

The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness Mark 1:1-8

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. John's baptism was not Christian baptism.
2. The baptism with the Holy Spirit took place at Pentecost.

Practical Application

1. We can use Mark 1:3 to refute the cults.
2. We need to be a voice in the wilderness.

Questions

1. What was Mark's relationship to Peter? to Paul? to Barnabas?
2. Why was Paul unhappy with Mark? Did this situation change? What is the spiritual lesson here?
3. There are 18 miracles performed by our Lord, but only 4 parables recorded in Mark? Why?
4. Describe the different baptisms:
 - a) John's baptism
 - b) Christian baptism
 - c) Old Testament baptism
 - d) Holy Spirit baptism
5. What do the cults have in common? Which verse in this passage can be used to refute the cults?
6. Describe John's background and demeanor. What is the spiritual lesson here?

The Baptism and Temptation of Christ
Mark 1:9-13

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord Jesus did not need to be baptized by John the Baptist.
2. It is not a sin to be tempted.

Practical Application

1. Pleasing God should be our top priority.
2. Let's not forget about God's holy angels.

Questions

1. Why did the Lord Jesus submit to the baptism of John?
2. Is it a sin to be tempted? Is it a sin to yield to temptation?
3. Why was Jesus driven into the wilderness?
4. How can Jesus, being without sin, understand our temptations?
5. Who ministered to Jesus when he was in the wilderness?
6. Do angels minister to us today? If so, how?
7. Is it OK to worship angels?

Answers

1. Even John was surprised (Matthew 3:13-15). It was fitting to fulfill God's will; to show approval of John's baptism; to set an example; for Jesus to identify Himself with those who were denouncing religious hypocrisy; for those who were preparing themselves for the coming of the Messiah.
2. No. Yes. The sin is not in the temptation, but in the yielding.
3. To be tempted of the devil, and to show that He would not yield.
4. Our High Priest, Jesus can sympathize, for He was tempted as we are (Hebrews 4:15).
5. Angels
6. Yes, they minister to believers (Hebrews 1:14). By protecting us.
7. No. We are not to worship or try to contact angels or have an unbiblical interest in them. But we are not to forget that they minister to us, and we should thank God for them.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are there recurring temptations in your life? If so, and if you yield to them, do you try to justify or minimize your actions?

2. Read the Matthew account of Jesus' temptation (4:1-11). How did Jesus deal with the temptations of the devil? Look at each temptation separately, and note how Jesus dealt with each one. Look up the Scripture references in the Old Testament that Jesus quoted.

Challenge

1. Consider how you must deal with your temptations, then act accordingly.

Our Lord's Galilean Ministry and the Calling of His Disciples
Mark 1:14-20

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God keeps a perfect timetable.

2. The kingdom of God has come and is coming.

Practical Application

1. The Lord calls ordinary people like you and me.

2. Let's be intelligent fishermen!

Questions

1. Name the four fishermen who Jesus called to follow Him.

2. Explain the differing views of time - the world view and the biblical view.

3. In light of our chaotic world, can we depend on God's time-table?

4. Has the kingdom of God come? Is the kingdom of God yet to come? Explain.

5. As believers, are we called to be fishers of men? If so, how can we be intelligent fishermen?

Answers

1. Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John
2. The world view is endless or cyclic. The biblical view is that God created time; it has definite goals, and along the way there are special and specific times
3. The world seems chaotic and out of control, but God has a perfect timetable. In this passage, we see two events in His time-table - the coming of the King and the announcement that the kingdom of God is at hand.
4. Yes, the kingdom of God has come in spiritual form. All who have received Christ as personal Savior have entered the kingdom of God. Christ is our King, and God rules in our hearts and lives. Yes, the kingdom of God is yet to come in visible form. When Christ comes to set up His earthly kingdom (the Millennium, as described in Revelation 20), it will set the stage for the eternal state.
5. Yes, Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men." We do not make ourselves to be fishers of men, but Jesus said that He would make us fishers of men. We need to use common sense by going where the fish are, by using the right bait, and by relating to people. For example, Christian literature would be different for a Jewish neighbor or a professing Christian. Pray for wisdom in approaching people and in selecting the appropriate bait.

Discuss / Consider

1. Think of three unsaved people in "your" world (work, neighborhood, school...). Pray for them consistently and pray for an opportunity to speak to them about Christ.

2. Select tracts or literature that would be appropriate to share with them.

Challenge

1. Go through the open doors that the Lord gives to you and claim victory in His name.

Our Lord's Power Over the Demonic Realm
Mark 1:21-28

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Demons can inhabit religious places.
2. Demons are orthodox in their belief.
3. Demons must submit to the authority of Christ.

Practical Application

1. We can speak with authority.
2. Let's not be surprised if healing is painful.

Questions

1. Why were the listeners astonished when Jesus' spoke?
2. Can demons inhabit religious places?
3. A supernatural display of power is always of God. T/F?
4. Demons are orthodox in their beliefs. T/F?
5. Why did the Lord silence the demons? Do demons have to submit to the authority of Christ?
6. Does belief alone save someone?
7. Can we speak with authority by God's Word?

Answers

1. Our Lord taught with authority, with the word of God, as opposed to the teaching of the scribes, who would quote rabbinic opinions.
2. Yes. The man in this account was not in a bar, but in a synagogue. It can happen today. Satan infiltrates the church. Demons deceive and slip into the midst of God's people. See 2 Corinthians 11:14 and 1 Timothy 4:1.
3. It might be Satanic, rather than of God. See 1 John 4:1.
4. Yes. They knew who Jesus was (Mark 1:24) and that He is God. They have no problem believing that God is Creator or that He exists.
5. He did not want people coming to Him because of demonic testimony. Yes, demons must submit to the authority of Christ. He spoke but a word, and the demons obeyed.
6. No. The demons believe and tremble, but that doesn't save them. See James 2:19.
7. Yes. The Lord didn't quote other's opinions. He quoted God's Word. We don't have to quote other people, but we can speak with authority from the Word of God.

Discuss / Consider

1. Recall a time when you were healed physically and think of the accompanying hurt. Was it worth it?

2. Think of someone you know who is hurting physically. How can you help?

Challenge

1. Recall a time when you were healed spiritually, and the hurt involved. Try to help someone you know who is hurting spiritually.

Our Lord Healed at Sunset and Prayed at Sunrise
Mark 1:29-39

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There is a distinction between physical sickness and demon possession.
2. The Lord Jesus placed a priority on preaching.

Practical Application

1. We are healed in order to serve.
2. Let's find a place and make time to pray.
3. Sometimes we must say, "No," because of priorities.

Questions

1. Was Jesus trying to impress people by healing them and by casting out demons?
2. Is sickness and sin caused by demon possession? Explain.
3. On which ministry did our Lord Jesus place priority?
4. Why does the Lord heal people?
5. When confronted with a need, I am obligated to respond, regardless of a busy schedule. Right?

Jesus Cleanses a Leper
Mark 1:40-45

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Leprosy is a picture of sin.

2. Cleansing of leprosy is a picture of salvation.

Practical Application

1. Have you felt the touch of God?

2. Would you touch a leper?

Questions

1. Why did the leper say, "You can make me clean," instead of "You can make me whole?"

2. What does the parallel account in Luke 5:12 tell us about this leper?

3. What did the leper say to Jesus? What does this say about the leper?

4. How did Jesus respond?

5. Why did Jesus tell the man not to tell others? Did the healed leper obey this command?

6. Discuss the parallels between the stages of leprosy and the stages of sin.

7. Was the healing of the leper partial or complete? Immediate or delayed? What does this tell us about the touch of the Lord today?

Our Lord Heals a Paralytic
Mark 2:1-12

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Jesus can forgive sin because Jesus is God.
2. God honors the faith of those who assist in the salvation process.

Practical Application

1. Let's be creative and ingenious in bringing our friends to Christ.
2. Let's be willing to carry one corner of the bed.
3. Let's pick up our beds and walk.

Questions

1. Why did the friends of the paralytic tear apart the roof? Wouldn't this damage the house?
2. What would the paralytic think when Jesus said, "Son, your sins are forgiven?"
3. Which is more important -- concern for the eternal condition of a man's soul, or the temporal condition of the body?
4. How did Jesus claim His deity in this episode?
5. Was God glorified in the healing of the paralytic?
6. How did the Lord test the faith of the healed man?
7. Compare the picture of the leper and the paralytic. What does each represent?

Answers

1. This miracle took place in a home in First Century Capernaum. Houses were different in construction then, having an outside staircase leading to a flat roof. The roof would have been made of stone or clay tiles laid across the beams, then covered with sod for insulation. In other words, the roof was not damaged, but just taken apart for access to the room below.
2. The Jewish mind connected sin and sickness, so he likely had a sense of guilt.
3. Jesus dealt with the sin question first.
4. If only God could forgive sins, as the scribes had said, then He proved Himself God. He asked which was easier, to forgive sins or to heal (Mark 2:9). Both were impossible for man, but God could do either. The scribes could not refute the healing (Mark 2:11-12).
5. Yes. See Mark 2:12
6. Jesus did not pick up the man's bed or carry it for him, but He told him to do it.
7. Leprosy is a picture of sin. Paralysis is a picture of the result of sin.

Discuss / Consider

1. Think of some creative ways by which you could bring your friend(s) to Christ.

2. Try putting some of these into action.

Challenge

1. Are you willing to carry a corner of the bed?

The Lord Calls Levi, a Tax Collector
Mark 2:13-17

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Jesus came to save sinners.
2. Separation is not isolation.

Practical Application

1. We should practice relationship evangelism as Matthew did.
2. Don't wait to witness.

Questions

1. Who was Levi, and what was his occupation? Where was his office?
2. What was it like to be a tax collector in the days of Jesus? What is another name for a tax collector?
3. What did the scribes and Pharisees infer when they asked the question in Mark 2:16?
4. What did Jesus mean by His statement in Mark 2:17?
5. Did Matthew's values and attitudes change after the Lord called him?
6. Does Jesus pray for believers to be taken out of the world?
7. What does the great commission tell us to do?

Answers

1. Levi was also known as Matthew, and he wrote the gospel bearing his name. He was a tax collector before he became a disciple. His office was like a toll booth. Capernaum was located on a major road, so trade, travel and citizen's taxes were collected there.
2. It was a lucrative position, and open to graft because of over-charging. Tax collectors were not popular with the people (understatement), because the Jews were forced to pay taxes to Rome. Another name for a tax collector was "publican."
3. That the publican and others at the table were sinners.
4. The scribes and Pharisees thought of themselves as righteous, and others as sinners. The self-righteous felt no need of salvation, and therefore, couldn't be cured.
5. Yes. He changed his ways and wanted to share Christ with his friends. He was not hesitant in identifying himself with Christ. See Mark 2:14-16.
6. No. He prayed that they would be kept from the unholy values and attitudes of the world, but that they were to stay in the world to share the gospel with unbelievers. See John 17.
7. See Matthew 28:19-20

Discuss / Consider

1. Recall the people with whom you have shared Christ over the years. Have you had the joy of leading someone to Christ?
2. How separated are you from the values and attitudes of the world?

Challenge

1. Re-evaluate the two questions above, and think how you could be a more effective witness.

Things Were Different Now that Jesus Had Come
Mark 2:18-22

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Christianity is more than legalistic fasting.
2. Christianity is more than ritualistic Judaism.

Practical Application

1. Let's not lose the joy of the Lord through legalism.
2. Let's not go backwards in the faith through ritualism.

Questions

1. Who fasted? Who didn't fast? Who fasted self-righteously? See also [Luke 18:9-14](#).
2. Why couldn't a piece of new cloth be sewn into an old garment? Why couldn't new wine be put into old bottles? What do these parables represent?
3. What is the first hint of the cross in Mark's gospel?
4. The bridegroom was there and would soon be taken away. When would the joy return?
5. Why was the law given?
6. Can law and grace be mixed?
7. How do we hinder the power of the Holy Spirit?

Answers

1. John's disciples and the Pharisees fasted. Jesus' disciples didn't fast. In this account, a particular Pharisee fasted self-righteously.
2. There were no pre-shrunk garments in those days, so the new cloth would have torn the old garment by putting a strain on it. As for the wine, the new wine expanded as it fermented. The "bottles" were containers made of goatskins, which would become brittle and would break when fully filled. New goatskins would have more elasticity. The old garment and the old wineskins represent ritual and ceremonial forms of Judaism. The new garments and wineskins represent the new Christianity, which is alive.
3. The time would come when the bridegroom (Christ) was to be taken away (Mark 2:20)
4. At His resurrection (John 16:19-22).
5. God gave the law as a foundation or confirmation to prepare and lead the way to Christ.
6. No. You cannot put Christ into the wineskins of Judaism now that He has come. The new wineskin church is more elastic than Old Testament law and ceremony (as it had become).
7. In the teaching of the two parables, we see that Christianity should not be boxed in by forms and rituals. Even when we move toward good forms of ritual, we can become rigid through traditions, suppressing the Spirit of God.

Discuss / Consider

1. What happens when you start to live your life by a set of rules? What happens when you impose your list of rules on others?
2. Define "worldly." Should we judge others by our standards?

Challenge

1. Do you have the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit? If not, what can you do about it? Read Romans 14:17.

The Lord of the Sabbath
Mark 2:23-28

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.

2. Bible stories should be used as precedents.

Practical Application

1. Let's not miss the spirit of the law by keeping the letter of the law.

Questions

1. Of what were the Pharisees accusing Jesus' disciples?

2. How did the Lord answer their accusation?

3. What did the Lord say concerning the Sabbath? Why did the Lord say to keep the Sabbath? Is the Sabbath given as a law in the New Testament?

4. How might we miss the spirit of the law?

5. What is the difference between a regulatory law and a moral law? Give an example of each.

6. What is it called when a moral law is broken and justified by circumstances?

Healing the Man with the Withered Hand
Mark 3:1-6

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Anger is not necessarily a sin.

2. Obedience is evidence of faith.

Practical Application

1. Let's not do evil by refusing to do good.

2. Don't be surprised if opposing forces unite against you.

Questions

1. Is it possible that the man with the withered hand was "planted?"

2. What kind of hearts did the Pharisees have?

3. Who were the Herodians?

4. Why did the Pharisees and Herodians counsel together?

5. Was Jesus Christ ever angry?

6. Isn't anger sin? Are there limits to being angry?

7. How did the man with the withered hand evidence his faith?

Answers

1. The man could have been brought by the religious leaders to see if Jesus would "work" on the Sabbath (Mark 3:2). The Pharisees watched, just like they watched before (Mark 2:23-24), that they might accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath law.
2. Hardened and calloused. See Mark 3:5.
3. They supported Herod, the son of Herod Antipas. The Herods ruled in the Galilee area, whereas Pontius Pilate was the ruler in Judea.
4. The Herodians feared political unsettling because of Jesus; the Pharisees were challenged by Him in religious matters. The enemies of each other became co-conspirators to be rid of Christ.
5. "Christ looked on them in anger" (Mark 3:5). This is the only unquestioned and explicit account of Christ's anger, although it was implied at other times (e.g., cleansing the temple).
6. Anger can be a proper emotional response when it involves degrading God. Why was Jesus angry? Because of the unbelievable hardness of men's hearts. "Be angry, and sin not" (Ephesians 4:26). Anger need not be a loss of temper or a fit of rage. It can be non-malicious indignation for the right reasons, and it can be controlled to bring right to a wrong.
7. He obeyed what Christ told him to do, and because of obedience, his hand was restored. See Mark 3:3-5.

Discuss / Consider

1. Recall an Old Testament person who gave evidence of faith by his/her obedience.
2. "Don't taint a saint." When believers criticize you, even to forming a coalition against you, how do you respond? By name-calling or degrading them? Or do you let the Lord handle the situation?

Challenge

1. Check your anger by asking, "Is it a righteous anger?" "Is it controlled anger?" Check your obedience to Christ (How well do you know God's commands? How quickly do you obey? What is your attitude toward obedience?)

The Lord Jesus Ministers to Large Crowds
Mark 3:7-12

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The rejection of Jesus by the Jews resulted in the grace of God going out to the Gentiles.

2. The extent of Christ's healing miracles is a picture of the scope of salvation.

Practical Application

1. You can expect problems in a successful ministry

Questions

1. Why did Jesus withdraw with His disciples?
2. How was Jesus received by the Jews?
3. To whom did Christ minister?
4. Is God's grace to Gentiles only during the New Testament period?
5. Can Jews become Christians?
6. Read Romans 11. What is the meaning of the parable of the tree?
7. What did Jesus do when He was nearly crushed by the crowds?

Answers

1. He withdrew to the Sea of Galilee because He knew it was time to speak to the Gentiles, having been rejected by the Jews. Also, He knew about the plot to destroy Him.
2. The Lord Jesus was born into this world as the Jewish Messiah, but His own people didn't receive Him. See John 1:11.
3. To whosoever would receive Him (John 1:11-12; 3:16). When the Jews rejected Jesus, salvation came to the Gentiles.
4. God's grace was shown to Gentiles of the Old Testament. Re-read the story of Rahab in Joshua 2, and review the repentance of the Ninevites, a cruel and pagan people, as recorded in the book of Jonah.
5. Yes. Jews today can be saved and become a part of the body of Christ.
6. The tree represents a place of blessing. The Jews were the natural branches, broken off because of unbelief. There will come a time when the Jews will be grafted back in.
7. He had a small boat ready to use as a platform, because the lack of space was hindering His ministry.

Discuss / Consider

1. What is the connection between Mark 3:6 and Romans 11?

2. Why didn't Christ just heal everyone? Why doesn't Christ just save everyone?

Challenge

1. Consider the evidence of the grace of God in your life.

Jesus Calls the Twelve Disciples
Mark 3:13-21

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God's call to discipleship is based on character - not on credentials.

2. There are three basic qualifications for effective Christian service:
 - A. To be with the Lord

 - B. To preach

 - C. To be empowered

Practical Application

1. Don't be surprised if a Judas turns up in your ministry.

2. Don't be surprised if people label you a religious fanatic.

Questions

1. What kinds of disciples did the Lord Jesus choose? This diverse group - what does it tell us about Christ?

2. Who were the two Simons?

3. Who were the Zealots?

4. How did John change after he had been with Jesus?

5. What was Christ's three-fold purpose of calling the disciples?

6. What are the three basic qualifications for Christian service? (parallels in the 3-fold purpose of calling).

7. By whom was the Lord labeled a religious fanatic? (Have you ever been called a religious fanatic?)

Answers

1. Mostly young men, probably in their twenties. Christianity emerged out of Judaism as a youth movement. Jesus began by calling Peter and ended with Judas. They included a number of professions and there were unknowns. What does it say about our Lord? That He can bring people from the most diverse backgrounds and characteristics together for a common purpose.
2. Simon Peter, the stone or rock, so-called because of his role in the early church; and Simon the Zealot.
3. A political group in Palestine; fanatical nationalists. See Luke 6:15.
4. He was called, along with his brother, "Boanerges," a Hebrew idiom for thunder. Later, John was known as the disciple of love.
5. a) that they might be with Him, b) that He might send them out to preach, and c) that they might have power to heal the sick and cast out demons.
6. a) to be with Christ (spending time in the Scriptures and prayer), b) to preach (a willingness to verbalize the gospel and to see spiritual needs), and c) to be empowered (to use whatever spiritual gifts the Lord gives for His glory).
7. His own family thought He was losing it and couldn't handle the pressure. It seems to be OK to be fanatical in the area of sports or business, but not in the faith. Don't be turned off by a label.

Discuss / Consider

1. On what does God base His call to discipleship?

2. Are you proud or ashamed of the gospel of Christ? See Romans 1:16

Challenge

1. Do you qualify as a disciple? Check it out: Are you spending quality time with the Lord? Are you ready to speak a word for Him? Are you ready to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to use your spiritual gift for God's glory?

Jesus Is Wrongly Accused
Mark 3:22-30

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Demons are in Satan's kingdom, but Satan is a defeated foe.

2. Can the unpardonable sin be committed today? (No and Yes).

Practical Application

1. Let's be patient and logical in our witness.

2. Don't be surprised if the world misinterprets our motives.

Questions

1. Why did the scribes accuse Jesus of being empowered by Beelzebub? Who was he? Who were the scribes?

2. Did the scribes deny the miracles of Jesus?

3. How did Jesus respond to their accusation?

4. Who is in the kingdom of Satan?

5. Was Satan an angel?

6. What is the unpardonable sin? Where are those who committed the sin? Is there an unpardonable sin today?

7. Did people misinterpret the Lord's motives?

Answers

1. The scribes accused Jesus in order to escape the obvious conclusion that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Beelzebub is another name for Satan. The scribes from Jerusalem were the teachers of the law, the theologians, and they were self-righteous. See Mark 3:22.
2. No. There was too much evidence. They did not do as others did by trying to explain away the miracles. In fact, the miracles are in the Talmud, and Orthodox Jews take this position today.
3. With great logic by asking, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" and with the statement that a kingdom is divided against itself cannot stand.
4. All the demons, the evil spirits, and those who preach another gospel.
5. Yes. He was created as a good angel, but he fell (Isaiah 14:12-15), and he took others with him.\
6. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Those who committed the unpardonable sin are in hell today, awaiting further judgment. Yes, there is an unpardonable sin today - it is to reject the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. There is no second chance after death. If you are a Christian, you don't have to worry about committing the unpardonable sin. But if you are not a believer...
7. Yes. We see our Lord in His wonderful miracles being totally misinterpreted. The world hated Him. See John 15:18.

Discuss / Consider

1. How should we witness to accusers and skeptics?

2. How can we be sure that we have pure motives?

Challenge

1. Satan cannot control you if you are a Christian. Make sure that you do not dabble in the occult or in white magic, for you could become confused. If you know of someone who is into these things of Satan's kingdom, show them how unreasonable and unwise it is.

Our Lord's Teaching about Family Relationships
Mark 3:31-35

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **Spiritual ties are stronger than natural ties.**

2. **Obedience is the evidence of membership in God's family.**

Practical Application

1. **Remember that you are a member of a spiritual family.**

2. **You can expect some conflict between your two families (spiritual and earthly).**

Questions

1. Where did Jesus' family travel from? Why did they leave?

2. How is Mary's "perpetual divinity" disproved by the Scriptures?

3. Who were Jesus' brothers? Were they believers?

4. Which are stronger – spiritual & natural ties? Will there be conflict between your natural and spiritual families?

5. Should you ignore your family because of spiritual ties?

6. Is there a characteristic that is evident of your membership in the family of God?

The Parable of the Sower
Mark 4:1-20

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord taught in parables to reveal and conceal truth.
2. The different soils represent different conditions and responses of the human heart to the Word of God.

Practical Application

1. Watch out for the three big fruit reducers.
 - A. Cares or worries / anxieties.
 - B. Deceitfulness of riches / love of money
 - C. Desire for other things (worldly things).

Questions

1. What is a parable? What is the purpose of teaching in parables?
2. Why didn't the sower make sure that the seed was sown on good ground?
3. Where is the "mystery" found in the Bible?
4. Is the kingdom of God here now?
5. Why did the Lord rebuke the disciples?
6. In the parable of the sower, tell what each of these soils represent

Answers

1. A parable is a common, earthly story that has a hidden or spiritual meaning. It's purpose is to both reveal and conceal truth (Mark 4:11). Jesus revealed truth to His followers and concealed truth to unbelievers. See Isaiah 6:9-10.
2. The sower of the First Century scattered seed from a shoulder-strap bag.
3. The mystery is something concealed in the Old Testament and revealed in the New Testament. See Mark 4:11.
4. The present form of the kingdom of God is here in the hearts of believers, but the future kingdom of God is yet to come in power and glory.
5. He gave a mild rebuke because He wanted to teach them deeper truths, yet they didn't understand this simple parable.
6. a) indifferent, insensitive hearers; the seed could be snatched away easily by Satan before it could germinate, b) a shallow heart; emotional enthusiasm, but no depth, c) spiritual strangulation; the love of riches, the cares of the world, anxiety, and other interests, and d) the ready heart; the proof is in the fruit.

Discuss / Consider

1. "Light received brings light. Light rejected brings night." What does this mean? Give an example of each.

2. Go over the "Big Three" fruit reducers. What is a 100% producer of fruit?

Challenge

1. Do you desire more light? Having counted the cost, what are you willing to forego to spend more quality time with the Lord?

Spiritual Truths Shared
Mark 4:21-25

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The truth will come to light.
2. The possession of spiritual truth follows the law of supply and demand.

Practical Application

1. If you're willing to draw water, your well will never run dry.
2. Use it or lose it.

Questions

1. Describe each of the following in terms of the First Century:
 - A. Lamp or candle
 - B. Bowl, basket or bushel
 - C. Bed
 - D. Lampstand
2. Re-read Mark 4:21-22. What do these items represent in a Christian's life?
3. What are the two popular interpretations of Mark 4:22?
4. What happens when you listen to what you hear? What happens when you turn a deaf ear to God's word?
5. What does it mean to "keep drawing water?"
6. What happens when you do not apply what you know from God's Word?

Answers

1. a) The lamp was a small ceramic container of olive oil with a floating wick, carried by hand. b) A bowl was used as a measure of dried grain, which could be put over the lamp to extinguish it. c) A soft mattress or pad that could be rolled up during the day. d) The support walls or pillars had niches in them that could be used as shelves to hold the lamps.

2. a) The lamp represents God's truth, revealed to believers. b) The bowl speaks to believers that they are not to dim the lamp by placing a bowl over the light. c) Nor are believers to be lazy, as represented by the bed. d) Christians are to place the light so all can benefit from it.

3. a) We are to take the truth and explain it, bringing it to light for all who are seeking, which means digging out the truth and studying it in order to explain it. b) There is nothing hidden that will not someday be revealed. There is a coming day of review and reward for servants. See also Luke 12:2-3.

4. In the measure that you obey after hearing God's word, you receive blessing in like measure. See Mark 4:23-25.

5. In reference to God's truth, the more you dig in, study and become involved in the work of the Lord, the more you will know God's truth.

6. Mark 4:25 refers to spiritual truths. When you fail to apply what you've learned, and if you are not using what you know or have, you will lose it. Even as the body, so the soul can atrophy when unused.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review what happens when you take heed of what you hear. Review what happens when you turn a deaf ear to God's word. Give specific life examples.

2. If you are not already in a group Bible study, explore that possibility, either as a participant or as a leader.

Challenge

1. Keep drawing water.

A Parable About the Kingdom of God
Mark 4:26-29

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Spiritual maturity is a gradual process.

Practical Application

1. You can be sure that there will be a harvest.

Questions

1. In which of the gospels is this particular parable found?
2. What does spiritual maturity mean in the life of Christian?
3. How does the parable of the wheat and tares (Matthew 13), relate to spiritual maturity in the kingdom of God?
4. There will be a harvest. What does this mean in the life of an individual believer?
5. There will be a harvest. What does this mean as it relates to the kingdom of God?

Answers

1. Only in Mark.
2. Christian maturity is when the word is received, believed and obeyed, then the believer grows.
3. This fits in with the Lord's return and God's program. The same man who did the sowing will do the reaping. The wheat and tares are gathered together, then put into the barn or discarded.
4. If we scatter the seed, there will be results. People will be saved and disciples will be made. (We must recognize, however, that we don't save people; only God does that).
5. This refers to God's final stage of the program for the kingdom. We cannot know the inner workings, but we know it's on schedule. There will be a harvest, and we can be a part of it, for God uses us as we are willing to do His work.

Discuss / Consider

1. Read Isaiah 55:11. What does this mean in light of God's purposes? Does it relate to you? What does it mean in your life?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:58. Are you fulfilling this in your life? How?

Challenge

1. Considering the two verses above, what is your part, and what more you can do in bringing the kingdom of God to fruition.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed
Mark 4:30-34

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The kingdom of God is not synonymous with the body of Christ.

Practical Application

1. Make sure you are a possessor and not just a professor.

Questions

1. Describe the mustard seed of Mark 4:31.
2. Who is in the body of Christ?
3. Who is in the kingdom of God?
4. When the servants asked the master if they should gather up the tares, why did he tell them not to? When will the wheat and the tares be separated, and what will happen to each?
5. Are professing Christians in the kingdom of God?
6. Refer to the kingdom parable of the mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32). Do the birds represent good or evil? Which is the preferred interpretation in this parable? Why?

Answers

1. It is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth, and the smallest one that the Jewish farmers knew and planted. It could become greater than all the herbs or other seeds, sometimes reaching heights of ten to fifteen feet, with branches and leaves for birds.
2. Believers only, with Christ as the head of the body.
3. Both true believers and professing believers at the present time.
4. Because they might uproot the wheat when they took out the tares. Separation comes at harvest time (the final judgment). The wheat will be gathered into the barn (heaven), and the tares will be bundled and cast into the fire (hell).
5. Yes. Everywhere the gospel is spread and takes hold, throughout Christendom, there are both professors and possessors. The kingdom of God is the sphere.
6. There are two interpretations: a) the birds are good, finding rest, or b) the birds are evil, representing those adhering to false teaching and the cults, coming in under the umbrella of Christendom. The latter, for they are a part of the kingdom, but not of the church (the body of Christ). The birds can be seen as part of Satan's kingdom, with false teachers resting in the branches of Christendom, connecting them with the parable of the sower (Mark 4:4).

Discuss / Consider

1. Refer to the kingdom parable of the dragnet (Matthew 13:47-50), and discuss what the following represent: a) the net, b) the sea, c) every kind of fish, d) the good fish, and e) the bad fish.

2. Refer to the kingdom parable of the virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). What did the Lord say to the foolish virgins when they asked for the door to be opened? In light of the virgins, how do you identify?

Challenge

1. Do you have friends who believe that they are Christians (even going to and serving within the church). Do you know for sure that they are possessors of the truth, and not merely professors? Re-read 2 Corinthians 13:5, and apply the test to both you and your friends.

The Wind and the Sea Obey the Lord
Mark 4:35-41

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is 100% God and 100% Man.
2. Christ's power over nature guarantees the promise of a disaster-free new Heaven and new earth.

Practical Application

1. Our character is built through crises.
2. We are not alone in the storms of life.

Questions

1. What happened during the voyage at sea?
2. What happened to the little ships?
3. What did the disciples do when the storm came? Where was Jesus?
4. When awakened, what did Jesus do?
5. Could there have been a connection between the accounts in Mark 1:23-27 and Mark 4:39?
6. What are the three Ds in this section and in Mark 5?
7. Why didn't Jesus just delay sailing until it was calm? Why didn't He protect His disciples from the storm?

The Healing of a Man Possessed with Many Demons **Mark 5:1-20**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Demons are more than psychological problems.
2. People are more important than animals.

Practical Application

1. You are never too far gone for God's saving power.
2. The Lord will not stay where He is not wanted.
3. Let's start reporting the great things the Lord has done for us.

Questions

1. Were both Jews and Gentiles living in the Decapolis area?
2. Who were the herdsmen, the ones raising the swine? Was the business legal?
3. Did Jesus cause the swine to drown? Why did the swine stampede?
4. Who are demons? Are they all alike? Can more than one demon inhabit a person?
5. Are evil spirits all-powerful?
6. Are people or animals more important?
7. Some people who have been deep into sin believe that they have gone too far to be saved. Is this true?

Two Miracles of Our Lord: Healing Sickness and Raising the Dead **Mark 5:21-43**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The touch of faith is different than the touch of curiosity.
2. Man is dead and dying apart from Christ.

Practical Application

1. Don't let trembling stop you from testifying.
2. Don't forget the follow-up food.

Questions

1. Had the woman with the bleeding problem sought medical attention?
2. Did the woman touch Jesus out of curiosity, superstition or faith?
3. Why did the woman tremble? Did the Lord Jesus rebuke her?
4. Who was Jairus? How were Jesus' miracles personalized in Jairus' life?
5. How do you think Jairus felt when Jesus stopped to heal the woman? How would you have felt?
6. Who were the mourners, and what did they do concerning Jesus?
7. Had the girl really died?
8. What does it mean, "Man is dead and dying apart from Christ?"

The Unbelief of the People of Nazareth
Mark 6:1-6

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Jesus is more than a carpenter or the Son of Mary.
2. The sin of unbelief hinders the work of the Lord.

Practical Application

1. Don't let unbelief limit the blessing of God in your life.
2. Don't be discouraged by the negative attitude of close friends and relatives.
3. Don't reject the Lord once too many times.

Questions

1. What was the response to Jesus' previous ministry in Nazareth?
2. After this return of our Lord to Nazareth, did He return? How did He respond to the 2nd rejection at Nazareth?
3. Are there Christians in Nazareth today?
4. What do people think of Jesus today?
5. Should we revere Mary?
6. Jesus could do no mighty work in Nazareth. Why? Didn't He have the power?
7. Why couldn't the Israelites enter the promised land?

The Lord Sends His Disciples on Short-Term Missions
Mark 6:7-13

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God will not force anyone to become a believer.

2. The Lord Jesus did not practice or preach the prosperity gospel.

Practical Application

1. Let's aim to travel light.

2. The buddy system works well in ministry.

Questions

1. Why were the disciples given power to cast out demons and heal sicknesses?

2. What were the disciple missionaries to take? What were they not to take?

3. What were they to do when they were rejected?

4. With what kind of oil were the people anointed?

5. What is the "name and claim" type of Christianity?

6. What should we seek first?

7. Why were the disciples sent out two by two?

The Martyrdom of John the Baptist
Mark 6:14-29

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Going to church does not make you a Christian.
2. God's ways are higher than man's ways.

Practical Application

1. Let's not doubt God's ways.
2. Don't make rash and foolish decisions in moments of emotion.

Questions

1. Who did the people think that Jesus was?
2. Why did Herodias hate John the Baptist?
3. Why did Herod protect John the Baptist? If Herod respected John, why did he have him killed?
4. Who gave John the Baptist a decent burial?
5. If Herod feared and respected John the Baptist, was he considered a believer?
6. Why did God allow the tragic death of John the Baptist? (According to Jesus, John was the greatest prophet. He had a vital ministry, but it was cut short).

Answers

1. Herod thought that Jesus was John the Baptist. Some thought that Jesus was Elijah (see Malachi 4:5). Others thought that Jesus was just a prophet.
2. Because he had spoken out against her immoral relationships.
3. He feared him, believed that he was a just man, and he gladly heard what he had done. But in order to show favor to Salome, Herod told her to ask what she would. Her mother, Herodias, told her to ask for the head of John the Baptist. In order to save face, Herod granted her request.
4. John's disciples.
5. Although Herod knew that John was right, he continued in his sin.
6. The scene - it was a stupid dance, and a stupid decision by a drunken ruler at a party. But God allowed it, and He had His reasons. See Isaiah 55:8-9.

Discuss / Consider

1. Some people, like Herod, respect the preacher but fail to enter into what he has to say. They like the messenger, but reject the message. Be sure that the message gets into your heart. Being a believer means more than listening to a sermon and going to church.

2. Consider some of the hasty decisions that you have made. What were the results?

Challenge

1. When tragedy strikes, it can make us reassess our values, and it can strengthen our faith. Do you believe this? Is your faith strengthened in times of crises?

The Miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand
Mark 6:30-44

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. R & R with guidelines is biblical.
2. "Let go and let God" with guidelines is biblical.

Practical Application

1. Aim to include biblical R & R in your vacations.
2. Expect your best plans to be interrupted.
3. When you give to the Lord you end up with more than you started with.

Questions

1. Which two miracles are recorded in all four gospels?
2. Where did all the people come from?
3. How was it that the people arrived before the Lord and His disciples?
4. What do some of the critics say about this miracle?
5. What happens when you give what you have to the Lord?

The Miracle of the Lord Walking on the Water
Mark 6:45-56

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord is praying for us in heaven while we are toiling here on earth.

Practical Application

1. The Lord can walk on your troubled waters.

Questions

1. Why did Jesus compel the disciples to get into the boat?
2. What happened to the disciples while they were in the boat?
3. Did Jesus really walk on the water?
4. Was there healing magic in touching Jesus' garment?
5. What is the Lord's present ministry on behalf of His disciples?
6. What do parables and miracles have in common?
7. How did Jesus answer the frightened cry of the disciples? How does this apply to us today?

Answers

1. They wanted to make Him a king, but the cross had to come first.
2. A strong wind arose, which was not uncommon on the Sea of Galilee. It took all of their strength to keep rowing to Bethsaida, as the Lord had asked them to do.
3. Yes! Although some would say that He found a sandbar or stepping stones to keep Him up. Incidentally, it was the same place where Peter walked on the water. When Jesus walked on water, it was another miracle showing His power over nature.
4. There was no magic in the touch, but the healing was the Lord's response to the faith of those who reached out. Intercessory.
5. They present a spiritual picture of the truth portrayed.
6. He talked with them and said, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." He went to them and the wind ceased. For us today? Are you troubled? Straining at the oars? Afraid? Sometimes the Lord permits hardships in our lives, and He may wait before answering our cry, but then He brings the calm. Do not be afraid, for He is here. Follow the Lord's directions, even when the winds are contrary.

Discuss / Consider

1. What is the spiritual truth pictured in this account?

2. When you find yourself in troubled waters, be assured that a) the Lord is interceding on your behalf (He is praying for you), and b) the Lord is with you.

Challenge

1. Recall how the disciples tried to follow the Lord's directions, even against all odds. Are you trying to follow His directions, even when your sea is troubled?

The Lord's Denouncement of the Scribes and Pharisees
Mark 7:1-13

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Scripture is the final and ultimate authority.
2. The Scriptures are complete and sufficient.

Practical Application

1. Let us not add to or take away from Scripture.
2. Always distinguish between Scripture and tradition.
3. Don't use God as an excuse for neglecting our God-given responsibilities.

Questions

1. Who were the Pharisees? Who were the scribes?
2. In this instance, why did they travel from Jerusalem to Galilee?
3. What did the "committee" ask Jesus? How did He answer them?
4. Is the church the final authority?
5. How can a person distinguish between Scripture and tradition?
6. Give an example of a good tradition.
7. What is the end result of an enforced tradition?

Answers

1. The Pharisees were a religious party who arose during the intertestamental period. They were self-righteous. The scribes copied the Scriptures, and thus became the official interpreters of the Scriptures and the law. Often they were the lawyers of that day.
2. They came as a fault-finding committee to check out this popular Jesus.
3. Seek 7:1-5. Jesus not only answered the question of washing, but He accused them of keeping other traditions, making the word of God ineffective. See Mark 7:6-13, just one of their many acts of hypocrisy.
4. No. Tradition, not even good tradition, is equal to or above Scripture. The word of God is the final authority.
5. Check it out - does the Bible say it, or is it church doctrine, not found in the Bible?
6. Having a quiet time before daybreak. Disciplining yourself is good, but beware lest it lead to legalism and pride.
7. It can lead to lip service and vain worship. See Mark 6:7 and Isaiah 29:13.

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you had the experience of being caught up in a religious tradition (legalism) to the point that it kept you from a heart-felt love for Jesus Christ? If so, reconsider the real values in your spiritual life. Free yourself up so you can enjoy the Lord.

2. Do you believe that the Scriptures are the final and ultimate authority, complete and sufficient? If so, do you always look to the Lord for wisdom and guidance?

Challenge

1. Develop such a concern for your parents and/or children that you are willing to cut back on your own pleasure pursuits. Think how you ought to provide for them. (Actually, there are many activities that you can enjoy together, so it may not be an either/or).

The Lord Explains about Defilement
Mark 7:14-23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Even spiritual people can be blinded by unbiblical traditions.
2. Evil actions follow evil thoughts.

Practical Application

1. Beware if you place too great an emphasis on the externals.
2. Let's aim to change the heart of people.

Questions

1. What defiles a person?
2. To whom was the Lord Jesus speaking in this portion of Scripture?
3. Was the context of this teaching moral or medical?
4. Why did the Lord give the Jews dietary laws?
5. Why didn't the disciples, of all people, understand what Jesus was teaching?

Answers

1. Contrary to what the scribes and Pharisees taught about defilement (things entering the body), the Lord taught that defilement comes from within, from the heart.
2. To the multitudes and to the disciples.
3. Moral, for what you eat does not defile you morally.
4. There were clean and unclean foods, and in that day there was no refrigeration. There were other reasons, too, for health purposes.
5. Jesus had to explain again to the disciples, because they were convinced that you were defiled by the food itself. They had been wrongly taught Pharisaical laws. The Lord rebuked them for their blindness. But, to their credit, they were spiritual men.

Discuss / Consider

1. How can you discern between Scripture and traditions of men? Do you find yourself becoming blinded at times by unbiblical traditions? For example, how important is it to place the emphasis of Christian lifestyle on body position while you are praying? Or on dress codes? Or on hair styles?

2. Do you have listening ears? Are you listening carefully to what God is saying to you?

Challenge

1. Check out your thought life, for thoughts lead to action. Are your thoughts pure? Read 2 Corinthians 10;5 and Philippians 2:5.

The Lord Heals a Demon-Possessed Daughter
Mark 7:24-30

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God must be approached on the right grounds.
2. The power of prayer can remove demons.

Practical Application

1. When we are willing to settle for crumbs, God gives us a full loaf.
2. We should always bring the spiritual condition of our children before the Lord.

Questions

1. Who was the woman of this story?
2. Wasn't it a harsh statement that the Lord made to the woman, calling her a dog? How did she respond?
3. Was the woman right in coming to Christ as she did? How did the Lord respond to her?
4. Of what special significance is this story?
5. How is the woman's faith illustrated?
6. Can a demon be cast out at a distance? What does this teach us?
7. What happened when the woman was willing to settle for crumbs?

A Deaf and Dumb Man Healed
Mark 7:31-37

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Spiritual deafness and dumbness go together.

2. The Lord is tender in the way He deals with people.

Practical Application

1. Can you say, "He has done all things well?"

2. Your lone testimony can change a whole community.

Questions

1. What was the man's affliction in this account? How did the Lord communicate with him?
2. Wasn't touching the man's tongue with spit a bit gross?
3. What is the spiritual lesson we learn from this account?
4. How does this lesson apply to the nation Israel? What is the meaning for us today?
5. Good news! What did it mean to the man? to Israel? to the world today?
6. How does the Lord work with people, as shown here? What is the lesson here for us?
7. Which two prophecies are partially fulfilled here?

Answers

1. A speech impediment, caused by a physical deformity or his deafness.
2. No. It was a common practice - when a rabbi did this, it was as a balm.
3. Defective hearing and speaking go together, since words cannot be properly pronounced when they are not heard. Spiritually, something cannot be given out that is not taken in.
4. To Israel - they twisted the Scripture because they could not hear it correctly, for they did not acknowledge Jesus as Messiah. To us - unless we know the Lord, we are deaf and dumb spiritually. When Scriptures are read and ears are not open to hear the truth, then they cannot be plainly spoken.
5. The man was healed. A sizeable portion of the nation Israel will be saved (see Romans 11). Today, any unbeliever can be healed by coming to Christ.
6. He is tender, merciful, loving and gracious. He took the man aside from the crowd to avoid embarrassment. He gave him signs that showed He would heal him. The Lord deals gently with us. Also, think how you appreciate it when a doctor or dentist explains beforehand what he is about to do to heal you.
7. Read Isaiah 35:5-6 and Isaiah 42:3.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you sure that you are hearing properly in order to speak correctly? Is the word of God clear to you? Are you listening? Are you being obedient? Are you sharing the word? There is only one way to hear properly, and that is by being born again by the Spirit of God.

2. Read Mark 5:17-20; 32, 37. When a healed demon-possessed man came from Decapolis, he returned and told what happened to him. His was the lone testimony in a Gentile area. Could your testimony change a whole community (or neighborhood, or your campus, or your work place)?

Challenge

1. The Lord showed tenderness to the deaf and dumb man. Recall how He has shown tenderness to you. Have you, in turn, extended tenderness to someone else?

The Feeding of the Four Thousand **Mark 8:1-9**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. **God provides bread in the wilderness/desolate places.**

Practical Application

1. **The Lord knows and cares about all your personal needs.**

2. **How soon we forget.**

Questions

1. Why do critics believe that the Bible is in error concerning the feeding of the 4,000? How could you answer them?
2. What is the bread? What is the essential meaning of this miracle?
3. How did the Lord show compassion on the crowd?
4. Does the Lord know your needs? How far can you go without fainting? How long before your strength is gone? Why does the Lord delay in answering our needs?
5. Doesn't it seem strange that the disciples so quickly forgot the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000?

Answers

1. Critics believe there is confusion and inaccuracy because of the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000. There were, indeed, two miracles, reported in both Matthew and Mark. Note the differences in numbers (5,000/4,000), in location (northeast end of the Sea of Galilee/east-southeast end of the Sea), in time with Jesus (3 days/1 day), in the amount of food (5 loaves and two fish/7 loaves and several small fish), in leftovers (12 baskets/7 baskets), in the size of the baskets (small/large, the latter the size Paul was put in to be lowered over the wall), in events following the miracles (Jesus departed alone to pray/Jesus and His disciples went together).
2. The bread is Christ Himself (see John 6). Spiritual hunger can be satisfied only in Christ; He is the provision in our wilderness. God provides salvation for sinners and spiritual food for saints. He is all that we need.
3. He said that if the crowd was sent back, they would faint on the way. He was moved with compassion for the 5,000. He was concerned for their spiritual needs (sheep without a shepherd). He cares about both.
4. He knows and cares. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). In this account, Jesus delayed for three days. He has His reasons for delaying today, too. We learn to lean on Him and look to Him for help.
5. It would seem that the disciples would have remembered the earlier miracle. We see answered prayer in our lives, but we keep on worrying, forgetting quickly. God sees our todays and tomorrows, even as He saw our yesterdays.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you believe that the Lord knows and cares about all your needs? Do you lay your needs before Him? Do you trust Him to meet them?

2. Read Psalm 78:19. Answer: Psalm 78:20, 25. What hinders the Lord's provision? Answer: Psalm 78:22.

Challenge

1. Recall the times when the Lord provided a table in the wilderness for you. Write down some of your "tables."

The Lord Warns His Disciples about Leaven
Mark 8:10-21

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Unbelief will never be satisfied.
2. The leaven of the Pharisees and Herodians can characterize disciples as well as unbelievers.

Practical Application

1. Let's not remember the facts and forget the lessons.
2. Our experiences today are for our greater faith tomorrow.

Questions

1. Why did the Lord use the figure of leaven?
2. Did the disciples understand what Jesus was telling them?
3. Explain, "People convinced against their will are of the same opinion still?"
4. Why do people try to explain away heavenly signs?
5. Why did the Lord say that no sign would be given?
6. What do the two leavens represent? Can the leavens characterize disciples?

The Blind Man Healed in Stages **Mark 8:22-26**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Context is helpful in determining the meaning of the miracles.

Practical Application

1. Let's take the necessary steps to obtain 20/20 spiritual vision.

Questions

1. What is the common denominator between Mark 8:23 and John 9:6?
2. What does it mean, "The man saw men like trees walking?"
3. Why did Jesus tell the man to go home, but not to tell about the miracle?
4. Why did the Lord heal the blind man in stages?
5. Why is it important to look at the context of miracles?
6. List the steps, as shown in this miracle, to obtain 20/20 spiritual vision.

Answers

1. Jesus spit on the eyes of blind men when He healed their blindness.
2. He had fuzzy vision. His eyes were not yet clear, nor his vision fully restored.
3. He didn't want crowds following Him because of His miracles.
4. Coming to spiritual maturity is not instant, but it takes place one step at a time. His vision was cleared in stages, just as is our spiritual vision. The Lord wants to clear our spiritual eyesight, and this teaching is dramatized in the miracle of healing by stages.
5. The disciples were believers, but they had a lack of understanding. They loved the Lord, but lacked understanding. There was need for spiritual enlightenment. The Lord said to Peter that he was not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men. We need to look at the context of the Lord's miracles for clearer understanding.
6. a) let the Lord lead, b) there must be separation from the world (Bethsaida was a city under judgment, and so is the world), c) humility is required (the man submitted to the Lord's treatment, and so must we (see 1 Peter 5:6), and d) let the Lord keep His hands on your eyes.

Discuss / Consider

1. Whenever you read about a miracle in the Bible, be sure to look at the context.

2. Are you content with limited vision (seeing men like trees walking)? There is always need for keener eyesight. Think of ways that yours can be enhanced.

Challenge

1. Review the steps in obtaining 20/20 spiritual vision. As you have grown spiritually, can you identify with these steps? Are there certain stages that you need to attend to more carefully?

A Confession of Faith and a Call to Discipleship
Mark 8:27-38

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There was a change to the content of Christ's teaching after Peter's confession of faith.
2. Even a disciple can voice satanic strategy.
3. Suffering is the way of true servanthood.

Practical Application

1. Who do you say Jesus is?
2. You can lose by gaining and gain by losing.

Questions

1. Why was Caesarea Philippi a fitting place for Peter's confession of faith?
2. What was the content of Jesus' teaching prior to Peter's confession of faith? How did this change after Peter's confession of faith?
3. Did Jesus teach about His imminent suffering?
4. Why is it said that Peter voiced Satanic strategy? Could we be guilty of this?
5. What is the way of true servanthood?
6. What does it mean to "take up your cross?"
7. Who is Jesus?
8. "You lose by gaining, and gain by losing." Is this double talk?

Answers

1. It contrasted acknowledging Jesus as Messiah with the refuting of Jesus as the Christ in a city with many idols and shrines to Greek gods.
2. "The kingdom of heaven was at hand." Jesus began to speak plainly about His suffering, rejection, death and resurrection.
3. Yes, but it was veiled (see Mark 2:20) prior to Peter's confession of faith. Afterwards, there was open rejection of Jesus, and Peter was ready to be the spokesman for the disciples.
4. When Peter rebuked the Lord, he in turn was rebuked by the Lord. Yes, we could be guilty. Satan is the god of this world, and it would be easy for us to be taken in by and adopt his strategies, for they are all around us. We must be careful when we give advice to others, that it doesn't reflect worldly attitudes or values.
5. Suffering is the way of true servanthood.
6. Taking up your cross is not a personal affliction, but it is death to self. A disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot live a self-centered life.
7. When Jesus asked what people thought about Him, He was given a variety of answers, all of which denied His deity. Today, many people even think that He is a great and good man. But He is much more. He is the anointed One, the Son of God, and the only way to salvation.
8. It may sound so, but it isn't. It applies to discipleship - if you save your life by consuming it on selfish interest, it does not count for eternity, and there is a loss of rewards. Conversely, as you serve wholeheartedly as a disciple, you will gain life, both now and in heaven.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 to realize again the sufferings of Christ on the cross on our behalf. What is your standard of gain and loss?

2. What is the value of a soul? Does this move you to action?

Challenge

1. How would you answer the Lord Jesus when He asks you, "Who do you say that I am?"

The Transfiguration **Mark 9:1-8**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Transfiguration was a prophetic glimpse of the coming Kingdom of God on earth.
2. The Transfiguration left no doubts as to the identity of Jesus.

Practical Application

1. Let's not lower the Person of Christ as Peter did.
2. Let's listen to the Lord Jesus for everything.

Questions

1. What was the Lord referring to when He said, "some who will not taste death till they have seen kingdom of God..."?
2. What kind of a body did Jesus have on the mountain? What kind of bodies did Moses and Elijah have in their appearance on the mountain?
3. What was the cloud?
4. Of what kind of kingdom was the Transfiguration a prophetic glimpse? What is the other name for this kingdom? How long will it last? Who will be there?
5. Review Peter's confession of faith (Mark 8:29). Was this confirmed in the Transfiguration? Review Peter's comments concerning the Transfiguration (2 Peter 1:16-19).
6. What messianic prophecy was given to Moses? Does this relate to the Transfiguration?

Answers

1. The Transfiguration
2. Jesus' body was glorified. Moses and Elijah were not in their resurrection bodies; they only took on the bodily form of men.
3. The Shekina glory, the pillar that led the Israelites in the wilderness by day and by night. It covered Mt. Sinai when the law was given; it filled the tabernacle and later the temple. It was the visible expression of God's presence.
4. The coming kingdom of God on earth. The millennium. 1,000 years. Who will be there? The Lord, the saints (born again believers, the church), Old Testament believers, and saints who will come out of the tribulation.
5. Yes. Jesus is the Christ.
6. See Deuteronomy 18:15. Yes

Discuss / Consider

1. Peter lowered the person of Christ when he put Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah. Do you ever lower the person of Christ?

2. When the Bible and popular opinion clash, what should be your course of action?

Challenge

1. "Hear Him!" How does this impact your life? Does the word of God govern your life and lifestyle?

Answers

1. If they had started sharing this experience, it would have promoted the wrong idea of what the Lord's messiahship was all about. People would have thought that Jesus was to be King of the Kingdom of God immediately.
2. They understood the idea of a general resurrection, for that was a part of the Jewish Old Testament thought, but the idea of a resurrection out from the dead was new to them.
3. See Mark 9:11-13.
4. This can be looked at as a) partial fulfillment, where John the Baptist partially fulfilled the Malachi prophecy and the Elijah to come will completely fulfill it in the future, and b) typical fulfillment, where John the Baptist was a type or picture of the one who is to come in the future.
5. Sometimes we need to use restraint because others wouldn't understand, or because it would fuel our pride. When our sharing is under control and with understanding, it could be the right time to share. Always make sure that it will bring glory to God. Paul shared his experience of being caught up into Paradise, but only after fourteen years.

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you had mountain-top experiences with the Lord? If so, did you relate them immediately, or did you wait? What were the results?

2. "Elijah has come and is coming." What does this mean?

Challenge

1. Peter, James and John didn't take their questions to the Lord. Do you find yourself searching everywhere else for biblical answers, or do you take your questions directly to the Lord? Cite examples. "They asked Him...Then He answered them..." (Mark 9:11-12)

Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy
Mark 9:14-29

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There is full deliverance from demonic effects found in Christ.
2. Spiritual power is always available, but not always appropriated.
3. God honors an imperfect faith if it is a genuine faith.

Practical Application

1. We can't stay on the mountaintop.
2. The Lord can help you when His disciples fail you.

Questions

1. What kind of a scene awaited Jesus and the three disciples when they descended from the mount of transfiguration?
2. Where is full deliverance from demonic control found? What did Jesus tell the demonic spirit in the boy?
3. Is it possible for demons to come and go in certain persons?
4. Is deliverance from demonic effects painful?
5. Does God honor an imperfect faith, if it is genuine?
6. The Lord said, "Everything is possible for him who believes." Does this mean that the power of positive thinking is operative and appropriate?
7. Read the prayer of the father of the boy (Mark 9:24). Do your prayers resemble this prayer?

Answers

1. There was a boy who had seizures. The scribes and Jesus' other disciples were arguing.
2. Full deliverance is found in Christ alone. Jesus told the demon never to enter the boy again.
3. Yes
4. Yes. The boy cried out and became as one dead. But then he was healed.
5. Yes. The father of the boy said, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief."
6. No. It means that with God all things are possible, and the Lord's power is enough to meet any need. However, the power of positive thinking in itself honors man and not God, for it assumes that man is not dependent on God, but that he is sufficient within himself.
7. What is your personal answer to this question?

Discuss / Consider

1. Recall a mountain-top experience you've had with the Lord. How long did it last? What happened afterwards?

2. Have you ever felt that fellow-believers failed to help you in a time of need? If so, how did you respond to them? Have you failed to help a fellow believer in time of need?

Challenge

1. Spiritual power is available, but it is not always appropriated. Have you found this to be true in your life? If so, cite examples. Determine to call upon the Lord in order to appropriate His power, rather than trying to do things in your own strength.

**The Lord Jesus Teaches His Disciples Not to Have a Sectarian Spirit
Mark 9:30-42**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Understanding the meaning of the cross is of utmost importance.
2. Greatness in the Kingdom of God is determined by humble service
3. A sectarian spirit which causes stumbling is serious sin.

Practical Application

1. Let's not be too quick to judge another's salvation.
2. Even our cups of water will be rewarded.

Questions

1. Why were the disciples afraid to ask the Lord about His coming death and resurrection?
2. What prompted John to speak out as he did, in the midst of a teaching session?
3. What was the focus of the Lord's teaching during these final days?
4. Was Jesus referring to Judas when He said, "The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men"?
5. What does the cross mean? That a good man was accused and crucified unjustly?
6. What was Jesus' teaching about greatness in the kingdom? Were the disciples quick to learn this lesson?
7. Were the disciples ashamed? If so, why?

An Exhortation to Practice Ruthless Self-Discipline
Mark 9:43-50

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Natural desires sometimes must be controlled by drastic and severe action.
2. Hell is not annihilation.

Practical Application

1. Human tragedies are not the last word.
2. Keep salt on your peace table.

Questions

1. List the three categories of desires and appetites and tell what they mean.
2. Is the Lord telling us to take this portion of Scripture literally or figuratively?
3. Give some examples of desires that need to be regulated.
4. Is hell annihilation?
5. Who said, "You are the salt of the earth." To whom was he speaking?
6. Explain, "Keep salt on your peace table."

Answers

1. a) matters of the hand, or things that we do (Mark 9:43), b) matters of the foot, or where we go (Mark 9:45), and c) matters of the eye, or what we see (Mark 9:47)
2. Figuratively
3. Viewing indiscreet or violent TV or videos, and extremes in sports or other pursuits.
4. No, it is not a cessation of existence. The Bible teaches that hell is a permanent place of punishment for the damned. The worm speaks of the gnawing conscience; the fire not quenched speaks of eternal punishment.
5. Jesus. See Matthew 5:13. His disciples, then and now.
6. Salt prevented the spread of decay. Salt is good, and we are to be salt, a preservative in our society, so we are not to lose the flavor. We are to have peace with one another, but not at the expense of losing the quality of the salt (not at the expense of compromising doctrine).

Discuss / Consider

1. Ponder the permanence of hell. Does this prompt you to witness to family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, classmates? It should if you are a disciple of Christ.

2. How are you being salt? Are you maintaining a peace table?

Challenge

1. Review the categories of desires and appetites. Are you vulnerable in one or more of these areas? Take care to discipline yourself that you may be grow as a disciple of Christ.

The Lord's View Concerning Divorce
Mark 10:1-12

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Bible does not condone divorce.
2. God designed marriage to be heterosexual, monogamous and permanent.

Practical Application

1. Your marriage might be better if you leave your father and mother.
2. Be willing to let God change your mind about your spouse.

Questions

1. On what issue did the Pharisees test Jesus? How did they try to trap Him? Were all the Pharisees of like mind concerning this issue?
2. How did the Lord answer them?
3. Under whose jurisdiction was the territory of Perea? How was he involved in the issue?
4. What is marriage supposed to reflect, according to Scripture?
5. List three aspects of a God-designed marriage.
6. Marriage counselors frequently note that there is a particular barrier to reconciliation. What is this barrier? What can happen when the barrier is dropped?

Answers

1. Divorce. If Jesus had come down hard on divorce, it could incur the wrath of Herod. On the other hand, if He went light on the subject of divorce, He would lose the support of the common people who were His followers, and were more conservative on this matter. It seemed to be a "Catch-22" situation. The Pharisees themselves were divided on this issue.
2. The Lord answered them by going back to the creation of marriage, as God intended.
3. Herod Antipas. John the Baptist had denounced Herod's divorce and adulterous remarriage to Herodius. Herod ordered the beheading of John the Baptist at the request of Herodius and Salome.
4. The relationship between Christ and His bride, the church. See Ephesians 5.
5. It is to be a) heterosexual, b) monogamous, and c) permanent.
6. To be willing to let God change your mind about your spouse. Miracles can happen.

Discuss / Consider

1. Be honest in stating your view on divorce. Does it agree with the biblical view? If your view differs from the biblical view, trace it back to its origin and justification in your mind.

2. If you are married, does your marriage reflect the relationship of Christ to His church? Read Ephesians 5.

Challenge

1. If you have never thanked the Lord for not divorcing you because of your unfaithfulness to Him, do so now.

Entrance into the Kingdom of God Requires Childlike Faith
Mark 10:13-16

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Children are important to the Lord.
2. Entrance into the Kingdom of God requires a childlike attitude.

Practical Application

1. Let's not misrepresent the Lord.
2. Let's bring our children to the Lord.

Questions

1. Of what age are the "children" of Mark 10:13?
2. What prompted the parents to bring their children to Jesus?
3. How can "blessed" be translated?
4. "Do not forbid them..." (Mark 10:14). What characteristics were seen here in Jesus?
5. What was Jesus teaching in this object lesson?
6. In what ways does a person have to become like a little child?
7. How can obstacles be overcome that interfere with bringing a child to Christ?

Answers

1. Babies, young children, pre-teens
2. It was common in Jesus' day for parents to bring their children to a great rabbi for blessing.
3. "Fervently blessed"
4. Tenderness, compassion and social graciousness
5. That entrance into the kingdom of God required a child-like attitude
6. Children are essentially trusting and receptive to what is told them; they are not yet cynical or skeptical, but they are open. In the same way, people who become Christians must in simple faith and trust believe that Christ died on the cross for their sins, and accept Him as their personal Savior. They must become child-like in their reception. Furthermore, children are helpless and dependent. Salvation must be received as a gift.
7. There can be obstacles, but your relationship to your children can overcome them. Eunice's situation was not ideal, for her husband was not a believer ([Acts 16:1](#)). Eunice should be an example to single parents or those of mixed marriages. Pray about obstacles, then let the Lord lead.

Discuss / Consider

1. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever." Children were important to the Lord then, and they are important to Him now. How important are they to you? In whatever your sphere of influence, do you sense an urgency in bringing children to Christ?

2. Why is it important for parents to bring their children to the Lord in their early years? How can they bring their children to Christ?

Challenge

1. The disciples misrepresented the Lord when they rebuked the people. (The average person would have thought that this was the Lord's policy). Be careful that you do not misrepresent the Lord.

The Rich Young Ruler Comes to Jesus
Mark 10:17-31

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. No one is good.

2. No one earns salvation.

Practical Application

1. Aren't you glad you're not rich?

2. You can't make a better investment than to serve Christ.

Questions

1. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:25) What does this mean?

2. Jesus said that those who leave their family for His sake and the gospel's will receive a hundred fold (Mark 10:29-30). Does this mean that a man should divorce his wife to go out preaching?

3. "No one is good." Is this for real?

4. What do you recall about the man who came running to Jesus?

5. What did he ask Jesus? Why wasn't keeping the law good enough to save him? Why did he go away sorrowful?

6. Why is it hard for those who are rich to enter the kingdom of God? Why is it hard for Christians to be wealthy?

Answers

1. There are several interpretations: a) the needle is a narrow mountain pass between rocks, b) a small door located within the city gate, called the eye of the needle, which a laden camel would have difficulty getting through, c) a physician's needle, like Dr. Luke used (Luke 18:25). In any case, it would be impossible for a camel to pass through any of them.
2. Absolutely not. It means that when you are committed to the Lord Jesus for service, your priorities change. The Lord becomes number one, and all else comes under His Lordship.
3. The Lord did not deny His deity, but He showed the ruler that he had a faulty concept of what was "good." In reference to God's standard of what is good, we all fall short (Romans 3:10-12, 23). Relative to one another, we may be good or bad, but in God's perfect standard, no one is good except the Lord Jesus. Salvation in Christ alone makes one righteous.
4. He was sincere, unlike the Pharisees. He was enthusiastic, reverent, respectable, and he kept the law. He was rich, young and a ruler.
5. "What shall I do that I may inherit life?" The Lord had to show him that he really hadn't kept the law. Jesus pointed out to the young ruler that God was not number one in his life. He told him to sell whatever he had and to give it to the poor, and he had many possessions. He was confronted with a decision - either Christ was number one, or he was.
6. Material possessions can be an obstacle to entering the kingdom of God. We are confronted with the same decision as the young ruler. Just as riches keep someone from becoming a Christian, so they can keep a Christian from a full commitment to Christ (see 1 Timothy 6:9). Riches can be used for the Lord, but many Christians have difficulty handling them.

Discuss / Consider

1. Is Christ really number one in your life?

2. What is the best investment you can make?

Challenge

1. If there are any riches (material possessions or other obsessions keeping you from a full commitment to Christ, shed them, so He is number one.

The Lord's Third Major Prediction
Mark 10:32-45

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord Jesus was omniscient during His earthly life.
2. There are future rewards, but they are earned.
3. The death of Christ was substitutionary.

Practical Application

1. Don't let fear keep you from following Christ.
2. How mature is your faith?

Questions

1. Why were Jesus' disciples amazed and afraid? Did being afraid keep the disciples from following Christ?
2. Define "omniscient." Was Jesus omniscient during His earthly life?
3. What did James and John ask from Jesus? What was wrong with this request?
4. How did the other disciples feel about their request? What does this tell us about them?
5. What is the cup? What is the baptism?
6. Did Jesus' prediction come true?
7. What was it that the Lord was teaching in this passage?

Answers

1. Because the Lord was determined to go to Jerusalem, knowing that He was going into a danger zone. And so were the disciples, but regardless of their fear, they followed Him.
2. All-knowing. Yes, because He was and is fully God. There were times, however, when He chose not to use His omniscience.
3. They asked Him to let one of them sit on His right hand and the other on His left hand in glory. It was selfish and ambitious, and made at the expense of the other disciples.
4. They were greatly displeased. It showed that they were not free from selfish ambitions, either.
5. They refer to the Lord's imminent cup of suffering and the baptism of death.
6. Yes. James was martyred (Acts 12:2) and John was exiled (Revelation 1:9).
7. That greatness in the kingdom is determined by serving others. This is not the world's concept of greatness, but it is the Lord's.

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you ever been selfish and ambitious in your desires and requests? How are positions of honor given in the kingdom of God?

2. How was the death of Christ substitutionary? Contemplate what this means to you.

Challenge

1. Have you ever been fearful when following Christ? If so, list some of these times. Did you overcome this fear? If not, how could you overcome it?

Bartimaeus, the Blind Beggar, Healed
Mark 10:46-52

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord Jesus always honors the request of faith.
2. Discipleship means following Christ up to Jerusalem.

Practical Application

1. Don't let the crowd keep you from Christ.

Questions

1. Are there contradictions in the Bible as to the number of blind men, and as to where they were healed?
2. How many "Jerichos" are there?
3. Why did Jesus honor the request made in Mark 10:51, and deny the request made in Mark 10:37?
4. Discipleship means following Christ up to Jerusalem. Of what is this a picture?
5. The crowd tried to keep Bartimaeus from Christ. How? Why?

Our Lord's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem
Mark 11:1-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God made a legitimate offer of the Davidic Kingdom to the Jews.
2. Profession is not the same as salvation.

Practical Application

1. Are you willing to let the Lord borrow your stuff?
2. Be careful how you use the phrase, "The Lord has need of it."

Questions

1. What is meant by "Passion Week?"
2. Who prophesied that Jesus would come into Jerusalem riding on a donkey?
3. What is significant about the village of Bethany in this passage?
4. What is significant about the village of Bethpage?
5. How did the crowd receive the Lord when He came to Jerusalem?
6. What does "Hosanna" mean? What did the crowd have in mind when they cried "Hosanna?"
7. God made a legitimate offer of the Davidic Kingdom to the Jews. What was it? How did they respond?
8. Because of their response, what does this mean concerning the Davidic Kingdom?

Answers

1. It is the last week of the Lord's earthly ministry. The triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem is the event we celebrate as Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter.
2. The prophet Zechariah. See Zechariah 9:9.
3. It is where the Lord started from. It was a little village about two miles east of Jerusalem. This is where He stayed for the first few nights of His last week of ministry, possibly in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.
4. Jesus sent two of His disciples ahead to the village of Bethpage, where they were instructed to find a donkey.
5. They welcomed Him into Jerusalem, spreading palms, leafy branches and clothing on the road before Him. They rolled out the red carpet.
6. "Save, we pray." It is taken from Psalm 118:25-26, which was typically sung or chanted during the Passover Week. "Save" was cried in the sense of "Hail to the King," or "God save the King." Most likely, the crowd had in mind, "Save us from our Roman oppressors," for they knew that God had promised an everlasting kingdom to David through the Messiah.
7. Read 2 Samuel 7:16. In Mark 11:10, the people probably understood that Jesus, as a son of David, was a fulfillment of this prophecy. However, they rejected the King and His kingdom. The nation of Israel refused to accept Jesus as their Messiah.
8. Because of their rejection, the kingdom was not set up then. The earthly kingdom will be set up when Christ comes back again. The time has been set when the nation of Israel returns to the Lord.

Discuss / Consider

1. Explain the distinction between true possessors and false professors

2. In which parable did Jesus make this distinction? See Matthew 13.

Challenge

1. Are you willing to let the Lord borrow your "stuff?" In what ways have you done this?

The Cursing of the Fig Tree and the Cleansing of the Temple
Mark 11:12-26

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Israel's history is pictured by the fig tree.

Practical Application

1. By faith we can see certain mountains removed.

Questions

1. What do the buds of a fig tree indicate?
2. Who were the money changers? What did they do? Why did the Lord denounce them?
3. How is the fig tree a picture of Israel's history?
4. What did John mean about the ax laid to the root of the tree? See Matthew 3:10. Was this prophetic?
5. What is the good news about the nation of Israel?
6. What is the meaning of the mountain in Mark 11:23? What did this say to the disciples? To us?
7. Why was the fig tree cut down? What is the Lord's promise here?

Answers

1. They are edible as early fruit in the spring, and they indicate the summer harvest.
2. They took in money from all over the Roman Empire and exchanged it for local coinage. They took advantage of people and made a good profit for themselves. Jesus denounced them because the money changing was done in the name of worshipping God, so the people could pay the temple tax and buy sacrifices. But it wasn't worship; it was business transacted in the Lord's house, which should have been a place of prayer.
3. The fig tree represents Israel, and it is likened to a fig tree in both the Old Testament (Hosea 9:10) and the New Testament (Luke 13:6-7). The three years mean the Lord's ministry on earth. The tree didn't bear fruit, but only "religious" leaves. Therefore, it will be cut down and set aside. In the cursing of the fig tree we see God's dealing with Israel. The Lord looked for fruit, but found none (John 1:11). He found leaves, but no fruit. There is a lot of religious activity and lip service, but no fruit.
4. Israel was cut down and removed from the place of privilege. Yes, in 70 A.D., the temple was destroyed and the nation of Israel was scattered.
5. There will be a return of the nation Israel to the place of privilege.
6. The mountain was a barrier to the Lord's on-going ministry and program, and therefore, removed. These kinds of mountains can be removed. When we face barriers to the Lord's work, we can remove them. How? By praying in faith and not doubting.
7. So the Lord's program could be realized and the gospel go out into the whole world. If we confront some obstacle or barrier to the work of the Lord, by praying in faith we can see that mountain removed.

Discuss / Consider

1. Why should you keep your eyes on Israel? What do you see of historic and spiritual significance currently happening in Israel?

2. How great is your faith in God? Do you pray believing?

Challenge

1. Are there mountains in your life right now? What are they? Which ones are a barrier to the work of the Lord? How can you see them removed?

Our Lord Foils an Attempt by Jewish Leaders to Trap Him
Mark 11:27-33

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Giving creative answers to the opposition is biblical

2. Point out the inconsistencies of the opposition is biblical.

Practical Application

1. Let's be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

Questions

1. What are the "these things" of Mark 11:28?

2. What was the Sanhedrin? Who were the members of the Sanhedrin?

3. How did the Jewish leaders try to trap Jesus with His own words? Did it work? How did Jesus answer them?

4. Did Jesus answer the question about John's authority?

5. What does it mean to be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves?

6. Cite a creative answer that Jesus gave to the opposition.

The Parable of the Vineyard **Mark 12:1-12**

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The nation of Israel was worse than a fruitless vineyard.
2. The Lord predicted the Gentile Church in this parable.

Practical Application

1. Let's be willing to talk about the wrath of God and hell.
2. Let's try to influence society to support biblical values.

Questions

1. To whom was Jesus speaking in parables
2. Who were the landlords and owners of large estates in Palestine?
3. How did the Palestinian workers pay rent to the landlords?
4. How did the owners protect the vineyards?
5. What was represented a) absentee owner and landlord, b) the vineyard, c) the wall, d) the servants, e) beloved son?
6. Did the landlord expect a harvest?
7. What was predicted in this parable?
8. From what Psalm was Mark 12:10-11 taken?

The Pharisees and Herodians Question the Lord
Mark 12:13-17

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.
2. Render to God the things that are God's.

Practical Application

1. Let's try to give creative biblical answers to the critic.
2. Let's remember that we are God's coinage.

Questions

1. Who were "they" in Mark 12:13?
2. Who were the Pharisees? The Herodians? Were these 2 groups normally in agreement with one another?
3. How did they try to trap the Lord? How did the Lord answer them?
4. What did the Lord mean, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's..."? What does this mean to us?
5. Why should we try to give creative biblical answers to critics?
6. What does it mean that we are God's coinage?

Answers

1. The Jewish leaders and the authorities.
2. The Pharisees were a religious party, orthodox Jews. The Herodians were a political party, supporting the Herods who were in power in Palestine (and since the Herodian dynasty received its authority from Rome, they in turn supported Rome). Normally these two groups were poles apart when it came to religious and political issues, but here we see them joining forces against the Lord.
3. They began with insincere flattery, then they asked about paying taxes. They thought they had Him in a dilemma. If He answered, "Yes," He would alienate the common people, who hated paying taxes to Rome. If He answered, "No," they could accuse Him of rebelling and opposing Rome, and have Him arrested. The Lord Jesus answered wisely by asking for a penny, the price of the tax. Read His answer in Mark 12:17.
4. If you are living in the Roman Empire, using Roman coinage, using Roman roads, and living under the protection of the Roman government, then you should pay your taxes. It means that we are to be subject to our governing authority. See Romans 13:1 and Titus 3:1.
5. There are always those who would try to put us in a dilemma, even as the leaders tried to do with Jesus. Critics of the Christian faith would try to make us look like fools. If we have creative answers like Jesus did, we can thwart their attempts to discredit Christianity. We need to prepare and think ahead, and we need to pray. Read Hebrews 4:16 and James 1:5.
6. It means that God's image is stamped on us. We were made in the image of God; we are His coinage, His property, and we are to represent Him and be available for His service.

Discuss / Consider

1. Have you ever been the object of agreement between normally opposing parties because of your stand for Christ? How did you react? How should you react?

2. Do you have some biblical and creative answers for critics? See the answer to question #5.

Challenge

1. Ponder, "You are God's coinage." Does this mean as much to you as it should?

The Sadducees Try to Discredit the Lord
Mark 12:18-27

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There is no marriage in heaven.
2. There is no soul sleep after death.
3. Every word in Scripture is inspired and important.

Practical Application

1. It's not wrong to outsmart the opposition.

Questions

1. Who were the Sadducees? Were they influential?
2. Did the Sadducees believe in the resurrection of the dead? Did they believe in all the Scriptures?
3. How did they test the Lord Jesus? How did He answer them?
4. Is there marriage in heaven? Support with Scripture.
5. Do we turn into angels in heaven?
6. What is meant by "soul sleep?" Is it scriptural?
7. Why did the Lord use a quotation from Exodus when He spoke to the Sadducees?

The Lord Asks and Answers a Question of the Scribes and Pharisees
Mark 12:28-37

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Word of God is both Human and Divine.

2. The Son of God is both Human and Divine.

Practical Application

1. Commitment is more than belief.

2. Try asking questions as a technique for witnessing.

Questions

1. Who tried to trap the Lord to discredit Him before the people, and to get Him arrested by the Roman authorities? How did they try to trap Him? Did they succeed?

2. Another group tried to trap the Lord. Who were they? How did they try to trap Him? Did they succeed?

3. What did the scribe of the Pharisees ask the Lord? How did He answer? Which Scripture did He quote?

4. What did the Rabbis do to the law?

5. Is the Shamah still followed? If so, by whom? What is the Shamah?

6. Is the Word both human and divine? Support your answer biblically.

7. Is the Son of God both human and divine? Support your answer biblically.

Answers

1. The Jewish leaders. They sent a delegation of Pharisees and Herodians to question Him. They tried to trap Him by asking a question about paying taxes to Rome, but they did not succeed.
2. The Sadducees asked a hypothetical question about the law of Levite marriage in connection with the resurrection. They did not succeed.
3. He asked which commandment was foremost in all of the law. Jesus answered by quoting from Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18.
4. They divided it up in 613 precepts.
5. Yes, by Orthodox Jews, who have the words written in their phylacteries and placed on a piece of parchment in the mazuza, a box outside their doors. The Shema is taken from Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one."
6. Yes. Note how the Lord referred to the authorship of Psalm 110, where David himself said by the Holy Spirit, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies my footstool.'" (Psalm 110:1). David wrote this Psalm under the Holy Spirit's direction. This is what is meant by divine authorship. Every book of the Bible was written by men, but the Holy Spirit controlled and superintended it. "Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21). This is what is meant by inspiration.
7. Yes. This was the essential point the Lord was making with the scribes and Pharisees. They all agreed that the Messiah would be a descendant of David's, but the Lord's point was that He must be more than this. In Psalm 110, God the Father speaks to God the Son. How could He be David's Lord if He was only a human descendant? He had to be God as well as man.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you believe that the Word of God is both human and divine? How would you defend this if a skeptic should challenge you?

2. Do you believe that the Son of God is both human and divine? How would you defend this belief if challenged?

Challenge

1. Answer the question, "How can the Messiah be David's son if David himself called Him Lord?" Also answer the question, "What is meant by divine authorship?"

The Hypocrisy of the Wealthy Givers and the Humility of a Poor Widow
Mark 12:38-44

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There are degrees of punishment in hell.
2. God is more interested in the how than in the how much.

Practical Application

1. Let's not be like the scribes and Pharisees.
2. God looks at how much we have left.

Questions

1. What does the Lord tell those to whom He is speaking? Why does He tell them this?
2. Why were the Jews told to wear fringe and tassels on their garments? How did they abuse this order of God?
3. How were the scribes paid for their work? How did they abuse this privilege?
4. Are there degrees of punishment in hell?
5. God is more interested in the "how" than in the "how much." Explain.
6. God looks at how much we have left. What does this mean?

Answers

1. He tells them to beware of the scribes and Pharisees, because they are self-righteous hypocrites. They loved to look and sound pious, but it was for show.
2. See Numbers 15:38-40. They made the fringe and tassels obvious to draw attention to themselves. They loved the greetings in the marketplace, and their prominent place in the temple.
3. They were not paid, per se, for their work in interpreting the Scriptures. But, as the lawyers of their day, they would depend on the generosity of the devout Jews for support. With clever legal maneuvering and manipulation, they took advantage of the common people and exploited the poor. In some cases, they forced widows out of their houses for their own financial gain.
4. Yes. Read Mark 12:40 and Matthew 11:20-24.
5. As the Lord watched people putting money into the treasury, He saw a lot of money going in. He didn't condemn big givers, but He took special note of the poor widow. How a person gives is more important than what he gives. The widow gave sacrificially, in faith, trusting the Lord to meet her needs, for she put in all her living expenses.
6. The widow gave all that she had, whereas the rich had a lot left. The Lord looks at what we have left, or what we keep for ourselves.

Discuss / Consider

1. Do you believe in a literal heaven and a literal hell? Do you believe that there will be degrees of rewards in heaven and degrees of punishment in hell? On what do you base your answers?

2. Have you ever been caught up in loving the attention of people?

Challenge

1. How do you determine what to give to the Lord? Do you believe that your giving honors Him? Have you ever been convicted about giving more? Do you give sacrificially, depriving yourself? When you give more of your income and yourself to the Lord's work, what is the outcome?

The Olivet Discourse – the Lord Talks About the End Times
Mark 13:1-13

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Olivet Discourse looks forward to two future events.

2. The Olivet Discourse answers two questions about the end times.

Practical Application

1. Let's not be sidetracked by buildings.

2. Let's not be misled by date setters.

Questions

1. When did the Olivet Discourse take place?

2. What was it that the disciples remarked about? What do you recall about the temple?

3. What did the Lord predict in this passage? Did it come true?

4. The Olivet Discourse looked forward to two future events. List them.

5. When will the times of the Gentiles come to an end?

6. The Olivet Discourse answers two questions about the end times. What are the questions?

7. List the signs that are not concerning the end times.

Answers

1. During the final week of the Lord's earthly ministry.
2. The beauty of the temple, including the associated buildings and the great stones of the temple complex. The temple itself was of white polished marble, and the roof was gilded with gold.
3. That not one stone shall be left. This literally came true in 70 A.D. when the Roman army under Titus conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the temple.
4. The destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., and the return of the Lord.
5. When the Lord returns.
6. a) When will these things be? and b) What will be the sign when all of these things will be fulfilled?
7. False messiahs, wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes and famines, persecutions, floggings, arrest, family betrayals.

Discuss / Consider

1. What is your grasp of Bible prophecy? What signals the end times?

2. The disciples focused on the buildings, which wasn't wrong, but the priority should be on God's program and God's people. Where is your focus?

Challenge

1. How involved are you in the church of your attendance? What are you doing, specifically, to share the gospel and to build up believers?

Continuation of the Olivet Discourse
Mark 13:14-23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There will be a future Tribulation.

2. There will be a future Temple.

Practical Application

1. Let's try to understand prophecy.

Questions

1. Why did the Lord give the Olivet Discourse?
2. What did the Lord speak about in the first part of the discourse? (v1-13). What is the topic of [Mark 13:14-23](#)?
3. Is the Tribulation taking place now? Or, will it be in the future? Will Christians go through the Tribulation?
4. Which three books of the Bible (mentioned in the tape) underscore the Tribulation?
5. Is "Jacob's trouble" a time of trouble for Jewish people only?
6. To what does the abomination of desolation refer? What does it signal? Does this event come gradually?

The Olivet Discourse: Jesus' Return and Signs of the End Times **Mark 13:24-27**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. The Second Coming of Christ will be preceded by worldwide signs**

- 2. The Second Coming of Christ will be preceded by worldwide evangelism.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let's get ready for the biggest party this world has ever seen.**

- 2. Let's distinguish between the signs of the end times.**

Questions

1. What worldwide signs will be noted prior to the Second Coming of Christ?
2. To whom especially was the sign of the abomination of desolation given?
3. When, precisely, will the cosmic disorders occur?
4. Could spiritual forces of evil be involved in these signs?
5. When will worldwide evangelism occur?
6. Who will be present when the Lord returns to earth in power and in glory (when He sets up His kingdom on earth)?

Answers

1. The Great Tribulation and cosmic disorders
2. To the Jewish believers
3. Immediately after the Tribulation and right before the Lord's return to earth.
4. Yes. There will be war in heaven. See [Revelation 12:7-9](#).
5. Before the Second Coming of Christ
6. Old Testament believers, the church, martyrs of the Tribulation period, believers who survived the Tribulation, and the elect angels.

Discuss / Consider

1. Would you be able to distinguish between the signs leading up to the end times and the signs of the end times?

2. Can you differentiate between the Rapture and the Second Coming of the Lord when He returns to earth in power and glory? Could you state these events clearly to someone who is uncertain?

Challenge

1. Review the signs leading up to the end times and the signs of the end times. Clarify this in your mind so you could explain the signs to someone else.

The Parable of the Fig Tree
Mark 13:28-31

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The return of Israel is not a coincidence.

2. The duration of the Jewish people is not a coincidence.

Practical Application

1. Why not make a better investment of your time and money?

Questions

1. State the two categories of the signs given in the Olivet Discourse.
2. List the events that characterize each of these signs.
3. What is the difference between a parable and an illustration?
4. Explain the parable of the fig tree.
5. Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?
6. When was the nation of Israel set aside? When was Israel reborn as a nation?
7. Is the return of Jews to Israel just a coincidence? Is the duration of the Jewish people just a coincidence?

Watch and Be Ready for the Lord's Return
Mark 13:32-37

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Watch is more important than when.
2. There is a difference between having omniscience and exercising omniscience.

Practical Application

1. Let's spend more time in preparation than in calculation.

Questions

1. What was the subject of the Olivet Discourse?
2. In which passage of the Bible are the events of 70 A.D. covered?
3. Who were the Gentiles in this passage of Scripture?
4. Are we on the threshold of the end times? How do we know?
5. According to the Roman culture of this time, what are the four times of Mark 13:35?
6. Explain the difference between having omniscience and exercising it.

Mary Anoints the Lord
Mark 14:1-11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Worship involves sacrifice.

2. Worship is not a waste.

Practical Application

1. Have we done what we could?

2. Is it possible that you are a Judas in disguise?

Questions

1. Explain the Feast of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

2. Who was Simon the leper?

3. Was Mary's anointing of Jesus as shocking to them as it would be to us?

4. Why did Mary anoint the Lord Jesus?

5. How did Jesus' companions respond when Mary anointed Him?

Answers

1. These were two of the seven annual feasts in the Jewish calendar. Since they shortly followed one another, Jews from all over Palestine and the Roman Empire would be in Jerusalem to celebrate.
2. He was a leper who had been healed by Jesus. He was possibly either Mary, Martha, and Lazarus' father, or Martha's husband.
3. No, it was not out of place in their culture. It was common at that time to anoint your guests' head and feet with ointment.
4. It was more than a gesture of welcome to her guest. She realized that He was about to die, thus she was anointing His body for burial (Mark 14:8).
5. They criticized her for "wasting" this valuable perfume, saying she should have sold it instead and given the money to the poor.

Discuss / Consider

1. The events of Jesus' last week were not a surprise to Him. He knew Judas would betray Him; He knew He would be put to death. All of these events were under the sovereign control of God. See Matthew 26:2 and Acts 2:23. If you knew this suffering was in your future, would you have continued? Although He knew the horror that awaited Him, Christ endured all of this for your sake. Praise Him for this today.

2. Worship is not a waste. Do not be discouraged when unbelievers, or even fellow believers, criticize you for "spending too much time" on your Christianity. Your worship is valuable and precious to God. Discuss things that this world finds valuable, but that, from an eternal perspective, are a waste. Your worship will have eternal value.

Challenge

1. How costly is your worship of God? Are you giving God only your spare time and thoughts, or are you giving Him the best you can afford?

The Institution of the Lord's Supper
Mark 14:12-25

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The predetermined plan of God does not eliminate the moral responsibility of man.
2. Unbelievers will some day wish they had never been born.

Practical Application

1. Is your house available for the Lord's use?

Questions

1. What did the Passover Feast commemorate?
2. Why would it have been easy for the disciples to spot a man carrying a pitcher of water?
3. What did the Lord mean when He spoke of the one dipping into the bowl with Him?
4. Were there many steps in the Passover meal? Which steps did the Lord take in His last Passover meal?
5. When did the Lord end the Passover meal?
6. What two things were emphasized in the Passover meal?
7. Where did the Lord and His disciples go after the meal?

Answers

1. The exodus of the Jews out of Egypt during the Passover. A lamb was sacrificed, which is a spiritual picture of the great sacrifice of the Lamb of God.
2. In those days, a woman would have been carrying a pitcher of water, not a man.
3. People did not use silverware then, as we do today, but they would take pieces of bread and dip them into bowls or dishes containing juices and other preparations.
4. Yes, there were a number of steps. One step was the breaking and passing of the unleavened bread, and it was at this point that the Lord Jesus said, "Take, eat, this is My body." Then, there was the step of taking of the cup of thanksgiving. In the Passover meal, there were four steps of taking the cup, the third one was known as the cup of thanksgiving. It was likely at this point that Jesus said, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many."
5. After He said, "I will no longer drink of the vine until I drink it again with you in the kingdom of God."
6. The cup of consummation, which awaits the Lord's return to this earth when He will set up His kingdom, and the Passover meal, to be superseded by the Lord's Supper.
7. To the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane

Discuss / Consider

1. Judas was held accountable for his actions, even if it was in the pre-determined will of God. It is not easy to understand how the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man fit together, but man is accountable for his actions. Have you ever felt that you were not responsible for your actions? Have you ever excused yourself on these grounds?

2. How do you feel when you hear that unbelievers will someday wish that they had never been born? Does this make you sense a greater responsibility to share the gospel?

Challenge

1. The owner of the house offered his large upper room, and he furnished it and made it ready for the Lord's Passover meal. Is your house available for the Lord's use?

The Lord's Prayer in Gethsemane
Mark 14:26-42

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. There was no other way to save us.
2. Watching and praying preserves believers from temptation.

Practical Application

1. Have you ever prayed an hour?
2. When I am strong, then I am weak.

Questions

1. What did Jesus and His disciples do after the Passover meal?
2. "I will strike the Shepherd & the sheep will be scattered." Which OT book did Jesus quote? What did it mean?
3. What was the response of the disciples? Who was the most vocal? How did Jesus reply?
4. What did Jesus do in the garden? What did He ask of His disciples? What did the disciples do in the garden?
5. Why was Jesus distressed and troubled? What did He pray about?
6. Did the Father grant Jesus' request?
7. "When I am weak, then I am strong." Who said this, and what did he mean?

Answers

1. They sang a hymn, then went out to the Mount of Olives. The hymn probably was from Psalms 115-118, a part of the praise or Hallel psalms, traditionally sung after the Passover meal.
2. Zechariah 13:7. It means that all the disciples would scatter because Jesus would be struck down.
3. All the disciples said that they would not forsake Jesus. Peter was the most vocal disciple. Jesus spoke three times to Peter, saying that before the rooster crowed, he would deny Him three times.
4. He prayed and He asked His disciples to watch and pray. However, they slept.
5. Not because of the impending pain of the crucifixion, but because He knew He would have to suffer the wrath of God because of our sins. He was made a sin offering for us. Jesus prayed, if it were possible, that this cup would pass from Him, but He quickly added, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done."
6. No. Because there was no other way. The only solution for us as sinners is substitution, and the substitute must be a sinless human being. Our Lord Jesus alone was that Person. He took on humanity to become our Savior.
7. Paul (2 Corinthians 12:10). He meant that when he was battered about, he found a source of spiritual strength available from the Lord. When we are at the end of our rope, we can find strength in the Lord. The converse is also true. When we think that we can do something in our own strength, we find that we fail.

Discuss / Consider

1. Why is it so difficult to attend to prayer, especially for any length of time? Remember, it is prayer and waiting on God that preserves believers from temptation.
2. Determine to increase the amount of your prayer time, especially when you are by yourself. Perhaps you may want to keep a prayer list, and from time to time review it, keeping a record of when and how God answered your prayers. This can be most encouraging to pray specifically.

Challenge

1. Have you found that when you are strong, you are weak? And the converse? Recall some specific examples. Determine to seek strength in the Lord alone.

Judas Betrays the Lord Jesus with a Kiss
Mark 14:43-52

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Zeal can be misguided.

2. Failure can be overcome.

Practical Application

1. Are you a follower like Judas?

Questions

1. What happened after the session of prayer in the garden?
2. Was Judas' kiss an unusual gesture?
3. Who would have comprised the multitude?
4. What was the Sanhedrin? Who were its members?
5. Who wielded the sword? Who was struck by the sword?
6. What did the disciples do when they saw that the Lord was not going to defend Himself?
7. Was Judas a trusted follower of Jesus? Was Judas a true follower of Jesus?

Answers

1. Judas arrived with an armed multitude, and he kissed the Lord on the cheek.
2. No. This was a common gesture of affection that a disciple would give to his Rabbi.
3. The Jewish temple guards and some Roman soldiers (John 18), as well as some members of the Sanhedrin (Luke 22).
4. The ruling body, or the Jewish "senate." Members would be the chief priests, scribes and elders.
5. Peter. Malchus.
6. They all forsook Jesus and fled.
7. Yes, he was even treasurer of the group of disciples. No, he had never committed himself to Jesus by faith.

Discuss / Consider

1. Zealousness can be a good thing, but not always. Can you recall a time that your zeal got you into trouble?

2. Are there times when you have been like Judas, betraying Christ?

Challenge

1. Once a failure, always a failure does not have to be true. Can you recall a time when you failed the Lord? Was it permanent? How can you be true to your Lord?

The Lord's Trial
Mark 14:53-65

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Jesus predicted His resurrection.

2. Jesus claimed to be God.

Practical Application

1. At whose fire are you warming yourself?

Questions

1. Who were the Jewish authorities involved in the Lord's trial?
2. What were the two stages of the Lord's trial? Why were there two stages?
3. What was the purpose for this unusual night session?
4. When did the high priest become convinced that they had accomplished their mission?
5. How did the Lord foretell His resurrection? To what was He referring?
6. A claim to be the Messiah was also another claim. What was it?
7. Why did the Jewish authorities want Jesus crucified?

Answers

1. Jesus was tried before Caiaphas (the high priest) and the Sanhedrin (the governing body of the Jews).
2. The first stage was before the religious authorities, and the second stage was before the political authorities (Pilate and Herod). The religious authorities did not have the power to enforce the death penalty.
3. To find some cause to take the Lord before the Roman authorities the next day to ask for the death penalty.
4. When the Lord answered, "I am."
5. He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ([John 2:19](#)). He was referring to the temple of His body.
6. That He was also God.
7. Because Jesus claimed to be God.

Discuss / Consider

1. Skeptics have a problem accepting Jesus' claim to be God. Are you sufficiently versed in apologetics to defend the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah?

2. Why is it impossible for the skeptics to confirm their denial?

Challenge

1. Compare Mark 14:54 and John 21:9. Label these two fires. Can you identify as a participant in either or both of these fires?

Peter's Denial of the Lord Jesus
Mark 14:66-72

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The heart of man is very deceitful.

2. True faith perseveres.

Practical Application

1. Does our love stand the test of fear?

2. Have you heard the rooster crow lately?

Questions

1. Where was Peter warming himself?

2. What trial was going on during that time?

3. What clue showed that Peter was a Galilean?

4. Who accused Peter? Of what was he accused?

5. What is a characteristic of a true saving faith? Does this apply to Peter? Does it apply to Judas?

6. What casts out fear?

7. Was Peter scared?

Answers

1. By the fire in the lower courtyard of the home of Caiaphas, the high priest.
2. The religious trial of the Lord Jesus, which was taking place upstairs where the Sanhedrin was gathered.
3. His speech. The Jews of Palestine spoke Aramaic. People from the Galilean area spoke Aramaic with a definite accent, different from those in Jerusalem.
4. A servant girl of the high priest. She accused him of being with Jesus, then of being "one of them," and finally, of being a Galilean.
5. Perseverance. Although Peter denied the Lord, he came back to serve Him faithfully. After the Lord restored Peter, he served even unto martyrdom. Judas was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver, but he never exercised faith.
6. Love. "Perfect love casts out fear." (1 John 4:18)
7. Yes. Wouldn't you be?

Discuss / Consider

1. Failure can cause a Christian to weep over his sin and denial of the Lord, and to re-evaluate his life and return to the Lord. This happened in Peter's case. Has it ever happened to you?

2. Have you heard a rooster crow lately?

Challenge

1. Take a lesson from Peter and persevere in your faith.

The Political Trial of the Lord Jesus
Mark 15:1-20

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Jesus was the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.

2. God delivered Jesus to be crucified for our sins.

Practical Application

1. What's our bottom line when making decisions?

Questions

1. Which trial takes place in Mark 15?
2. List the three phases of this trial.
3. Of what did the Sanhedrin accuse Jesus?
4. What did the Sanhedrin accuse Jesus of before Pilate? What was the irony in this accusation?
5. When Jesus answered, "I am", what was the essence of the meaning?
6. If Pilate found no fault in Christ, why did he deliver Him to be crucified?
7. Was God in control when Jesus was delivered to be crucified?

Answers

1. The political trial before Pilate
2. a) Jesus appeared before Pilate, b) Jesus appeared before Herod, and c) Jesus appeared again before Pilate
3. Blasphemy
4. Treason, by saying that Jesus was perverting the nation, that He refused to pay taxes to Caesar, and that He, Himself was a king. The irony? The Jews themselves had desired for someone to overthrow Rome. Also, they called for the release of Barabbas, who was convicted of treason.
5. He meant that His kingdom was not of this world. A king, yes, but His kingdom was not political. He was not seeking to overthrow Rome.
6. He wanted the favor of the crowd.
7. Yes. God was and is always in control. God sovereignly decreed that the Lord Jesus would go to the cross for our sins.

Discuss / Consider

1. Read about the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. What has this Suffering Servant done for you? Does He make a difference in your life on a day-to-day basis? How about concerning a lifetime purpose?

2. What is the bottom line when you make decisions, whether large or small. Is it to please God or to please self? In this light, keep an account of your decisions.

Challenge

1. Everyone is given options. What option did Pilate choose? What option did Jesus choose? What options are you given, and how do you choose? Basically, our options are to please self or to please God.

The Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ
Mark 15:21-32

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The physical sufferings of Christ were secondary to the spiritual sufferings of Christ.
2. In order for Christ to save others He could not save Himself.

Practical Application

1. We have an option to carry the cross.
2. We have an option to believe and see.

Questions

1. What was required of those who were condemned by crucifixion? Why was Jesus exempted from this?
2. The place of the crucifixion is called by different names. What are they?
3. The Lord was offered a drink that would deaden His pain. Why did He refuse it?
4. What time was the "third hour?"
5. Why didn't Mark dwell on the physical sufferings of Christ on the cross?
6. Could Christ have come down from the cross and still saved others? Could He have come down from the cross and saved Himself?
7. What does it mean to take up the cross?
8. Discuss, "...that we may see and believe." (Mark 15:32). What is God's order concerning seeing and believing?

Answers

1. To carry their own heavy crossbeam to the place of the crucifixion. Because of His weakened physical condition after the Roman scourging.
2. Golgotha, the Aramaic word for skull, and Calvary, the Latin word for skull
3. Because He chose to be fully conscious with all His senses intact when He would suffer and die for our sins.
4. 9:00 A.M., according to Jewish reckoning
5. Because they were secondary to the spiritual sufferings of Christ. It is not that the physical sufferings were insignificant (quite the contrary), but the spiritual sufferings, involving the judgment of the wrath of God against the sin of the world, were of crucial significance because of God's love for us as sinners in need of a Savior.
6. No, in order to save others, Christ could not save Himself. It was the only way, and He chose to stay on the cross for you and for me. Yes, He could have come down from the cross. He could have called twelve legions of angels to fight for Him, but He chose to stay on the cross to redeem us.
7. It means to deny yourself, to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ. It does not mean sharing in Christ's suffering for sin, for that work was finished on the cross. Nor does it mean to suffer through physical infirmities or problems in our lives. It means to put self to death, and to put Christ first in your life. It has to do with discipleship, not salvation.
8. The "show me" attitude is typical of the unbeliever. The unbeliever says, "Let me see, and then I'll believe." Unbelievers at the cross wanted to see the Lord come down from the cross. God's order is the reverse, "Believe, and you will see." The irony of this concept at the time of the cross and the resurrection was that the believers at the cross got to see the Lord after His resurrection. 500 believers saw Him at one time. Those who said they would believe if they could see, saw nothing.

Discuss / Consider

1. Put yourself in the crowd at the cross. How might you have responded?
2. Are you taking up your cross daily? How?

Challenge

1. What is your orientation -- "Let me see first, then I'll believe, " or do you believe first?

The Crucifixion
Mark 15:33-41

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. "My God, My God," was not a question of surprise or a cry of despair.
2. Entrance into the Holy of Holies is now permitted and encouraged.

Practical Application

1. Let's follow the example of the women who followed Christ.

Questions

1. Discuss the darkness of Mark 15:33. Could the darkness have been explained away as a natural event?
2. What is the meaning of "Eloi, Eloi?"
3. Discuss Mark 15:37
4. What did the veil of the temple signify?
5. Was "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" a cry of despair?
6. From which Psalm did the Lord quote?
7. Can we comprehend God's requirement of the penalty for sin?

Answers

1. The darkness was over the land for three hours, from noon until 3:00 P.M. During these three hours, the judgment of a holy God fell on Christ for our sins. The darkness was real, but it symbolized God's judgment on sin. A first-century non-Christian historian tried to explain it away as a natural event, a solar eclipse. The Christians refuted this because it was during the Passover, during the time of a full moon.
2. "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," is Aramaic for "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" "Eloi" is from Matthew 27:46, the Hebrew transliteration of "My God."
3. When Jesus cried out and breathed His last breath, it was most likely the cry recorded in John 19:30, "It is finished." It was not a last gasp of exhaustion. The Lord's life was not taken from Him. He gave it as an act of His will. It was a cry of victory, for the sin question was finished. He accomplished what He had come to do.
4. It divided the holy place from the holy of holies, where only the designated priest could enter once a year, on the Day of Atonement. The rent veil meant that the holiest place of all was now open to believers. See Hebrews 10:19-22.
5. No. It was not a question of surprise, or a cry of despair. The Lord fully realized what He was going through in His work of atonement on the cross.
6. Psalm 22:1
7. No. We cannot understand why God had to forsake or abandon His Son. Such love is beyond our comprehension, but we can fully appreciate what Jesus did for us on that cross, and that the Father allowed it (and even planned it for our salvation). We can know that Christ suffered the judgment of the holy wrath of God against sin, our sin, and that Jesus died as our substitute.

Discuss / Consider

1. What does the rent veil mean to you?

2. "Truly, this man was the Son of God!" What do the words of the Roman Centurion mean to you?

Challenge

The women who followed Christ ministered to Him. They were faithful in their devotion to Him. How are you following their example?

The Burial of the Lord in the Tomb of Joseph of Arimathea
Mark 15:42-47

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The fact of Christ's death and burial is more important than the location of the tomb or the authenticity of the shroud.

Practical Application

1. Are you willing to risk your reputation for the sake of Christ?

Questions

1. According to Jewish reckoning, when was the evening?
2. Why was Friday called the preparation day?
3. What was the urgency in having the Lord buried?
4. What evidence is noted that the Lord was crucified on Friday?
5. Who was Joseph of Arimathea? Who accompanied him to the burial site?
6. Were there other theories concerning Christ's death and resurrection?
7. How valid is the Shroud of Turin?

Answers

1. Evening was between 3:00 in the afternoon and sunset.
2. According to Jewish law, no work was to be done on the Sabbath.
3. No burials could take place on the Sabbath, and the law stated that exposed bodies must be buried before sunset. (Deuteronomy 21:22-23).
4. The three days and three nights was a cultural expression of the Jews, for any part of a 24-hour period is considered a day and a night. This could refute the Thursday crucifixion.
5. He was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin, a devout Jew, waiting for the kingdom of God to come on earth. He had not gone along with the council's decision to arrest and crucify Jesus. Up to this point, he was a secret believer, but now he boldly asked for the body of Jesus. See Luke 23:50-51 and John 19:38-39. Nicodemus accompanied Joseph.
6. Yes. Theories include a) the "swoon" theory (Christ wasn't really dead, and He revived in the coolness of the tomb), b) the Roman soldiers made a mistake and that Jesus wasn't really dead. There are also counter theories concerning the resurrection: a) they couldn't find the tomb, b) they went to the wrong tomb, c) the disciples stole the body from the tomb and hid it. (Were the authorities really this incompetent?)
7. A shroud is the burial linen, enveloping the body after it has been wrapped with strips of linen and covered with spices. The Shroud of Turin is so named because it is housed in a church in Turin, Italy. It is thought by some to be the burial shroud of Christ because it has a faint image, supposedly printed there when Christ was resurrected in a burst of radiation. However, the radiation test date is to the Middle Ages.

Discuss / Consider

1. Often there is considerable importance placed on the location of Jesus' tomb, and on the shroud, even to the demeaning or exclusion of Christ's death and resurrection. How much time do you spend on secondary priorities?
2. Are you or have you ever been a secret believer? If so what prompted you to hide your identification with Christ?

Challenge

1. Joseph of Arimathea was a respected and prominent council member. His reputation was put at risk when he sought the body of Jesus. He would lose the respect of his colleagues and be branded as a Jesus follower, becoming a part of a persecuted minority. Are you willing to risk your reputation for the sake of Christ?

The Resurrection
Mark 16:1-8

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The empty tomb is compelling evidence for the Resurrection.

Practical Application

1. We can see obstacles removed as we move forward in our devotion to Christ.

2. Remember that our feelings are important to God.

Questions

1. Who were the women at the crucifixion and at the tomb?
2. What was their concern on the way to the tomb?
3. Who did they see when they entered the weeping chamber?
4. Is there a problem because of the differences in the gospel accounts concerning the angels?
5. How is the empty tomb evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ?
6. Why do theories other than the resurrection have a hollow ring?
7. What obstacle was removed for the women? What is the lesson here for us?

Answers

1. Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James the Less or the son of Alphaeus; and Salome, the wife of Zebedee, the mother of James and John, two of the disciples.
2. How they could roll away the heavy stone from the opening of the tomb.
3. They saw a young man, an angel.
4. No. In fact, eye-witness accounts authenticate the situation. In Luke's and John's gospel accounts, two angels are mentioned; in Matthew and Mark, only one angel is spoken of, but they don't say that there was only one. Each writer simply focused on the angel who was speaking. The fact that there are differences in the accounts is evidence of non-collusion, but of four independent witnesses to the same event.
5. The empty tomb is compelling evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The angel calls attention to the fact that it is empty. The empty tomb cannot be explained away, even by legend. No reputable or thinking scholar today doubts the empty tomb.
6. To the contrary, there is too much evidence, and the other theories do not make sense because there are too many details that would have to be explained away.
7. The stone was rolled away. As we move forward in faith, obstacles are removed.

Discuss / Consider

1. God showed His concern for the feelings of the women. Do you ever think that your feelings are not important to God? Do a Bible search on this portion of Scripture and on other portions that show God's care and concern for the feelings of His people. Your feelings are important to God.

2. What does the empty tomb mean to you? How is it expressed in your life?

Challenge

1. God removed the stone. Have you experienced the removal of obstacles as you moved forward in your devotion to Christ?

The Lord's Appearances After His Resurrection, and His Ascension
Mark 16:9-20

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The doctrine of inspiration is not compromised if God chose to use more than one inspired writer for a book.

2. It is unwise to make doctrinal points from Mark 16:9-20.

Practical Application

1. Let's not be unbelieving believers.

Questions

1. Is there a question about the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20?

2. What is a favored explanation about these verses?

3. What is the doctrine of inspiration?

4. Is the doctrine of inspiration compromised if God chose to use more than one inspired writer for a book?

5. Should doctrinal points be made from Mark 16:9-20?

6. Is it OK for Christians to handle poisonous snakes, based on the Bible accounts of it?

7. Can a person be saved even though he is not baptized?

Answers

1. Yes. Mark 16:9-20 may not have been written by Mark. Most Bibles point out this possibility. The reason for this textual question is that some of the manuscripts of Mark do not contain these verses. Manuscripts are hand-written copies of Scripture before the invention of the printing press. We have no originals, but there are over 5,000 New Testament manuscripts in the Greek language alone. Perhaps the most cogent argument is the literary style in these latter verses differs from the rest of the gospel.
2. The verses in question may have been written at a later date by another inspired writer.
3. It holds that God superintended the writers and the writings of Scripture so that the whole Bible is the word of God, right down to the very words used in the original.
4. No
5. No. The events in Mark 16:9-20 are not supported by other Scripture. See the next answer for an example of misuse of broad conclusions.
6. No. It is not OK to build a doctrine about Christian snake handling from this portion of Scripture. What it says is that this is one of the confirming signs that would follow the early Christians if they were compelled to do these things by their persecutors, and God would protect them. There was no intention of building a doctrine whereby Christians would not be harmed if they purposely handled poisonous snakes. Yet, there are cults who parade this "doctrine," and they've had to come up with excuses when they are bitten.
7. Yes. A person is saved when he puts his trust in the finished work of Christ on the cross. Baptism is an outward sign of identifying with the Lord Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you inclined to discredit and disbelieve miraculous accounts of God's working today, or are you apt to believe such reports? We are not to be gullible, but neither are we to be skeptics when good evidence is presented. Try to find the proper, God-honoring response to accounts of God's working in the lives of people.
2. Are you able to discern appropriate, scripturally based doctrinal points? As a believer, you should be.

Challenge

1. The Lord had to rebuke the disciples because of their unbelief. Have you been rebuked by the Lord?