



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 #23

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.

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?

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).

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 appearance to others.

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

My Cross:

- Every 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 our old self (identity), and base ourselves (new identity) on Jesus and what the gospel teaches us about Him.

Thought: What if we put the same energy into holiness as we do into knowing or predicting Christ return?

- Like the disciples we are prone to seeking "signs."
- In every generation there have been people who claimed to be the Messiah.
- Wars, earthquakes and famines prove we live in a broken world (birth pains). The birth pains point us to a time of terrible sorrow and tribulation for the whole world.
- According to scripture, when Christ returns it will not be done in secret, and it will be evident to all.

Scripture: Mark 14:1-31 (ESV)

It was now two days before the **Passover** and the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**. And the chief priests and the scribes were **seeking** how to **arrest** him by **stealth** and **kill** him, ² for they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an **uproar** from the people."

Passover:

- An annual celebration to commemorate a defining moment for the Jews.
- Passover commemorated the night the Israelites were freed from slavery.

- Feast of Unleavened Bread pointed to the quick escape from Egypt. Bread needs time to rise.
- The only way for your family to escape the pending wrath and judgement, was to put your faith in God's sacrificial provision; you must slay a lamb and put the blood on the doors as a sign of your faith in God (Exodus 12).
- Know: in every home that night there was either a dead child or a dead lamb.
- Passover points us to our perfect substitutionary sacrifice (Jesus).

³ And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, **a woman** (Mary) came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, **very costly**, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. ⁴ There were **some who said** to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment **wasted** like that? ⁵ For this ointment could have been **sold** for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they **scolded her**. ⁶ But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? **She has done a beautiful thing to me**. ⁷ For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. ⁹ And truly, I say to you, **wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world**, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

- Every time we see Mary, she is at the feet of Jesus.
- Women in that culture don't approach men in a public setting (meal).
- Mary cared little about cultural norms, even if they would keep her from worshiping Jesus.
- Her public worship demonstrated her love for Him.
- Jesus was her Lord and Savior!

Questions:

- Can you remember a time when you did something that really cost you something?
- Have you ever made a sacrifice of extravagant love?

- When was the last time you worshiped at the feet of Jesus, and cared nothing of what people thought regarding your worship?

Note: The response of Mary and Judas could not be more defining.

Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” ⁶ He said this, **not because he cared** about the poor, but because he was a **thief**, and having charge of the moneybag he used to **help himself** to what was put into it.

John 12:4-6

¹⁰ **Then** Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, **went** (initiative) to the chief priests in order to **betray** him to them. ¹¹ And when they **heard** it, they were **glad and promised to give him money**. And he **sought** an opportunity to **betray** him.

Question: How do you get that close to Jesus, and reject Him?

- Judas wanted a political Messiah.
- Judas wanted a position of power, and acclaim.
- Jesus wasn't going to meet his expectations.
- Jesus was calling him to servanthood and sacrifice.

People see Jesus in two primary ways:

- What they can get from Him (stuff).
- What they can get from Him (Himself).

¹² And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, “Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?” ¹³ And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, ¹⁴ and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹⁵ And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us.” ¹⁶ And the disciples set out and went to the city and **found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover**. ¹⁷ And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸ And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, “**Truly**, I say to you, **one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.**” ¹⁹ They began to be sorrowful and to say to him

one after another, "**Is it I?**" ²⁰ He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me.

²¹ For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

Question: How would you define betrayed?

- Too often we wear Judas's mask. We condemn others actions while rationalizing our own betrayals.

²² And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "**Take**; this is my body." ²³ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. ²⁴ And he said to them, "This is **my blood** of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵ Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it **new** in the kingdom of God." ²⁶ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

- Jesus is in total control of all the details of His death.
- The cross did not catch Jesus off guard.
- The Passover feast was great reminder of God's power and faithfulness.
- Jesus would now usher in a new supper to help them and us to remember His death.

Lord's Supper:

- Most of us try to forget how those we love died, but Jesus wants us to remember how He died. Why? Because everything we have as Christians centers in that death.
- Jesus' words point to His substitutionary sacrifice that will establish a new covenant between God and us.
- The first Passover was observed as God rescued the Israelites. This Passover was eaten the night before God rescued mankind from sin and death through Jesus' blood.

- “Take” requires a response from us (faith).
- Communion reminds us of the type of relationship Jesus desires for us, and paints a picture of what Heaven will be like.

In the pressure of the moment the heart does surprising things.
Henry Blackaby

²⁷ And Jesus said to them, “You will **all** fall away, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ ²⁸ But **after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.**” ²⁹ Peter said to him, “Even though **they** all fall away, **I will not.**” ³⁰ And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, **you will deny me** three times.” ³¹ But he said emphatically, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And they all said the same.

Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be **scattered**.
Zechariah 13:7

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.
Proverbs 16:18

- Basically, Peter calls Jesus a liar.
- Peter’s character will reveal itself, painfully.
- Peter shows us how easy it is to profess our faith and how difficult it is when the heats on!
- The enemy uses denials as a wedge.
- The cross reminds us our denials are redeemable.

Question:

- What does “deny me” look like today?