:31-35; Luke 22:31-38; and John 13:36-38.
- 14:27 – “offended” – (Greek “skandalizo”) Lit. “to catch in a scandal, to trip up by hiding a stumblingblock in front of someone.”
- “I” – Jehovah speaking. He is doing the smiting.
 - Satan will also attack the shepherd to scatter the flock.
- 14:31 – “I will not deny You” – Peter argues with Jesus.
- Peter’s self-confidence must be broken!
 - John 14-17 are the teachings Jesus gave on the way to Gethsemane.
 - “all said likewise” - The rest of the disciples agree with Peter.
- 14:32-42 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 26:36-46 and Luke 22:39-46.
- 14:32 – “Gethsemane” – Lit. “olive press.”
- 14:33 – “troubled” – Lit. “to be struck with terror.”
- “deeply distressed” – Lit. “anguish.”
 - Jesus is anticipating the weight of sin and the separation from the Father.
- 14:35 – “if it were possible” – Jesus is asking if it is possible for humankind to be saved without Jesus himself having to be crucified.
- If it were possible for us to be saved any other way, God would never have sent His Son to die on a cross for our sins. (Isa. 53:10)
- 14:36 – “cup” – The cup of God’s wrath. (Ps. 75, Isa. 51, Jer. 25, Ezek. 23, Rev. 14)

- 14:37 – “Simon” – Jesus doesn’t call him Peter here. Jesus is referencing the old man in Peter.
- 14:38 – “temptation” – Prayer is not only petitioning God for what you want, but also asking protection against what you do not want.
- “the flesh is weak” – This is an important lesson for Peter.
- 14:39 – “prayed, and spoke the same words” – Praying for something more than once is not necessarily a lack of faith.
- Jesus will settle the issue of surrendering to God’s will before leaving Gethsemane.
- 14:40 – “their eyes were heavy” – Luke 22:45 adds “that they were sleeping from sorrow.”
- 14:41 – “It is enough!” – We are not told how long Jesus sat there looking over His sleeping disciples.
- 14:43-52 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 26:47-56; Luke 22:47-53; and John 18:1-12.
- 14:44 – “a signal” – Judas is attempting to betray Jesus while maintaining the appearance of a devoted disciple before the crowds.
- “kiss” – A customary greeting of that day.
- 14:45 – “kissed him” – Lit. “kissed him over and over.”
- 14:47 – “cut off his ear” – In John 18, Jesus asks, “Whom do you seek...I am.” Peter in the excitement starts swinging.
- Luke 22:51 tells us that Jesus reattaches the ear of Malchus.
- 14:49 – “with you in the temple” – Jesus’ ministry was public and available to all.
- 14:50 – “all forsook Him” – It is necessary for Christ to die alone for us to know that we do not offer anything of ourselves to help with our own salvation.
- 14:51 – “a certain young man” – Most commentators believe this to be John Mark, the author of this Gospel.
- 14:52 – “linen cloth” – Ordinarily the outer garment was made of wool. The fine linen garment left behind in the hands of the guard indicates that the youth was from a wealthy family.
- 14:53-72 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 26:57-75; Luke 22:54-71; and John 18:13-18,24-27.
- 14:54 – “Peter followed Him at a distance” – There is a progression to Peter’s denial. He goes from promising to never forsake Jesus, to sleeping while he was to be praying, to acting in the flesh by cutting a man’s ear off, to running away, to following from a distance, to warming himself by the enemies’ fire, and then to denying Jesus outright.
- “the high priest” – That is Caiaphas. He was the priest from 18-36AD. He was the son-in-law of Annas, who was the high priest from 3-15AD. Caiaphas was the Roman appointee; Annas was the Jewish high priest.

- 14:55 – “put him to death” – This trial is not to find the truth, they had their minds made up already.
- According to Jewish law in a capital crime, they had to: 1. had to wait 24 hours between verdict and death sentence, 2. not hold the trial at night, and 3. seek the independent and corroborating testimony of two or more witnesses.
- 14:58 – “We heard Him say” – They are misquoting Jesus. (See John 2:19)
- 14:61 – “answered nothing” – Jesus, “when He was reviled, did not revile in return.” (1 Pet. 2:23)
- “the high priest asked Him” – Matthew tells us that Jesus was placed under the official oath. He was required by law to answer.
 - “the Christ” – The Jewish Messiah.
 - “the Son of the Blessed” – The Son of God.
 - The modern Jew is not looking for the Messiah to be the Son of God. They expect the Messiah simply to be a man of special power who will deliver and prosper their people.
- 14:62 – “I am” – Jesus’ response is clear.
- “coming with the clouds of heaven” – A reference to Dan. 7:13-14.
- 14:63 – “his clothes” – Maybe the high priestly garments.
- The OT law required the high priest to tear his clothes at blasphemy.
- 14:65 – “cover his face” – He couldn’t flinch or deflect the blows.
- Jesus was beaten beyond human recognition. (Isa. 52:14)
 - All the while, Jesus is holding all things together. (Col. 1:17)
 - They are pulling the beard from His face. (Isa. 50:6)
- 14:66 – “one of the servant girls” – Peter’s trial begins at the hands of a little girl.
- 14:68 – “rooster crowed” – There was an ordinance for roosters to be removed from the city during the feasts. Somehow this rooster escaped detection until now.
- 14:70 – “those who stood by” – John 18:26 tells us this is led by a relative of Malchus, the man whose ear Peter cut off in Gethsemane.
- “your speech shows it” – Peter spoke with a Galilean accent.
- 14:71 – “curse” – (Greek “anathema”) – Lit. “let me be eternally damned if I know Him.”
- 14:72 – “when he thought about it, he wept” – Luke tells us that as the rooster crows, Jesus looked at (literally “looked into”) Peter.
- Peter would be reconciled to Jesus again later. Our recognition of our weakness is a necessary step. (Luke 24:34)

Chapter 15:

15:1-20 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 26:1-2,11-31; Luke 23:1-6,13-25; and John 18:28-19:16.

15:1 – “in the morning” – Jesus will be crucified at 9am, so this scene must start at sunrise, 6am.

- “Pilate” – The prefectos (commonly called procurator). He usually lived in Caesarea by the sea, but moved next to the Praetorium in Jerusalem during feast times.
- The feast days, especially Passover, were sensitive because they raised the hope for the Messiah and Jewish independence.

15:2 – “King of the Jews” – The religious leaders are using this accusation in a political sense, trying to have Jesus tried for sedition against the Roman Empire. But when Jesus answers, He answers from the truth that He is a spiritual king, rather than a political king. (John 18:36)

- Ironically, Jesus stood accused of doing exactly what He refused to do, that is, take a stand against Rome on behalf of the Jewish nation.

15:3 – “answered nothing” – Here is a good rule of thumb demonstrated by Jesus: If people want information, answer them. But if they want accusation, keep silent.

15:4 – “how many things they testify against you” – Pilate knows the Jews are delivering Jesus to him out of envy (v. 10), and he hates the Jews. Pilate wants nothing to do with this situation. In addition, Pilate’s wife has been having nightmares regarding Jesus.

- Pilate was sent to Judea (from 26-36 AD) as a punishment to begin with, for not doing something right in Italy. On his first day as Judean procurator, he was paraded into Jerusalem with flags with the face of Caesar and caused a riot. His main responsibility in Judea was the keep the peace.

15:7 – “Barabbas” – means “son of the father.” Historians tell us his first name was Jesus.

- Pilate expects the people to choose Jesus over Barabbas.

15:10 – “envy” – The real motivation for their attack on Jesus.

15:11 – “the chief priests stirred up the crowd” – The multitudes’ opinion is being formed by the political/religious powers that be.

- Pilate, trying to hold his political position, will be swayed by the multitudes to act against conscience. And later, he will lose his position anyway.
- “stirred” – (Greek “seismos”) This is a turbulent scene.

15:12 – “what do you want me to do with Him?” – Pilate allows the crowd to dictate.

- This is a leader choosing peace at any price.

15:13 – “Crucify Him” – The crowds days earlier were yelling “Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” Now they are yelling for Pilate to crucify Him. Whether or not this is the same crowd or different segments of the Jewish population, it is noteworthy how quickly the voice of the crowd can change.

15:14 – “cried out all the more” – When you cannot win an argument with reason, yell louder.

- 15:15 – “released Barabbas...delivered Jesus” – And the world has been ruled by murderers and insurrectionists ever since.
- “scourged Him” – The Romans, not limited to 39 lashes, often killed or drove insane by whipping. Jesus’ back, butt, and upper legs would’ve been flayed by the bone and metal tied into the straps of the cat-of-nine-tails, yet He opened not His mouth. (Mark 14:61; Isa. 53:7)
 - Roman scourging was designed to get a confession.
- 15:17 – “crown of thorns” – This is symbolically ironic. The thorns came as a result of the fall (Gen. 3:18), and now the King of the Jews is ready to die for sin.
- 15:19 – “struck Him...spat on Him” – The tenses are “continually struck Him...continually spat on Him.”
- “worshipped Him” – There was a game the Roman soldiers played with political prisoners called Kill the King. They would feign worship before the prisoner before beating him. The soldier who struck the final death blow was the winner of the game.
- 15:20 – “led him out” – They would typically tie the crossbeam to his shoulders and a cord to an ankle. Occasionally they would step on the cord to stumble the prisoner bringing the 30-40lb. crossbeam down on the back of his neck.
- This was along the Via Dolorosa.
 - If the scene ends here and Jesus doesn’t proceed to the cross, this beating (despite being violent and extensive) means nothing. It is the cross that procures redemption that makes this of any value at all. The cup that Jesus drinks isn’t just physical, it’s spiritual as well. The beatings move us, but it is the cross which saves us.
- 15:21-37 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 27:32-50; Luke 23:26-56; and John 19:17-30.
- 15:21 – “compelled” – It was the right of a Roman soldier to require a citizen to bear a burden simply by placing their sword on the shoulder of the citizen,
- “Cyrenian” – It was an 800 mile journey from Cyrene, North Africa to Jerusalem. (Acts 2:10; 6:9)
 - Acts 13:1 – Simon (called Niger) of Cyrene
 - Rom. 16:13 – “Rufus chosen...”
 - “bear His cross” – They would have immediately defiled Simon and rendered him unclean for the Passover. His journey might seem to have been wasted.
- 15:22 – “they brought Him” – At first, they led Jesus out (v. 20). Now they are bringing Jesus with them. Apparently, Jesus has weakened significantly by this point.
- 15:23 – “mingled with myrrh” – A mind-numbing anesthetic. Jesus refused it to experience all our pain.
- 15:24 – “divided His garments” – Ps. 22:18.
- 15:25 – “third hour” – That is 9am.
- “they crucified Him” – There is a cruel brevity to the account.
 - God’s reason for recording these records is to stir belief in us, not simply to arouse pity.
- 15:26 – “His accusation was written” – It was written in three languages: Latin – the language of government, Greek – the language of philosophy, and Hebrew – the language of religion.

- 15:27 – “also crucified two robbers” – Jesus was crucified between two thieves. (Isa. 53:12)
 - Before His death, Jesus will save on the thieves and welcome him to Paradise. (Luke 23:43)
- 15:29 – “blasphemed Him” – They are mocking Him as He is dying for them.
- 15:31 – “He saved others; Himself He cannot save” – If He saves Himself, then He could save no one else. This is His great act of mercy toward us.
- 15:33 – “sixth hour...until the ninth hour” – From noon to 3pm darkness covered “all the earth.” (Luke 23:44)
 - This is not a lunar eclipse. The Passover was a lunar feast and you cannot have a lunar eclipse during a full moon.
 - In those three hours of darkness, Jesus goes through everything necessary to procure our salvation. Jesus actually “became sin for us.” (2 Cor. 5:21)
 - Ps. 22 – “great bulls of Bashan” describe the spiritual struggle going on.
- 15:34 – “cried out” – Lit. “screamed.”
 - “Why...?” – The first time Jesus asks a question He doesn’t know the answer to.
 - He is going through the result of our sin, separation from God.
 - “God separated from God, who can understand it?” (Martin Luther)
- 15:35 – “Elijah” – They think Jesus is calling for Elijah.
- 15:37 – “cried out with a loud voice” – In John 19:30, we are told He says “It is finished.” That comes from the Greek word “tetellestai” which means “paid in full.”
 - “breathed His last” – Jesus said “No one takes it (My life) from me, but I lay it down of Myself.” (John 10:18)
 - The shortest crucifixion on Roman record was 32 hours and the longest was 13 days.
- 15:38-47 – The parallel passages are found in Matt. 27:51-66; Luke 23:45-56; and John 19:31-42.
- 15:38 – “the veil of the temple” – Josephus tells us the veil was 80’ high and 40’ wide and 8-9” thick.
 - The veil tore at 3pm, the time of the evening sacrifice. The priests were there as witnesses. (Acts 6:7)
 - God doesn’t want anyone to stand between us and God. “The enemies of the cross” are veil-menders.
- 15:39 – “Truly this Man was the Son of God” – This centurion must have seen hundreds or thousands of crucifixions, but there was something different about this one.
- 15:40 – “Mary Magdalene” – Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2.
 - “Mary the mother of James the Less” – She was the mother of the disciple, James, the son of Alphaeus. (Matt. 10:2-3)
 - “Salome” – The mother of disciples James and John. (Matt. 27:56)
- 15:41 – “ministered” – (Greek “diakoneo”) Luke tells us “of their substance.”

15:43 – “Joseph of Arimathea” – In the hours of crisis it is often the Peters who have sworn loyalty to Jesus with big gestures and fullness of self-confidence that disappoint, and it is the secret and quiet followers of the Master that do not hesitate to serve Him in love as whatever the cost.

- “prominent council member” – Joseph holds a fairly prestigious position in the Sanhedrin.
- Joseph and Nicodemus are putting all on the line for a dead body.

15:44 – “Pilate marveled” – He is shocked that it only took 6 hours.

- A centurion had pierced Jesus’ side and blood and water came out officially declaring Him to be dead.

15:46 – “wrapped Him in the linen” – They follow the Jewish burial rights with Jesus’ body.

- “hewn out of rock” – A tomb cut out of solid rock by hand would be very expensive. Putting this body in there would defile it for the rest of his family.
- Isaiah prophesied that He’d be numbered with the rich in His death. (Isa. 53:9)

Chapter 16:

The parallel passages are found in Matt. 28:1-10,16-20; Luke 24:1-51; and John 20:1-2,11-29.

16:1 – “Sabbath was past” – Early Sunday morning. This was the day of the Feast of Firstfruits. (Lev. 23:9-14)

- Jesus was crucified on Friday as the Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7). He rested on Saturday as it was the Sabbath. And He rose again on Sunday as the Firstfruits of those who will rise from the dead (1 Cor. 15:20).
- The resurrection is essential to faith in Jesus. (1 Cor. 15:12-19) We are not following a dead Savior, but a risen One who has been serving at the right hand of God the Father for the past 2,000 years of human history. (Rom. 1:4; 1 Thess. 4:14)
- “come and anoint Him” – The spices were meant to cover the smell of the dead and decaying body. They were not expecting to see a living Jesus.

16:3 – “said among themselves” – Lit. “kept saying among themselves.”

16:4 – “the stone had been rolled away” – The stone was rolled away, not for Jesus to get out, but for us to look in.

16:5 – “a young man” – The other Gospels tell us this was an angel.

16:6 – “where they laid Him” – All that remained was the linen garments Joseph and Nicodemus wrapped Him in.

16:7 – “and Peter” – Heaven was concerned about one man who denied Jesus.

- Upon hearing this account, Peter and John run to the tomb and look into what the women had testified. (John 20:1-10)
- “as He said to you” – The doctrine of the resurrection is a cornerstone to all the teachings of Jesus. (Acts 1:22; 4:2,33)

16:9 – “He appeared first to Mary Magdalene” – John gives us more detail on this encounter. (John 20:11-18)

16:12 – “He appeared in another form to two of them” – Luke 24:13-27 gives us the account of Jesus meeting these two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

16:14 – “Later” – Luke tells us that this is a full week later.

- “He rebuked their unbelief” – The disciples get scolded by Jesus.

16:16 – “baptized” – The public declaration that one is following Jesus.

- “believeth not shall be condemned” – The work is in the believing, not the baptizing.

16:17 – “these signs will follow” – The context for these promises pertains to those who are taking the gospel into all the world. These signs support and affirm missionary and evangelistic endeavors.

16:18 – “take up serpents” – Paul is an example of this on the island of Malta. (Acts 28:3-5)

16:19 – “He was received up into heaven” – Acts 1 gives us the details on Christ’s ascension.

16:20 – “confirming the word with signs” – Holding His Word above all else, Jesus will affirm the truth we share with others by any means necessary.

- “The kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” (1 Cor. 4:20)