

Thirsty for Scripture: Mark

Mark 1:1-15

Observation Question

What do we learn about John the Baptist?

Interpretation Question

How does John prepare the way for Jesus?

Application Question

How might you help prepare those around you to encounter Jesus? Ask God for an opportunity today.

Mark 1:16-34

Observation Question

What different responses do you see to Jesus' authority?

Interpretation Question

What is Jesus accomplishing through his authority?

Application Question

How responsive are you to Jesus' authority? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any resistance in your heart.

Mark 1:35-2:12

Observation Question

What details do you notice about Jesus' interactions with these two men?

Interpretation Question

How is what Jesus offers them more or different than what's expected?

Application Question

As you consider God's recent interactions with you, what can you say about what he wants to offer you? Interact with him about that.

Mark 2:13-3:6

Observation Question

What does Jesus do here that's unexpected or controversial?

Interpretation Question

In these two stories, how is Jesus like new wine being poured into old and new wineskins?

Application Question

As you look at your own life, are there any "old wineskins" you can let go of? Ask God to prepare for you "new wineskins."

Mark 3:7-19*Observation Question*

As you imagine being one of this vast crowd, what might you see, hear, smell, and feel?

Interpretation Question

What is the significance of what Jesus appoints the twelve to do (v. 14-15)?

Application Question

How is Jesus inviting you to be with him, and who is he sending you to? Thank him for the good message and healing authority he's given you.

Mark 3:20-35*Observation Question*

What are the various voices of opposition to Jesus' ministry and what are their charges?

Interpretation Question

How does Jesus' explanation of his authority (v. 23-27) authenticate his ministry?

Application Question

How have you seen Jesus confront evil in your world? Thank and praise God for his power over evil.

Mark 4:1-20*Observation Question*

What characterizes each of the four responses to Jesus' words?

Interpretation Question

How might Jesus teaching a parable that requires a personal explanation be like the farmer scattering seed on different soils?

Application Question

When you are confused by God's word or actions, what characterizes your response? Make plans to "stick around to ask questions" of Jesus.

Mark 4:21-34*Observation Question*

As you consider carefully what you read, what are the key details of the Kingdom parables?

Interpretation Question

What themes come across in more than one parable?

Application Question

How are you encouraged by this teaching on the Kingdom of God? Ask him to show you how to live today in faithful response.

Mark 4:35-5:20*Observation Question*

What can you tell from the text about how the various people are feeling in each of these intense situations?

Interpretation Question

How does Jesus address each fear?

Application Question

What situations in your life are causing you to fear? Talk with Jesus about how you can choose faith over fear.

Mark 5:21-43*Observation Question*

What obstacles do Jairus and the woman face as they come to Jesus, and what motivates them to press forward?

Interpretation Question

What do Jesus' response to these people in need demonstrate about his character?

Application Question

What needs do you want to bring to Jesus? With bold humility, come to him and ask for his healing and comfort.

Mark 6:1-29*Observation Question*

How do the reputations of Jesus, John, and Herod affect these stories?

Interpretation Question

What does the contrasting example of King Herod emphasize about Jesus?

Application Question

As Jesus sends you out today, reread v. 7-13 and ask him for his instructions for you and the humble courage you'll need to obey.

Mark 6:30-56*Observation Question*

What are the disciples' emotional highs and lows through this story?

Interpretation Question

What is Jesus showing the disciples about being a shepherd for people?

Application Question

How is Jesus inviting you to join in his shepherding? Ask him for what you will need to remain soft-hearted.

Mark 7:1-23*Observation Question*

How does Jesus critique the Pharisee's teaching about what defiles us?

Interpretation Question

Given how Jesus defines hypocrisy in v. 6-8, what would a life honoring God look like?

Application Question

What do you find in your own heart as you reflect on v. 21-23? Admit to God what you've found and ask him to grow in you a true holiness.

Mark 7:24-37*Observation Question*

What is new or different about these two healings?

Interpretation Question

How do the challenging words and actions of Jesus serve those he encountered?

Application Question

When has the healing of Jesus in your life felt challenged or delayed? Ask him to draw you toward faith and intimacy in every encounter.

Mark 8:1-26*Observation Question*

How is this story similar or different from the feeding of 5000 in Mark 6:30-44?

Interpretation Question

What are the disciples supposed to understand from these experiences with Jesus?

Application Question

Where in your life is God offering you second-time-around lessons? Thank God for his patient instruction and ask for deepened understanding.

Mark 8:27-38*Observation Question*

What do the disciples learn about Jesus and his path?

Interpretation Question

Given these hard words, what makes it worth it for a disciple to follow Jesus?

Application Question

Now halfway through Mark, what have you learned about the gospel of Jesus? Talk with Jesus about losing your life for him and his gospel.

Mark 9:1-29*Observation Question*

Where do you see evidence of power in these two stories?

Interpretation Question

What do the disciples not yet understand about the power of the Kingdom of God?

Application Question

Where in your life have you become comfortable in your own abilities rather than depending on God's goodness and power? Ask him to forgive you and help you overcome your unbelief.

Mark 9:30-50*Observation Question*

What unexpected things does Jesus say about greatness and lameness?

Interpretation Question

How does Jesus' teaching on taking drastic measures to avoid sin in vv. 42-50 connect with his earlier teaching on greatness?

Application Question

Where has your pursuit of worldly greatness left you vulnerable to sin? Ask God instead for an opportunity today to serve others.

Mark 10:1-12*Observation Question*

How does Jesus view marriage?

Interpretation Question

Why does Jesus criticize their hardness of heart?

Application Question

How should this teaching impact your own decisions and relationships?

Mark 10:13-31*Observation Question*

What is left behind and what is received?

Interpretation Question

What would it have looked like for the rich man to receive the Kingdom of God as a child?

Application Question

What is the hardest thing for you to give up to follow Jesus? Ask your heavenly Father to make it possible for you to do so!

Mark 10:32-52*Observation Question*

How do the two requests made of Jesus compare to one another?

Interpretation Question

How is Jesus acting out his purpose "not to be served, but to serve" in his responses to both requests?

Application Question

What is the cry of your heart to Jesus? Ask him to align your desires with his for the sake of others.

Mark 11:1-25*Observation Question*

Compare the first and second times Jesus and his disciples enter Jerusalem and the Temple.

Interpretation Question

How does Jesus' curse of the fig tree relate to his interactions in the temple?

Application Question

Jesus wanted his house to be a house of prayer for all nations. How have you lived out that value, and where have your customs obstructed it?

Mark 11:27-12:12*Observation Question*

How would you describe the tenants in the parable?

Interpretation Question

What is Jesus saying to the Pharisees through the parable?

Application Question

Where do you see in your own world violent resistance to Jesus' claims to authority? Linger and marvel at God turning the rejected one into the cornerstone!

Mark 12:13-44*Observation Question*

Who is praised and who is rebuked?

Interpretation Question

How are all the people we see here doing in terms of keeping the two greatest commandments?

Application Question

Very practically, how can you love God and love your neighbor this week?

Mark 13:1-23*Observation Question*

What does Jesus instruct his disciples to do?

Interpretation Question

How do you see God's care for his people, even amid this terrible prediction?

Application Question

How have you experienced God's care for you as you went through hard times beyond your control? Offer him your thanks.

Mark 13:24-37*Observation Question*

What does Jesus tell his disciples to watch for?

Interpretation Question

Why is the return of the Son of Man worthy of our attention?

Application Question

Rather than idly speculating on his timing, consider what God would have you and your community do while you alertly watch for his coming.

Mark 14:1-26*Observation Question*

What are all the different ways we see people responding to Jesus?

Interpretation Question

What might their responses reveal about their views of Jesus and of themselves?

Application Question

Talk with Jesus about who you are and who he is. Be sure to include some quiet time to listen and let him speak.

Mark 14:27-52*Observation Question*

Imagine all that Jesus must be feeling as you make your way through this part of his story.

Interpretation Question

How does Jesus find strength during great difficulty?

Application Question

What might it mean for you to keep watch with Jesus in Gethsemane today?

Mark 14:53-72*Observation Question*

What are all the ways Jesus is being disowned?

Interpretation Question

What do you think is going on for Peter that leads him to deny Jesus?

Application Question

When is it difficult for you to identify as a Christian? Bring the pressures you face to God and ask for faith, wisdom, and courage to speak and act as a witness of Jesus.

Mark 15:1-21*Observation Question*

Who has power here and of what sort?

Interpretation Question

Why do you think Jesus chooses to be power-less here?

Application Question

What kind of power do you hold and how do you use it? Where is God inviting you to be powerless?

Mark 15:22-41*Observation Question*

How do the different people respond to Jesus and his crucifixion?

Interpretation Question

How does the centurion come to call Jesus the Son of God?

Application Question

What is your response today as you consider the death of Jesus?

Mark 15:42-16:8*Observation Question*

Who honors the body of Jesus and how do they do it?

Interpretation Question

What might the women be experiencing as they approach the tomb, meet the young man, and leave with the news?

Application Question

"He has risen." Jesus is not found in a tomb. What feelings does that invoke in you and what does it mean for your life from here?