

A Walk Through Mark

Introduction

The Gospel of Mark gives a vivid, fast-paced look at Jesus on the move—teaching, healing, casting out demons, and calling ordinary people to follow Him. It is traditionally linked to John Mark, a coworker of Peter and Paul, and many believe it reflects Peter’s preaching about Jesus’ life and ministry. Mark likely writes for believers in or around Rome who are facing hardship and even persecution, and he wants them to see that their suffering Lord is also the mighty Son of God. From the opening line—“the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”—Mark shows Jesus stepping into a dark, oppressed world with urgent good news and real authority.

Mark comes early in the story of the church and may be the first written Gospel, shaped while memories were still fresh and the cost of discipleship was already high. The book is very concrete and urgent. The word “immediately” appears again and again, and scenes change quickly. You see Jesus move from synagogue to home, from boat to countryside, always serving, always giving Himself away. The structure is simple but powerful: ministry in Galilee, the journey to Jerusalem, and then the final week leading to the cross and the empty tomb. At the center stands Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Christ—and right beside it, Jesus’ shocking call to take up the cross and follow Him.

Mark also works like a spiritual checkup for disciples. It shows not only discipleship, but failed discipleship, as the Twelve misunderstand, argue, fear, and even run away. Their stumbling exposes our own. Yet Mark’s Jesus keeps moving toward the cross as the Suffering Servant, laying down His life as a ransom for many. This Gospel presses us to ask: Do we only admire Jesus’ power, or will we follow Him on the path of the cross? It does not fight against grace; it shows what grace looks like when the crucified and risen Son of God grips a community’s life. Sinners are welcomed, failures are restored, and a new way of life appears—servanthood, sacrifice, bold faith, and hope in a King who conquered through suffering and now sends His followers into the world with that same costly, urgent gospel.

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Chapter 1

'This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. It began just as the prophet Isaiah had written:

“Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way. He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord ’s coming! Clear the road for him!’ ” ’

Mark 1:1-3

Long ago the prophets recorded the promises of God, about His son Jesus. Here’s where it all begins. One day God would send a messenger, very visible, to prepare the way. This one coming would require straight paths for people to come. This is new, this is exciting. Jesus is coming.

When I think of God’s messenger, I realize I am to do this too - make the way straight! This means, meeting people, listening, then introducing the sent one who was promised. Let's get after this!

'This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. '

Mark 1:4-5

John’s message was that people should turn away from sin, be baptized and be restored to God. John showed up and the people came.

When you show up, do people come and confess their sins? What should we continue doing, or what might you do, so they will hear the invitation of Christ? Are we willing to baptize them for repentance, right now, right here?

'Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”’

Mark 1:6-8

John was a good man, and a little crazy. He wore rough cloth for clothing and ate weird food. He was a sight to see, and people did come out. But their hearts were pierced. Who could this “One after me” be who is mighty, powerful, and fully worthy of God? John declares that he could not touch this guys sandal straps.

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John was bringing people for Jesus. He was beckoning them to walk from the old life, and turn. So we say, Oh, come to Jesus!

'It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Mark 1:9-11

The Father's testimony of the son - "He's my son. I am well pleased with Him!" Jesus - a well pleasing son. Before Jesus had done any ministry. Before the work, the healings, the teaching. Simply, affirmed by the Father.

The Father identifies us with Jesus as well! You are well pleasing. I am well pleasing... Time to say thanks, and worship Him!

Mark 1:13-15

John arrested. Time was fulfilled. The Spirit propelled Jesus into ministry, repent and believe!

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

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

Mark 1:16-20

Jesus saw the diligent fishermen working their trade, and he invited them to follow him. This was a "Come and work for me" offer, not merely "watch for a while." This is the great job opportunity. Would you take it?

Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Mark 1:21-22

He is the beloved Son.
He teaches with Authority!
The baptism declared it.
The desert proved it.

Mark 1:21-28

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Jesus teaches with the authority of God, His Father. The people recognized that. So did the demonic spirits. Do you recognize His authority? If you do, then you will obey his commands

On leaving the synagogue he entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her. He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them.

Mark 1:29-31

Where Jesus goes, he heals. Peter's mother in law was sick. Jesus walked in and without much drama, lifted her up. His authority is over demons, and over ailments. He restores.

What are you carrying that he needs to heal? They pointed out her illness to Jesus. Let's point out the illness that you see...

When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons. The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him.

Mark 1:32-34

He healed so many, drove out demons, but wouldn't let them identify him. Do you ever wonder why? I would suggest that Jesus wanted individuals to discover who he is on their own. Not because of some calamitous demon screaming his name. Likewise, Jesus invites you, come discover him. Find out who he really is. And you will be amazed at all that he does in your life. I am for what he's done in my life.

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Chapter 2

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it became known that he was at home. Many gathered together so that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door, and he preached the word to them. They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Child, your sins are forgiven.”

Now some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves, “Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?”

Jesus immediately knew in his mind what they were thinking to themselves, so he said, “Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, pick up your mat and walk’?”

But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins on earth”— he said to the paralytic, “I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.” He rose, picked up his mat at once, and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this.”

Mark 2:1-12

Jesus forgives and heals, because he is God. So you long for restoration? Come to Jesus

'Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. “Follow me,” Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” '

Mark 2:13-17

When Jesus calls, He's not merely asking you to agree with one of His views. He's not asking you to simply agree that He is the payment for sin.

Jesus asks you to join Him, and He wants to come completely into your life. He's coming to your house, and staying for dinner! You need all of Him! I do too!

'Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, “How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?”

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Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.”¹
Mark 2:18-22

When Jesus is in the room, just enjoy Him, listen to Him, learn from Him. Don't worry, there are enough critics out there that don't know Him, and want you to be like them instead. Disregard them, no matter how much their desire for control overwhelms them!

It's a new thing - like new wine - and I am just going to enjoy and follow what He says!

As he was passing through a field of grain on the sabbath, his disciples began to make a path while picking the heads of grain. At this the Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the sabbath?”

He said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions were hungry? How he went into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest and ate the bread of offering that only the priests could lawfully eat, and shared it with his companions?”

Then he said to them, “The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath. That is why the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath.”
Mark 2:23-28

It's not the rules, it's the Lord. Just follow Him.

Mark 2:23-28

The Sabbath is for Jesus. In fact he's in charge of it, completely over it. It's all about loving him. If you miss Jesus, then the Sabbath is meaningless. If you have Jesus, then you own the Sabbath as well.

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Chapter 3

"Again he entered the synagogue. There was a man there who had a withered hand. They watched him closely to see if he would cure him on the sabbath so that they might accuse him. He said to the man with the withered hand, "Come up here before us."

Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?" But they remained silent.

Looking around at them with anger and grieved at their hardness of heart, he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out and his hand was restored.

The Pharisees went out and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against him to put him to death."

Mark 3:1-6

When your theology leads you to "gotcha" traps, you may be way too far from Jesus. He sees it, and knows what a God loving heart ought to carry. And He goes directly there. Remove my heart of stone, and my self serving rules. Pour in a heart of flesh, compassion, and love for others.

'Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him. '

Mark 3:7-12

Jesus wants you to discover him, yourself! You've come for many reasons - most likely, you need healing, and heard of Him. That's cool - Jesus heals.

Curious, He doesn't allow the demons to announce Him. He silences them. He wants you to discover Him for yourself!

Mark 3:13-19

So he withdrew from the crowds and went up on a mountain and he summoned his followers and he named 12 of them as is apostles. He gave them a job to do, to deliver from demons, and to preach the gospel.

So how about you, are you doing the same? Are you following? Are you healing, and preaching the gospel?

He's given us power over the demons. We're like a walking hospital.

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"Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons." '

Mark 3:20-22

Is he out of his mind?
Is he powered by Satan?
How do you see Jesus?

If he's out of his mind, let's get him home, and some help.
If he's powered by Satan, let's bind him, exorcise him, and if necessary, banish him.

But if he is God, operating with Holy Spirit power and knowledge, then what? We'd have to decide whether we wanted to obey God.

For you, which is it?

'So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables:

"How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house. Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin."

He said this because they were saying, "He has an impure spirit." '

Mark 3:23-30

So Jesus asks you whether he is really here from Satan. He heals - it's known. He casts out demons, it's documented and proven in public.

So - where does his power come from? Your answer decides your future. Think about it. What is your next move?

Mark 3:31-35

The family of Jesus includes anyone who obeys what Jesus teaches!

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Chapter 4

Mark 4:1-2

Jesus used stories. He challenged people to think it through. They learned of faith. They learned of trust. They learned of forgiveness. They learned of love. They learned of hope. They learned of God. Have you begun to use stories yet? Tell them in your own words. Help people to see what Jesus showed, the things He said. Let them meet God just the same way that these crowds learned of God...

Mark 4:3-20

Receive Jesus' words.

Let them grow roots, grow strong in you.

Stop your concerns and cares for the world, let Jesus care for these.

Bear fruit, share your story. Help others follow.

You can do this.

Mark 4:10-13

Here's why we use stories. Jesus is at work in the people around us - some are ready and some are not. We tell stories, and those whom Jesus is working on, they respond. How do you know which ones Jesus is working on? We don't. So let's tell stories, and the ones who Jesus is working on, they will respond.

How do you make disciples? Tell stories.

'He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear." '

Mark 4:21-23

Jesus has come to disclose. He lights up the room, shows what's true, makes known what is right. I want Jesus' light to shine into me, make me what He wants.

'If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.'

"Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them." '

Mark 4:23-25

Consider carefully the words and teaching of Jesus. His teaching is true - and it illuminates you. It shines into your life, and declares whether you have faith, or whether you persist in unbelief. If you

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have faith, you'll grow in even more faith. But if you strive to not believe, you'll flounder more and more. Have faith!

'He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come." '

Mark 4:26-29

God's Kingdom is quietly growing. You don't see it. But seed is planted, and it slowly matures. The only action here is the planting of seeds... TELL JESUS STORIES! Tell what He is doing. Tell what He told (Like this one!) Tell. And then be amazed as people come to Him and grow into a Kingdom!

'Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade." '

Mark 4:30-32

Ah, the Mustard Seed. Love this - the Kingdom is like... a mustard seed. Starts tiny, and (don't be discouraged) grows quietly. But one day, the kingdom will be really really big. Like a tiny seed that becomes a huge plant, so big and strong, to hold even large birds!

This isn't talking about the established traditional church - it's talking about God's Kingdom. And it's true - given the Son of the King is explaining it!

'With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything. ' Mark 4:33-34

Jesus gives us as much as we can understand. Do you want to learn from Him? Read and listen to His stories. Then ask Him about them, and wait for His quiet voice. He still speaks and teaches His disciples.

'Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. '

Mark 4:36

I've read it many times. There were several boats in the storm. I never realized this. Maybe, God the Father was setting up a situation to proclaim Jesus as the Lord over the wind and the seas!

Mark 4:37-41

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'A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!"

Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

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

Mark 4:37-41

Jesus can calm your storm too.

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Chapter 5

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

Mark 5:1-5

How big is the battle you are facing? Perhaps it's so big you cannot stop it, cannot overcome it. Here's a man, overcome by an impure spirit. We say overcome, but the text says nobody could subdue or control him - and the man would cut himself and cry out. Is your demon simply too strong for you?

Take a hard look. Remember, the THIEF comes to steal, to kill, to destroy. If you're there, we have good news. That will be tomorrow. For today, we are all about understanding the real situation. Yes, help will come.

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

Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them."

He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened.

When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. '

Mark 5:6-15

So troubled, torn up, beaten, shredded - this man whom nobody could subdue... he needed help. Dire need for help. And maybe you are in dire need for help too? If so, consider his story - there's great resource for you too!

Jesus can restore you! He can remove the demons that torment, the pain, the lies, the wounds. And you can be in your right mind, healed!

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So come to Him, ask for healing and restoration. He says, YES!

'Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region. ' Mark 5:14-17

When we see the work of God and don't acclaim or honor Him, we make poor choices. Jesus is at work, and I need to value what He does, as good, and sufficient. There may be costs - but isn't the result worth the costs?

Here the pig tenders saw the demon possessed man, now healed and in his right mind. But their pigs had run into the sea and drowned. In today's money, those pigs would have sold for more than \$1M in the market. That's expensive!

The town people wanted Jesus to leave - for them the cost was too much. how about me, am I willing to have my life value spent for the gospel? How about you? See the man, dressed, in his right mind? How much is he worth?

'As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."

So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed. ' Mark 5:18-20

The Decapoleans wanted Jesus to leave - so He did. But He already knew about "you shall be my witnesses" even though He hadn't directed His followers yet. But here it comes. Something happens when we tell our story, and keep Jesus in it. Tell what He has done for you... They may be amazed!

'When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ' Mark 5:21-24

What do you do when the situation is overwhelming, you have no answer, and death is imminent? Come to Jesus, fall at His feet, and tell Him your deepest troubles. Jesus saves, rescues, heals, restores, and He has enough for you too!

'So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.

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When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. ' Mark 5:24-29

Some already know - they've been observing, watching, and living in despair. She had been ceremonially "unclean" for 12 years. She could not be with others, an outcast, a deplorable. Her reputation had been shattered, her self esteem gone. And she watched this man healing people, casting away demons. She would have to go through the crowd just to get near him. And she was "Unclean" and could never go through the crowd. But she was stuck.. Hopeless. Forsaken.

Are you stuck? Hopeless? Forsaken? Ashamed? Do what she did!

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

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

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.

He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." '

Mark 5:30-34

Jesus has the power. And He is eager to heal you! The pain, the illness, the hurt, the shame, the sin, the disease, the angst. Jesus is ready and He will bring it! Be healed! Be restored! You are forgiven!

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

Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly.

He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was.

He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.'

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Mark 5:35-43

He can.

He doesn't always.

He always does in the end.

For this family, restoration was immediate.

Talitha koum - arise!

The little girl immediately got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they [who witnessed the child's resurrection] were overcome with great wonder and utter amazement.

He gave strict orders that no one should know about this, and He told them to give her something to eat.

Mark 5:42-43

Jesus raised her from the dead, and everyone in the room was astonished. But Jesus told them, don't tell anyone.

Interesting - I think he didn't want people trying to persuade, but instead wanted the people around Jairus' home to discover, over time, that the girl had been restored, alive again. Jesus is big on people discovering for themselves, and then living their newly encountered discovery - into a life of faith!

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Chapter 6

'Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.

Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. ' Mark 6:1-6

Jesus went home. And on the Sabbath he began to teach. Many were amazed. But most were offended - at the teaching and miracles. Their hearts were nowhere near ready for the Lord.

Am I amazed, or am I offended by Jesus? How is my heart?

'He was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits. These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them."

They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. '

Mark 6:6-13

When Jesus calls you, He gives you authority and a call. Go help others, tell them about Jesus, heal them, and cast out demons. Faith does not happen in a pew, it happens on our feet, in a car, at a friend's table. OK, now, go!

'King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him." Others said, "He is Elijah." And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago."

But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!"

For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, because

A Walk Through Mark

Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled ; yet he liked to listen to him.

Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, “Ask me for anything you want, and I’ll give it to you.” And he promised her with an oath, “Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom.”

She went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask for?” “The head of John the Baptist,” she answered. At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: “I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”

The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John’s head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. On hearing of this, John’s disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb. '

Mark 6:14-29

Do I act based on what I know true? Or do I act in a manner to preserve my own reputation and public image?

Read this passage again, and imagine King Herod. What did he know about John? How was he responding to John? But then, catering to his own pride and public image, he promised his daughter "anything" and his wife used it to trick Herod. He was in a bind, and he caved.

But he thought it was over and done. And he had his reputation still. And then Jesus came along, and Herod was cut to his core. Is this John?

And now there's this Jesus doing miracles and teaching about the Father. Herod realized what he had done, and didn't know how to deal with Jesus.

What will you do, when your plans and self-fulfilling desires get discovered, and become obvious? Worse, the Holy Spirit provokes you, and you know what you did...

Come to Jesus. Repent and believe the proclamation. Good News, God's Son, the King, is here!

'The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. '

Mark 6:30-32

A Walk Through Mark

They were so excited about all the Lord had done through them! They had no idea what might happen, but doing what Jesus had said resulted in fruit!

Yet Jesus knew they needed rest too , so He took them to a solitary place. We need quiet time with Jesus too. Make the time. He will meet you there!

'So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. '

Mark 6:32-34

Jesus gets it. He understands, and has compassion. He knows me, and He knows you! He gets us, and has the knowledge to teach us how to live!

'By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages ! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" '

Mark 6:35-37

Sometimes Jesus puts us into a no-win situation. He enjoys creating a scenario where we will learn something new about Him, and discover that He has no No-Win situations. He can overcome every single one...

So look at the crisis you are facing. Where is Jesus in it? Seek Him, stay with Him, trust Him, and enjoy Him!

' "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see."

When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties.

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all.

They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand. '

A Walk Through Mark

Mark 6:38-44

What do you bring to the table? Talents? Vocations? Gifts? Assets? These are what Jesus will use. He made you unique, special, and gifted. And what you have, coupled with His amazing power - that is all you need! So - are you ready to follow Him in His great adventure?

'Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. '

Mark 6:45-46

Jesus sent the disciples away. Then He turned to the crowd and dismissed them. After they had left, He went up the mountainside to pray. We must do the same. Send our followers on ahead. Then dismiss the crowd who came for ministry. Then go meet with the Father up the mountainside.

Press into the Father, quietly, alone, and take your time! Speak to Him. Then listen. Offer Him praise, and acclamation for who He is and all He does. Let Him speak to you. restore your soul after the hard work! Re-center on Him, His praise and worship, just like He wants from every people and nation in the world. Ask Him what He wants to lead you toward, as you join in His work to the nations!

'Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them.

Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened. '

Mark 6:47-52

In the situation, they struggled, straining against the wind. And a bit before dawn, Jesus walks out on the lake, and as he was walking by, they saw him and were terrified. Not only were they facing harsh wind, there was a ghost! And of course they were terrified.

Then Jesus says, "Don't be terrified, it's me!" and climbs in the boat. And then the wind dies down, the disciples were amazed. And Mark gives us a clue - they had not understood about the loaves, their hearts were hardened.

Maybe our hearts begin hard, and Jesus works in our lives to slowly soften them. One day we will learn, He can always provide. And He can calm the storms too!

A Walk Through Mark

'When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.'

Mark 6:53-56

We are healed. All are healed. When they saw Him, they recognized Him. And they ran through the region finding all who were sick, and brought them to Jesus.

Not only is He the sin-bearer for us, He is the healer. Turns out, by His stripes we are healed. Come to Jesus. Run, don't walk, because He heals. It's one of His amazing acts in us!

A Walk Through Mark

Chapter 7

'The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: “ ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.’ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.” ’

Mark 7:1-8

Oh heart of mine, draw deeply to God. Seek Him, long for Him, pursue Him, stop everything else and make Him your passion!

'And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!

For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’

But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother.

Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.” ’

Mark 7:9-13

Oh come sit and learn of the Father. Jesus will teach you all about Him. You don't need catch-all rules, or books of exceptions. He wants a relationship with you where you listen, learn, ponder, ask, and He clarifies. These He does...

'Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.”

A Walk Through Mark

After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them?

For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)

He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person.” ’

Mark 7:14-23

Guard what's inside, what goes on in your heart. These are what defile me, this is where character and morality live... And, you can eat anything too...

'Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

“First let the children eat all they want,” he told her, “for it is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

“Lord,” she replied, “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”

Then he told her, “For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.” She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone. ’

Mark 7:24-30

Jesus may test you - are you in it only for the goodies? He adored this woman and her daughter. Still He pushed her a bit - and she showed her faith and trust in Him. She already knew that Jesus was for all nations, not just the Jews... He is for you too!

'Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.

After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man’s ears. Then he spit and touched the man’s tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, “Ephphatha!” (which means “Be opened!”).

A Walk Through Mark

At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly. Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it.

People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Mark 7:31-37

Back to Decapolis. The same region where they asked Him to leave because of the pigs. Now they brought the sick to Jesus, and begged Him to heal. God must have done a work with the healed demoniac, the Gerasene!

A Walk Through Mark

Chapter 8

'During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance."

His disciples answered, "But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?" "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Seven," they replied.

He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people, and they did so.

They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. About four thousand were present. After he had sent them away, he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha. '

Mark 8:1-10

Jesus has enough. What are you facing? Jesus is not overwhelmed... Go ahead and sit down. Let Him feed you! He has enough.

'The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it." Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side. '

Mark 8:11-13

Jesus is not a conjurer, nor a magician. Simply, He sees a need, and asks His father to supply it. We can do this as well - not because of us, but because of who Jesus is. We are adopted as beloved brothers and sisters... Ask Dad!

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

They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread."

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

A Walk Through Mark

“Twelve,” they replied. “And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?”

They answered, “Seven.”

He said to them, “Do you still not understand?”

Mark 8:14-21 NIV

Don't let doubt become your baseline. Such infects everything and undermines your rightful trust in our Lord.

'They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, “Do you see anything?” He looked up and said, “I see people; they look like trees walking around.”

Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Jesus sent him home, saying, “Don't even go into the village.” '

Mark 8:22-26

Sometimes Jesus does His work outside the village. He heals. Sometimes it takes a little more time, once more with Jesus. And then he tells the man not to tell anyone, but to go home. Soon, soon, the neighbors will notice, and then wonder, and be amazed. And they will too discover Jesus.

You, hang in there! Ask Jesus to heal the broken eyes. Ask Him what to do next. He has you!

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

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

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.” Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. '

Mark 8:27-30

Only after hanging around Jesus and seeing so many things - only after that did Jesus ask the question. And it's a crucial question, in fact it's THE QUESTION. Because once it's answered you must live accordingly.

So - Who is Jesus to you?

A Walk Through Mark

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

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

Mark 8:31-33

Jesus is not deriding Peter, or accusing him. Jesus is commanding Satan, our invisible adversary, to stop. Satan and demons obey authority. Jesus has authority. Also, Ephesians 1:3, we have authority. And we must exercise such authority whenever Satan reveals himself.

In this case, he was using Peter to try to circumvent the Father's plan. (See Isaiah 53, and Isaiah 61 - the plan was always there.) So recognize when the thief is coming to steal, kill and destroy. And cast him out, force him to stop. Jesus shows us how.

'Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.'"

Mark 8:34-38

What is the call? Simply this: lose your own life plan, and instead follow Jesus. Let His Gospel be your purpose. He will steer you, lead you, redirect you, and supply for you - but the key is simply living for Him and sharing His good news. What news? That our savior has come, our sins are carried away, we have new life, and He has great things ahead for each of us....

Are you willing to lose your own life, in exchange for the life and good news He brings?

A Walk Through Mark

Chapter 9

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

Mark 9:1

Perplexed? Confused? Scared?
Here's a pillar to hang your hope on:
Jesus knows what's next.
He has you covered.

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

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

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

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

Mark 9:2-8

My world is not as it appears. Jesus humbled himself and became man. But the Father decided to show His power and glory, in the midst of this frightening journey to the cross. Peter James and John needed a glimpse, because they were headed to tough times. And suddenly the Father transfigured Jesus with dazzling, sparkling brilliant white - better than anyone with Clorox could do. Peter panicked and decided construction was his calling - because he was lost for words. The Father graciously redirected Peter. "This is my son. Beloved. (Loved dearly). I want you to listen to Him, everything He tells you." The message is the same to us - Father loves His Son, and His Son has words for us too. Listen. And follow. Obey.

Sometimes the Lord gives a glimpse of something ahead. Listen to His voice. Ponder those quiet thoughts. Take them back to Him, and dwell there. He is good for the together time. And later when you find yourself before an amazing scene, you'll remember what He said earlier!

'As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant. '

Mark 9:9-10

A Walk Through Mark

Thinking, processing... Jesus told them plainly, but they had to process on it. They weren't sure what this meant. Oh there was so much to process on. Healings. Water. Storms. Loaves and fishes. Demons. Death.

Jesus could have drawn a line in the sand anywhere, and demanded they get onboard.

But He didn't.

He wants you to work it all the way through. Then do what you will.

Me? I am all in, making disciples.

'As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

And they asked him, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him." '

Mark 9:9-13

Jesus journeyed with his disciples. They were slowly figuring it out. And they were wrestling between what they had been taught, and what they were experiencing. And they still hadn't figured out that these are the days of Messiah, that Isaiah 53 was happening right there with them! When we figure out that the Creator of the universe has made you and I His adopted beloved kids, how will we then live? Will we change? Become excited? Talk to our neighbor?

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

"What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.

A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid.

I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not." '

Mark 9:14-18

They drove out demons before - what's happening here? They're arguing with people, not declaring healing and the kingdom.

A Walk Through Mark

Do we get caught up arguing with those to whom Jesus is sending us? Let's not do that... Instead, pray, fast, declare healing, command authority, and see the Spirit work...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead."

But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. '

Mark 9:19-27

Ever since the garden, there's been a promise that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the snake. To Abram, the promise was that all the nations would be blessed. To David, one day his descendent would rule. To Israel, Isaiah promised a messiah who would carry sin, death, sickness, pain and despair, and those who had it would find restoration, recovery, peace, righteousness, healing and justice. But also to us! We grab onto the promise for the nations!

So we find disciples lacking faith, we find a soldier who has carried his afflicted son so long - they all had forgotten the truth of Messiah. I got a call today from the Himalayas, from a couple exhausted, their son sick with a fungus, and then all with Omicron. They are tired. Where's Jesus?

He's there. He's ready. So we stand up, rebuke the spirit of affliction and sickness. We proclaim our faith and trust in Jesus and speak restoration and healing for all... Now to today's text... What do you see?

Friends, it's time to begin doing what Jesus says, not just waiting for Him to do it. Stand on His authority, as God's beloved, and command the spirits. Heal the afflicted. The Kingdom is here now.

A Walk Through Mark

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

After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?" He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer. "'

Mark 9:26-29

Why couldn't we?

Jesus told them that they could have. He tells us the same.

But there's a risk, an investment. We can't shrink back, we must step forward. We must stand on the authority of God's own children (Eph 1:3). We must invest in prayer. Fasting too (some manuscripts.)

You are a sent one. Change the world! So spend the time! Then take on all comers!

'They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples.

He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise."

But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it. '

Mark 9:30-32

Part of the journey is ministry, from place to place - seeing God's Kingdom in action. But another part of the journey is private, where Jesus is teaching us. Don't rush out to ministry, but instead sit and listen. Ponder and consider. And maybe you won't understand. But you can ask Him - He won't bite, but He will teach.

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

Mark 9:33-34

Come clean. Jesus goes completely to the bottom. He demands transparency. Stop pretending. Tell Him what trips you up. He alone can bring you through it.

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

A Walk Through Mark

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

Mark 9:33-35

Power. Significance. Authority. Leadership. We like these. We want these.

Jesus doesn't push these. He is about caring. Serving. Providing. Once we figure out the Lord has it handled, we can relax. We can help. We can care. We can get busy. We can be people of His Kingdom, and let Him be king!

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

Mark 9:36-37

Jesus turns status and prestige on its head, and shows His Father's heart. Do you really want to have a place of prominence? Pour yourself into little ones, for their benefit!

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

“Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us.

Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward. ’

Mark 9:38-41

There is power in the name of Jesus. Someone else is driving out demons in the name of Jesus. Don't stop them, thinking that they weren't with us, when we were with Jesus.

This is a person who has found the power that Jesus gives. He values Jesus' Kingdom. And he is bringing it! Look here, there's even reward for those who give a cup of water in Jesus' name!

Learn to live through the power of Jesus, use His name in what you do!

' “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. ’

Mark 9:42

A Walk Through Mark

Don't be in the rulemaking business. Instead be in the welcoming business. Jesus' Kingdom is about welcoming in the willing, not condemning the faulty. Messiah takes care of the faults, and Holy Spirit purifies those who follow. So be in the welcoming business; for Jesus!

'If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.

And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.

And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where “ ‘the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched.’ ”

Mark 9:43-48

Regularly, it's good to be circumspect. Is something you are doing, is it causing you to stumble? Cut that out of your life! Is there a place you are going that is tripping you up? Lose that! Are your eyes causing you to stumble? Time to cut that out too. Jesus wants all of us for Him, so let's not be double minded. Do all to enter His Kingdom!

' Everyone will be salted with fire. '
Mark 9:49

Hard times will come. Bank on it. Jesus underscores why devotion to the Lord, and why removing the stumbling stuff, is so important. You have to prepare for the hard times!

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

Mark 9:50

It's fantastic that you have a great desire to be like Jesus and walk with Him! You are "salty", something good that helps everyone around you to be thirsty and want the salt too. Your Jesus will rub off on others, so make disciples.

But that bit about who is greatest among you, you were just speaking about? So Jesus brought a child in front of you, as an example. And here He is again, saying that we gotta get along and not be contending with each other. Make it so!

A Walk Through Mark

Chapter 10

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

Mark 10:1-2

Jesus went from Capernaum south to Judea, and then across the Jordan. The crowds came to Him, and as was His custom, He taught them. They came for teaching. But the Pharisees came for testing. What are you coming to Jesus for?

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

"What did Moses command you?" he replied.

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

"It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'

'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." '

Mark 10:2-9

Moses gave in. God's plan was that men and women would marry, and stay together. Hardness of hearts drove them apart. Still does.

I ache for those with broken marriages. It's hard and sad. Pray for those who suffered through this. Pray for healing. Pray for softened hearts.

Friends, hear the cry of Jesus, that we be soft-hearted, willingly following, carefully loving and serving.

You can't fix everything. Fix what you can.

"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'

'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

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

Mark 10:6-12

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God's plan is so clear, as best you can, love your spouse. Serve him or her, let the Lord knit the two of you into one, and stay together! These guys were used to the normal crowd, not really taking in the whole counsel of God. Divorce was just one more thing. Oh let Jesus clarify for you - and do what He says!

'People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them. '

Mark 10:13-16

Jesus had much to teach these men, about real belief, about listening, about trust and dependence on Him.

So what was it about the children? They loved Jesus' gentleness, His direct and simple welcome to knowing God. They liked His warmth, His embrace. They listened and believed, every word.

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

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

"Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

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

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

Mark 10:17-22

Eternal Life is not awarded by following certain rules. You only get it one way - by following Jesus. Look here, Jesus listened to the man, and Jesus loved him. Jesus didn't condemn, but was likely very sad when the guy turned and went away sad.

Are your riches causing problems for you? Are they holding you back from following Jesus?

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

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

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

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

Mark 10:23-27

I can't get there. Not on my own. Nobody can get there. Not on our own. It's hard, so very hard. There's only one path left: reach out to God, ask Him to save you.

There's no prescribed rules, no liturgy, no daily practice, no specific action - none of that gets us anywhere.

Only with God is it possible. Think about the rich man who walked away sad. What was missing? Turn and ask God to save you - that's all.

"The disciples were amazed at his words.

But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

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

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

Mark 10:24-27

Turn to Jesus. Stop calculating. HE ALONE gets us in. NOTHING we do EARNs ANYTHING.

It's so hard, when we believe we contribute ANYTHING. We do NOT.

Jesus is everything. And because of Him, our Father welcomes you! He welcomes me too.

And there is another invitation ready! TELL YOUR FRIENDS, hey can come too!

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

“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in

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this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.” ’

Mark 10:28-31

Peter did. Andrew did. James and John did. Judas did. Matthew did. All the disciples did. How about you? Have you left everything to follow Jesus? Will you? What is the Lord asking you to leave?

He is worth it. Put your YES on the table, and then tell Jesus, "Here's my yes. Ask me anything. You already have my yes."

OK, ready? "GO!"

'They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. '

Mark 10:32

Again. Jesus told them again, the things that were going to happen. And so they are on their way to Jerusalem.

They didn't get it. They missed the cues. He didn't condemn them for it, He was simply laying a foundation. One day soon their eyes would open and they would be amazed.

He's at work in your life too, same way. And He will tell you what He is doing. But stay with Him, listen, talk less. You will be amazed at what He is doing!

“We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.” ’

Mark 10:33-34

The whole world was in on it. The Chief Priests and Teachers of the law condemn Him. The gentiles will mock Him and spit on Him, and kill Him. All peoples were the problem. All peoples tried to do away with Him. And for all peoples, He submitted.

But on the third day he flipped the tables - for All Peoples!

Are you in with Him? Do it today, join up!

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

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

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

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

"We can," they answered.

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

When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." ' "

Mark 10:35-45

You weren't even listening. He tried to tell you again of his upcoming betrayal, torture, murder, and resurrection. But you missed it.

You are asking for a seat at the table, a prominent seat. And He asks you, can you bear what I am going to bear?

Yah, they say. And he says, NOT! They didn't even hear it. So he lays it out some more, and then gives them a principle:

Don't come to be served. Come to serve. Serve everyone. Even Jesus does this. Listen. Trust. Serve.

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

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

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you."

Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. "What do you want me to do for you?"

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

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

Mark 10:46-52

The disciples and followers were intent on their journey. They were focused, all-in. Except it was their journey, not Jesus', and they had no time for interruptions. Do you make time?

Jesus has time for you.

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Chapter 11

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

They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go.

When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields.

Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

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

Mark 11:1-11

Jesus said it, and they followed. Everything was just as He said. For me, same thing. Jesus says it, and I follow.

He really has this thing in hand! Which thing? The big thing in front of you! Me? An election. A business. Ministry. Family. What He says, He fulfills. Take courage and follow!

Proclamation: Jerusalem, Here is your King!

And you would not believe their response - watch the next four days!

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

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple

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courts. And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’” ’

Mark 11:11-17

The fig tree was full of leaves - looking healthy, but it had no fruit. Not a single fruit - this was a fake, only going through the motions.

The temple was full of people - looking healthy, but it had no fruit. Not a heart toward the Lord - this was fake religion, turning the place into a business.

Jesus condemns both. So how about you - are you going through the motions? Or are you drawing to Jesus, hands open, heart humbled, and asking Him to make you what He desires?

If that's you, begin today, now! Turn over those tables and toss out the bad!

‘When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city. In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them.

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” ’

Mark 11:19-25

The fig tree had withered, overnight! Jesus brings out the truth, with results, overnight.

Likewise, the temple was changed overnight. Nobody caught it. But Messiah had come, was to be murdered, for my sin and yours, and for the sins of everyone in the place.

Overnight, God has taken back His Kingdom, and is now blasting it out for all people of all nations. The Fig Tree had withered - overnight.

Whatever we ask - it will be done - because that is how God rolls!

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

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

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

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

Mark 11:27-33

Don't trick Jesus. Don't fool Jesus. Don't pretend with Jesus.

Stop. Repent. Turn and follow Jesus.

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Chapter 12

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

"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.' "But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. Haven't you read this passage of Scripture: " 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes' ?" ' "

Mark 12:1-11

The man thought they were working together.

Those tenants were never in it at all.

Work with people, love them and trust them, until you learn you cannot love them and trust them.
Love the Son!

But they are going to kill Him!

"Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away. Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words.

They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?"

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?" he asked. "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it."

They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

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Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him. '

Mark 12:12-17

Living in deceit is hard. Give it up. If you have not yet turned fully to Christ, get over yourself and make the change. He is ready. Are you?

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

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They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied.

Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him. '

Mark 12:13-17

Why are you trying to trap me?

There are two kinds of people, those who come to Jesus to learn, follow and grow; and those who come to trick and trap Jesus.

You should come to learn, follow and grow. That's all.

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

Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

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Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!’

Mark 12:18-27

The problem with trying to trick Jesus has two aspects: not knowing the scriptures, and not knowing the power of God. These poor Sadducees thought their well-crafted argument would leave Jesus speechless. Actually they found themselves lacking.

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

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

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

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

Mark 12:28-34

Love God with all your heart, and all your understanding! Jesus expects us to obey what we now, grasp and understand. No doctorate in theology is required. Still, as you grow, you'll learn more, and need to love Him more as well - build on that understanding, and Love God with all of it!

‘While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, “Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: “The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.” ’

David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?”

The large crowd listened to him with delight. ’

Mark 12:35-37

Jesus taunted his critics. The crowds loved it - because they could see their messiah.

And in his teaching he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of

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honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

Mark 12:38-40

Beware.

Don't join in this. Don't do this.

No faking it, but with humility, care, love, serve others.

'Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

Mark 12:41-44

Jesus sat and watched... The widow was amazing. Was it good? Bad? He doesn't say. But she gave a huge portion. May the Lord do a Malachi on her - overflow her with His bounty!

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Chapter 13

'As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"

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

Mark 13:1-2

He's not into architecture or tradition. There's something more important going on, and the kids have no idea... This temple will be utterly destroyed. But nobody could imagine this.

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

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

"You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. '

Mark 13:3-10

When? The gospel must be first preached among all nations.

'Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. '

Mark 13:11

Holy Spirit has your back. He holds the words you need. He manages the daily calendar. Don't fear the times. Instead, recognize He is at work, and is using you!

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

Mark 13:12-13

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Tough times are coming. You didn't make this, nor did I. Satan did, in his role to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

Still, prepare for it, be ready, and get your big boy pants on. We must stand against it. In the end, everything matters. Love God. Love your family. Love your neighbor.

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

Mark 13:12-13

In the end, everything matters.

Love God.

Love your family.

Love your neighbor.

' "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out. Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak.

How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that this will not take place in winter, because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again. '

Mark 13:14-19

When the guy stands in the rebuilt temple, and draws worship to himself - it's the end. Flee. Run. Don't look back.

Yes we don't know when. But there's enough of the what - we will all see it, and it will be clear.

Jesus - I am ready today. Or decades from now. But today I am already listening, following, obeying.

' "If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. ' Mark 13:20

In the height of the Final Days, God's mercy and grace continue to be poured out. He is not a punisher of people, He is a God of Justice. His end game for Satan is happening, and will result in a lake of fire. That's not what He wants for you. He's already removed your sin and placed it on Messiah. He's already carried your shame, and established adoption as beloved - for you, for me. Embrace the Isaiah 53 promise, the Isaiah 61 guarantee! In the end, he doesn't let it go to the end! Grace and love!

'At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time. '

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Mark 13:21-23

There's a lot we don't know. There's times when we don't sense God's voice, see His hand, or know His counsel. Hang tough, He remains the Lord. He knows what He is doing. Keep following what He has said, and you'll be in exactly the right place. When others seem to have it, and their responses are all over the board, trust Him. Don't go running. He still knows you, you do hear His voice, and you are following!

' "But in those days, following that distress, " 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'

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

Mark 13:24-27

Jesus calls it short, so that He can bring people home. Hell is made for Satan and his rebellious demonic horde. It's not meant for you. The answer is Jesus, follow Him now!

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

Mark 13:28-31

It's all going to happen in a rush - and the people who love God will recognize it. Still unclear, even today, though we have bookstores filled with explanations of the truth. Some of the books have been pulled down because the explanation is out of date. Don't worry about that, instead, draw near to God, speak to your culture, preach repentance, and be faithful!

"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.

It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

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

Mark 13:32-37

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This is not about timing His return - this is about being His and serving Him. Whether tonight, 3 years from now, or in 150 years - our duty is loving others and serving God. Are you in?

A Walk Through Mark

Chapter 14

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

Mark 14:3

Have you done something way over the top for Jesus? Opened the stores, dug out your gold, and simply blessed and honored Him. He is a king, He is the king of all kings, he is above every one. Have you yet? Maybe it's time!

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

Mark 14:4-5

When you have an agenda, you hurt people, harm their souls and steal their joy.
Don't do that.

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

Mark 14:6-9

Do beautiful things for Jesus. Be personal with Him. Pour out your all on Him, for Him, and serve with Him. These shall never be forgotten!

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

Mark 14:10-11

Darkness always beckons. The call - "come here for an easy win. You can do better. You can change this simply."

Nothing changes simply. When you hear the call of the enemy, turn back to Jesus instead!

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

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

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

Mark 14:12-16

I may not recognize it, but Jesus has the details in hand. He knows what's coming, what's ahead, and how to navigate it. The disciples were amazed. We should not be amazed. Trust, follow, and enjoy!

'When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. '

Mark 14:17

Sometimes it's the little things. Here, in a verse I would normally walk right on by, we learn something... Jesus gave roles to people, and then He let them go do it. He didn't micro-manage, He didn't hover. Instead, He sent them to prepare the Passover meal - and they did it. Best Leader Ever! He arrived to enjoy what they had done. Very simple!

Do the same - trust your people!

'While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.”

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

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

Mark 14:18-21

Woe to the one who betrays the Son of God! Take caution, friend, to not sell Jesus out. Don't do it, no matter how convenient it seems. We are fickle people.

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

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them.

“Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” '

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Mark 14:22-25

Jesus shared bread and wine - announcing it was His body and His blood. These are the new covenant, an absolute promise and agreement by God toward us. And in it, we are washed, cleansed, made new, made acceptable, and adopted by God into His family!

Take the bread. Take the cup. Take the relationship.
Begin afresh with God today!

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

Mark 14:26

I do this in church. But not often around the table. Maybe rarely around the table. It's not a command. It's not a law. It is something Jesus did Maybe it's something I should do as well.

' "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: " 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not."

"Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times." But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same. '

Mark 14:27-31

I'm pretty sure I can do this.

The Lord assures me - I cannot. My strength is weak. I shouldn't bank on it. Peter and the others - they show the way...

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

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

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

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

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

Mark 14:32-42

Deep travail. What could cause the Son of God such deep anxiety? Soon was to be the first time, in eternity, where His fellowship with the Father would be broken. He will carry the sins of every man, woman and child, for all time. And the Father will let Him. This is the plan. But it is heavy. So heavy. And so necessary. Otherwise I would have been lost. And you too. They went forward, and bore what we could not bear.

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

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

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

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

Then everyone deserted him and fled. A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment behind. ’

Mark 14:43-52

Then Judas appeared.
And a mob with clubs and swords.
Then a kiss - a sign.
Then a panic, and an ear.
Then everyone fled.

How do you stand for the King of Kings?
For the Savior? For our sin-bearer?
Do you flee? Yeah, I probably would have too.
Satan must have thought he had won.

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

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

Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.'"

Yet even then their testimony did not agree. '

Mark 14:53-59

Satan and his crowd were out to get Jesus. They had no evidence, it was a mockery. Yet they persist. They do it to you and me as well - because they hate the good work the Lord is doing in and through us. Don't be surprised. Our Father has it handled!

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

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

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

They all condemned him as worthy of death. '

Mark 14:60-64

They had him! They finally got him to say he was God - a blasphemy! This was the success they had hoped to achieve. Now they could get rid of him!

Unless it was true. They played into the Father's Plan to bring messiah and save the world! But they cannot yet see the end game, Father's strategy.

"You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

They all condemned him as worthy of death.

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Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!"

And the guards took him and beat him. '

Mark 14:64-65

They fell into the Isaiah 53:3 mode - seeing Jesus as despised, rejected and held him as value-less. They thought he was there because of his failures and sins, and they walked away.

We do this too, when we do not recognize it's my sin, my failures, my faults and shame - THAT is what He was carrying. When I try to make things better myself, I am also not esteeming Jesus. He came to carry this pain, hurt, angst, fear, sickness - he was doing it instead of me.

Esteem Him, commend Him, recognize Him as savior. Stop trying to do it on your own!

'While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. "You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said. But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about," he said, and went out into the entryway.

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

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about."

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

Mark 14:66-72

God knows how to get our attention, how to bring us back to Him. He's a master of it, and wastes no time. Return to Jesus, no matter how far you have wandered!

A Walk Through Mark

Chapter 15

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

Mark 15:1

Darkness, evil, unbelieving, religious teachers, lawyers, all who were standing against Jesus - they were early making their plans. Don't mistake politeness or liturgy for honor and piety. Satan knows the whole battle. Our Father knows even more. Still, this is formidable.

Start your day early, on your knees. Meet with the Father first.

"Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate. "You have said so," Jesus replied. The chief priests accused him of many things. So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of." But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed. '

Mark 15:2-5

So many accusations. Pilate was amazed, as Jesus made no defense.

For three years, Jesus had served, publicly, healing, teaching, loving, caring. Everybody knew it.

But He isn't up for the shenanigans. And the Father wins this one. My hope is secure, because of Him, even because of this.

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

"Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him.

But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

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

"Crucify him!" they shouted. '

Mark 15:6-13

Beware your Chief Priests.

Watch the primary advocates!

If they are claiming things a little bit off, you'll know it.

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Watch the snakes, and be prepared to stand up.

“What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?” Pilate asked them.

“Crucify him!” they shouted.

“Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!” Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. '

Mark 15:12-15

The heinous things we do to stay popular. Pilate released a criminal and turned Jesus over to be crucified. That's torture.

That's my sin in action!

'The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!”

Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. '

Mark 15:16-20

Satan loves to attack righteousness. He is thrilled to bring upheaval. He was spiking the football here, celebrating that finally he is destroying God's son, and ending God's plan of redemption.

Don't be surprised when you are hit, hurt, reviled, and attacked. Allegiance with Jesus means trouble is coming.

We win.

'A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). '

Mark 15:21-22

These soldiers were no better than the religious leaders. They were cruel and harsh, and Simon got some of it too. A father, maybe a follower of Jesus, but he had to carry the cross. Satan and his followers are heinous.

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'Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. '

Mark 15:23

One act of mercy during a crucifixion is the offer of wine, to dull the pain. But you are worth too much. Jesus refused it - because he determined to feel every twinge, sear, agony. His pursuit was to carry all of your sin. Mine too. To bear all the shame. All the guilt. All the pain. As Messiah, He came to carry it all in my place and yours. He knew that a perfect life can redeem another - and so He gave His for ours. The great exchange.

No, He's not taking your wine - He is embracing redemption for us!

'And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. '

Mark 15:24

As simple as that, they put the Son of Man to death. Callous. Torture. Extreme spite.

THIS is how we must regard our sin problem - we hate it. We despise it. We must destroy it. But we can't. We are simply powerless.

The Father and Son set this as His goal - to carry all of it for us. (refer to Isaiah 53 for the details)

'It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: the king of the jews . '

Mark 15:25-26

The when and the why. They nailed him to the torture tree at 9am. He was to struggle for hours - that's how crucifixion works. Abject torture.

They killed him because he was King of the Jews. At this point their hate was so fired up, they just put everything into it. Satan working, thinking that finally he has done away with the Son of God. Satan knew who Jesus was, all along.

But it was my sin that placed Him there. Yours as well.

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

When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink.

"Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

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With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. '

Mark 15:33-37

Jesus went the distance.
He went all the way.
He carried my sin.
Yours too.

'The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

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

Mark 15:38-41

Witnesses watched, saw. Later they testified about this.
Jesus could not do these things, these are the works of the Spirit, active, testifying of Jesus!

'It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph.

So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.'

Mark 15:42-47

This is how it finished - at least Part 1.

We live and prove all that is in Part 2.

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Chapter 16

'When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Mark 16:1-8

Sad, but with a heart for Jesus, they went to the tomb to honor Him and prepare his body for long term emballment. But they found an empty tomb, no body, and a messenger waiting for them.

He knew whom they were seeking and was waiting with amazing news. Jesus has risen from the dead. They could look and see the body was not there. And they had already been surprised the stone had been moved.

The messenger told them to go and tell the disciples. This message is for them. They will see Jesus in Galilee.

This message is for you and I too. Jesus is risen. We will see Him as well!

' When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.

Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new

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tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.'

Mark 16:9-20

Jesus has risen. And He has appeared to many. He challenged the disciples to get busy as well. There's work to be done, bringing the great news of salvation to people from all over the world.

Do you have your running shoes on? This message is for you and I too. What are we doing to bring the Great News of Jesus to the world?