

A photograph of a weathered wooden boat on a calm body of water. The water reflects the sky, which has soft, warm colors. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the upper part of the image, containing the title text.

Following Jesus

Through the Gospel of Mark

Theme verse of Mark:

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:45

Week #12

Background of Mark:

The Gospel of Mark portrays the person of Jesus more by what He does than by what He says. Although Mark is the shortest of the four gospels, it pays close attention to matters of human interest. Matthew and Luke walk us through the genealogy of Christ. John's theme was to prove that Jesus is the Savior of the world. The Gospel of Mark was written to the Romans and his theme is ***Jesus Christ the Servant***. The Gospel of Mark wastes no time, and jumps right in to the ministry of Jesus. Mark does not record many of Jesus' sermons because his emphasis is on what Jesus did rather than what Jesus said.

What is the gospel?

- The long-awaited Messiah had come to break the power of sin and begin God's personal reign on earth.
- The gospel (Good News) of God was present in His life, teaching and atoning death.
- The gospel is both a historical event, and a personal relationship.
- Faith is trust placed in a living person, Jesus Christ.
- There is only one gospel (Gal. 1:1-9).

Crucial questions:

- What does this text teach us about God?
- What does this text teach me about sinful humanity?
- What does this text teach me about Jesus Christ?
- What does God want me to know?
- What does God want me to do?

Know: Few things are more destructive, seductive, and deceptive to a true and vital relationship with God than the deadly poison of legalism. The hidden purpose behind legalism is earned faith, being right with God, and my to others appearance.

Remember: Many traditions can be great and meaningful. But, when a tradition becomes an absolute is when it becomes unhealthy, dangerous, and self-serving.

Turning point:

- I'm the Savior, and the Savior is going to the cross. If you plan to follow me, the cross awaits you too. The cross calls us to die to self.
- Repetition is a wonderful and effective teacher (Mark 6:30-7:37).

You will never find fulfillment of heart on the far side of rebellion. True rest of heart is always found in submission to the Savior.

Paul David Tripp

Scripture: Mark 8:1-38

8 In those days, when again a **great crowd** had gathered, and they had nothing to eat, he called his disciples to him and said to them, ² **“I have compassion on the crowd,** because they have been with me now **three days** and have nothing to eat. ³ And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away.” ⁴ And his disciples answered him, **“How can one feed** these people with bread here in this desolate place?” ⁵ And he asked them, “How many loaves do you have?” They said, “Seven.” ⁶ And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and they set them before the crowd. ⁷ And they had a few small fish. And having blessed them, he said that these also should be set before them. ⁸ And they ate and **were satisfied**. And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. ⁹ And there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away.

Feeding the 5,000 5,000 men (15,000 to 20,000 people) 5 loaves and 2 fish 1 day in the wilderness 12 baskets of leftovers Mostly Jews	Feeding the 4,000 4,000 people total 7 loaves and a few small fish 3 days in the wilderness 7 baskets of leftovers Mostly Gentiles
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Know:

- Jesus always has a plan. He is never caught off guard.
- Teachable
- Jesus sees needs (compassion).
- Unbelief and blindness come to us just like it did the disciples. Why?
- Remembering is an essential part of our faith journey. Why?

Question: How many times have we forgotten the mercies of Jesus?

Know: Your life has equal value to Him!

¹⁰ And **immediately he got into the boat with his disciples** and went to the district of Dalmanutha. ¹¹ The Pharisees **came and began to argue** with him, **seeking** from him a **sign** from heaven to **test** him.

¹² And he **sighed deeply** in his spirit and said, “**Why does this generation seek a sign?** Truly, I say to you, **no sign will be given** to this generation.”

- Their motives were to discredit, and destroy Him. Not for belief.
- Jesus “sighs” with deep emotion. He knew their hearts.
- “You want a sign? Read the Scriptures!”
- If you cannot see God at work in Me, no evidence will convince you otherwise.

We cannot expect the world to believe that the Father sent the Son, that Jesus’ claims are true, and that Christianity is true, unless the world sees...the oneness of true Christians.

Francis Schaeffer

¹³ And he **left** them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

- Solid theology is wonderful, but if it never travels the roughly 12 inches from the head to the heart, it’s tragically pointless.
- The religious zealots were face-to-face with the Savior of the world, but their hearts were miles from Him.
- In the near future, they will crucify Him.
- “Jesus left” is tragic, because they rejected all His claims.

¹⁴ Now they had forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. ¹⁵ And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; **beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.**”

- Jesus did not often say “Beware!” but when He did it was important!

¹⁶ And they began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. ¹⁷ And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? **Are your hearts hardened?** ¹⁸ **Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember** (We just did this!)? ¹⁹ When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?” They said to him, “Twelve.” ²⁰ “And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of

broken pieces did you take up?” And they said to him, “Seven.” ²¹ And he said to them, “**Do you not yet understand?**”

Question: What does yeast do?

- “Yeast” in this passage symbolizes evil.
- Guard against accepting wrong teaching.
- A Small amount can affect the whole person.
- We need to constantly refocus. Why? Self-righteousness is lurking.

Question: Why is it important to understand?

- They/we don’t understand Christ’s purpose for us all at once. It’s a journey!

²² And they came to Bethsaida. And some people brought to him a blind man and **begged him** to touch him. ²³ And he took the blind man by the hand and **led him out of the village**, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, “Do you see anything?” ²⁴ And he looked up and said, “I see people, **but** they look like trees, walking.” ²⁵ Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶ And he sent him to his home, saying, “**Do not even enter the village.**”

- This healing is another teachable moment for the disciples.
- Sight was there, but not complete.
- The disciples had spiritual sight, but it was far from complete.
- Jesus was leading the disciples to a “clear” understanding of who He is, and what He came to do.

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

Crucial questions:

- Who is Jesus?
- What did He come to do?
- What does He expect of us?

Final exam:

- Who Christ is to you is crucial to cross bearing.
- With revelation comes responsibility. We can’t stay neutral.

³⁰ And **he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.** ³¹ And **he began to teach** them that the Son of Man **must** suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And he said this **plainly.** And Peter took him aside and began to **rebuke him.** ³³ But turning and **seeing his disciples,** he **rebuked Peter** and said, “**Get behind me, Satan!** For you are not **setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.**”

Speaking plainly:

- When Jesus’ uses the word “must” he is planning to die.
 - Jesus must suffer
 - Jesus must be rejected
 - Jesus must be killed
 - Jesus must be resurrected
- True forgiveness causes someone to suffer.
- There’s a penalty attached too sin. Guilt can’t be dealt with unless someone pays.
- We like the disciples want Jesus to fit our version of ‘savior.’

Wrong cross: We American Christians have a way of taking the Jesus of the Bible and twisting him into a version of Jesus that we are more comfortable with. A nice middle-class American Jesus. A Jesus who doesn’t mind materialism and would never call us to give away everything we have. A Jesus who is fine with nominal devotion that does not infringe on our comforts. A Jesus who wants us to be balanced, who wants us to avoid dangerous extremes, and who for that matter wants us to avoid danger altogether. A Jesus who brings comfort and prosperity to us as we live our Christian spin on the American dream. David Platt

³⁴ And **calling the crowd to him with his disciples,** he said to them, “**If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**” ³⁵ **For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.**

Question: What did Jesus mean when he said, “Take up your cross and follow me”?

My Cross:

- Culture teaches that your identity is performance-based, achievement-based.
- We die to self-determination, to running our lives, and surrender using Jesus for our agenda.
- Taking up your cross can’t be based on your comfort level. At some point taking up your cross will ask, “Do I really trust Him?” The answer to that question is revealed in our daily cross bearing.

- We need to lose the old self (identity), and base ourselves (new identity) on Jesus and what the gospel teaches us about Him.

I went to the cross—and on the cross I lost my identity so you can have one.
Timothy Keller

³⁶ For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

- What's the opposite of being ashamed of somebody? Being proud of them. Admiring them. Not being embarrassed to be seen with them. Loving to be identified with them.

Jesus asks nothing of us without giving us the strength to perform it.
Dietrich Bonhoeffer