

A Museum of Thought from the Gospel of...

MARK

Devotional Readings from the Gospel of Mark



Waukesha Bible Church
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A Museum of Thought

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Reigning Grace is the Theology of Waukesha Bible Church

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Preface

Since 1951 Waukesha Bible Church (WBC) has ministered to the Waukesha community. WBC is a Christ-Exalting, Word-Centered, Global-Impacting, Grace-Based Ministry. As a fellowship we are convinced that God is honored in the careful handling of His Word and in the acknowledgment that His Son, Jesus Christ, is enough for this life and in the life that is to come. We are equally convinced that God has entrusted us with this message. It is a message of life and not death; of freedom, not bondage. We wish to take this message to the ends of the earth until worshippers from every tribe, tongue, people and nation have been gathered to honor God.

A Word of Introduction

Local Churches have received from God a sacred trust. This trust is a mission. This mission is defined for us in Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, and 2 Timothy 2:2. This same mission is pictured for us by the early church in the activity of the apostle Paul beginning in Acts 13:1. The mission is to duplicate herself in the lives of others. Church health is not defined by numerical size or budgetary well-being, but by the degree to which they are intentionally engaging in the reproducing of local churches. Churches birth churches. God's safeguard against doctrinal defect and pastoral apathy is through the strengthening and establishing of local churches.

What is the Purpose of this Study?

The intent of all study is to ask the hard questions and to seek Biblical answers. Parroting standard answers without learning the truth first hand will produce an anemic faith. May it please our heavenly Father to open our eyes to the magnitude of His grace so that we might understand all that we are in His Son and all that He is for us.

A word about Torn Veil Publications

Torn Veil Publications (TVP) is the distributing arm of WBC and exists to shout the supremacy of God in all things by finding, celebrating, and declaring that He is enough in this life and in the life to come through the systematic study of Scripture and to share Him with every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. It is all designed as part of the WBC vision to spread a Christ-Exalting, Word-Centered, Global-Impacting, Grace-Based message to others.

Why “A Museum of Thought?”

AN INTRODUCTION

It is my desire to share with you a portion of my “walk with God” on a devotional level. This is personal and thus subjective. I find great joy in reading the Scripture, meditating on its truths, praying for the people of God, and enjoying who Christ is, what He has done, and who I now am in Him. These “musings” make up my “walk with God.” To understand better this idea I would like to explain why I have entitled this, “A Museum of Thought.” So without further ado, let us venture forth.

Let us begin by defining what a museum is. A museum is “an institution which collects, conserves, researches, exhibits, and interprets objects of lasting interest or value for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment.”

gondolin.rutgers.edu/MIC/text/how/organization_type_glossary.htm

“The English ‘museum’ comes from the Latin word, and is pluralized as ‘museums.’ It is originally from the Greek *mouseion*, which denotes a place or temple dedicated to the Muses (the patron divinities in Greek mythology of the arts), and hence a building set apart for study and the arts, especially the institute for philosophy and research.”

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum>

The verb “to muse” means “to be absorbed in thought, to ponder, loiter, and waste time.” It literally means “to stand with one’s nose in the air” (or, possibly, “to sniff about” like a dog who has lost the scent).”

<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=muse>

I can only speak for myself and the experiences inside of my life, but we have lost interest in “musing.” The ability is there; as image bearers, God made us “to muse.” However, our western culture defies our abilities and robs us of a context “to muse.” We rush from one brain-deadening activity to the next, never realizing the consequences of such fluttering action. It is as if we are consumed by a nervous quest that has no object and knows no end. Pausing and pondering flee from us as if in mortal combat. However, as I “muse” over this, there is a real sense in which our lost interest in absorbed thought is to the detriment of our immortal souls.

Think about this idea in your own life. When was the last time you were absorbed in thought? When was the last time you sniffed out something that eluded you? I find great joy in reading and in journaling my “musings.” There is nothing profound, but such actions have provided occasions for personal and enriched worship of God through the various objects observed and in the process itself.

I have written for a number of years, but only recently have chosen to make them available for your “musing.” This type of writing is a witness to my communion with God. It is a prayerful and worship-filled expression of my relationship with my God. I

give it to you for stimulation, so that perhaps you might slow down and “muse” over those objects and experiences that cross your path on a daily basis. The movement of God is all around us. May the Holy Spirit slow us down to His beauty, and may we take the time to see God’s hand in all things.

A word about the “journal:” The statements following the reference are the initial thoughts the Holy Spirit placed on my mind. Nothing I say is of necessary importance to you. I invite you to listen to the Holy Spirit’s instruction through the text of Scripture for yourself.

“A Museum of Thought” From the Gospel of Mark

1:1 *“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”*

Remember, there were 400 years of silence between Malachi and John.

1:2 *“I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way”*

John’s message was one of fulfillment – they anticipated His coming. There is a re-opening of the prophets. A calling back to what is true. John’s ministry is a ministry of preparation.

1:3 *“MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT”*

How do we make the paths straight? Through repentance and confession (v. 4).

1:4 *“John came, baptizing”*

The gospel begins and ends with the inclusion of baptism (16:16). Regardless as to its exact nature, baptism plays a key part in discipleship. When we compare 1:4 with 1:15, we should not assume the two are different. Let us seek to see their similarities.

Forgiveness was theirs when they repented. Confession was the outworking of that repentance. The baptism validated the confession. It made the confession public.

The baptism marked repentance. For example, if we were to say “the Son of God,” we mean a son characterized by the Father. The baptism of repentance is a baptism characterized by repentance.

1:5 *“Confessing their sins, they were baptized”*

Multitudes heard Jesus. Although the unbelieving will find Him repugnant initially, He is exactly what they need. This corresponds exactly to the vacuum in their lives.

Confession of sin and baptism are at the front end of discipleship. No one is a follower in the absence of either one. Asking people if they have been baptized after confession of sin is an appropriate question.

1:6 *“John wore clothing made of camel’s hair; . . .”*

John was a man of simplicity.

1:7 *"I am not worthy"*

John was a man of humility.

1:8 *"I baptize you with water"*

John's ministry was to baptize with water. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a baptism that is characterized by the Holy Spirit. The baptism by the Holy Spirit is a baptism of fire. We have this baptism.

1:9 *"Jesus . . . was baptized"*

Jesus' identification *with humanity* (v. 9) came through baptism. He identified Himself with those He came to save. He validated John's message and ministry by submitting to water baptism.

Notice the parallel ideas of "John appeared" (v. 4), "Jesus came" (v. 9), "after John, Jesus came" (v. 14).

1:10 *"Heaven being torn open"*

What graphic language, "torn open." Like the veil in the temple - the heavens were rent and the grace of God was confirmed in the Son's presentation.

1:10 *"The Spirit descended on Him"*

This scene indicated His approval or identification *by the Trinity* (vv. 10, 11). The Holy Spirit and the Father both affirmed the Son's message and ministry.

1:11 *"You are my Son, whom I love"*

Jesus' test in the desert (vv. 12, 13) is *validated* by the Father's words. If His righteousness is imputed to me, then am I not loved and pleasing to the Father?

Did anyone else see the dove or hear the voice?

1:12, 13 *"The Spirit sent him out into the desert"*

The temptation of Jesus was deliberate. The Spirit sent him where He would be tested. Is there a parallel between Israel's 40 year wilderness wandering and their failure, and our Lord's 40 day wilderness wandering and His success? Yes!

1:13 *"He was with the wild animals"*

Why do we always see this as a dangerous threat instead of the lion and the lamb lying together or a Daniel in the lion's den? The animals posed no threat to Jesus – they bow down before Him and worship. They, like the angels, were there to comfort and assist.

1:14 *"Now after John had been taken into custody"*

Mark does not revisit John's arrest until 6:14ff.

1:14, 15 *"Repent and believe the good news"*

This message is just as relevant today as it was then. It is our skewed view of eschatology that dismisses its application today. The Gospels are New Covenant truth. The Old Covenant is fulfilled. The New Covenant is upon them. God is not ending His relationship to the Jew but grafting in the Gentile branch.

1:15 *"The time has come, the kingdom of God is near"*

Everything foretold is coming to pass.

Repentance, belief, [and baptism] are all conditions/expressions of discipleship. These things could happen and one might still not be a disciple, but no one would be a disciple without repentance and belief.

1:16-20 *"Come, follow me"*

The invitation entailed "taking up their cross" (8:34-38). There is no other obedience than this. Why were none of the original 12 from the Pharisees and Scribes (cf. 1 Cor. 1)?

1:18 *"At once"*

Is my obedience marked by the same immediacy? (v. 20 "without delay"). Their obedience appears immediate and sharp. Was the leaving of their father inappropriate?

1:21-28 *"I know who you are"*

The contrast between the crowds and demons is always pronounced. The demons knew exactly who He was – there must have been quite a buzz with the incarnation!

The synagogue was an open format (v. 23). Inside the synagogue was a demon-possessed man — how often is this true inside the church?

Do we not think there were others who claimed to do what He did but could not bring what they promised?

1:27 *“He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey Him.”*

Both demons (v. 27) and disciples (vv. 17-20) obey Him.

1:29-31 *“The fever left her”*

Notice the constant interplay with healing and power and presence.

1:32 *“After sunset”*

Wow, no rest.

1:33 *“The whole town gathered”- “Everyone is looking for you!” (v. 37)*

See also verse 45. Notice the response (vv. 38, 44). Notice the summary statement in verse 39. Look at verse 5, “the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem.” His appeal was enormous – why? Because the Jews lived in a state of anticipation. Is that the reason? The crowds knew Him in a non-redemptive manner.

1:35 *“Very early in the morning”- “Stayed outside in lonely places” (v. 45)*

This is how Jesus prayed, and this is how He prepared for “ministry.” Our Lord’s devotional life is noted. How do we cultivate this spirit in a culture of distraction? The Lord and His disciples were no less busy, and yet He took time to pray.

Prayer was not a ministry responsibility; prayer was a part of His “walk” with God.

Why did Jesus have devotions? It was an opportunity for undistracted time with His Father. Even though God is in all our moments and He is showing Himself mighty in creation and in providence, we need time alone. Our devotions are just that, “time alone.”

1:40 *“If you are willing, you can make me clean” versus “If you can do anything” (v. 22)*

The one question addresses the desire, affection. The other question addresses ability.

1:44 *"Show yourself to the priest" versus "Instead he went out" (v. 45)*

Notice our Lord's compliance with the mosaic covenant.

Notice the leper's "disobedience." God healed the man and then the individual immediately **disobeyed** God (v. 45).

1:45 *"Stayed outside in lonely places"*

There is a necessity to be alone for the purpose of meditation and communion. Such rest is possible in the storm (Mark 4), but "in the storm" peace is probably not possible if we do not have "in lonely places" peace first.

Compare 2:1 with 1:21.

2:2, 15 *"So many gathered"*

The contrast between the greeting crowd and the unruly masses is eye opening. Notice 1:20, 28, 34, 39, 45. There was always a constant barrage of people.

2:2 *"He preached the word"*

He was speaking the Word to them. Our Lord taught. What Word did He bring (1:15)? Jesus preached the Old Testament prophecies to the people.

2:5 *"When Jesus saw their faith... 'Your sins are forgiven.'"*

Transferred faith: the paralytic's friends had faith in Jesus; their faith brought about healing for the paralytic. He healed whom they brought. People are often seen as interceding in behalf of others. For whom do I believe?

2:6 *"He's blaspheming!"*

Some will always resist the mighty hand of God (vv. 16, 24; 3:2). Who can forgive sins but God alone? This is a true question and statement (v. 7).

2:10, 11 *"Take up your mat"*

This was a very public display that challenged the religious leaders. How could it be blasphemy if God validated Jesus' claim by healing the paralytic? Jesus has authority to do what He wants (cf. Matt. 28:18-20).

2:12 *"We have never seen anything like this."*

Just like us, they read about these things in the text, but never experienced them as eyewitnesses. Why did He give them (the unbelieving and non-repentant) such open confirmation? He knew the Scribes would not believe (v. 6). He did what He did for the larger audience (v. 12). Why does God not show Himself mighty in our behalf in the same manner?

2:16 *"Why does he eat?"*

Jesus came to save sinners. All the elect start out as fully fallen sinners (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-31).

2:17 *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."*

Church work will always be messy. I would rather work with the sinners than the self-righteous. Why do we shy away from the needy when those are His targeted audience? This is our Lord's targeted audience. What did the teaching ministry of Jesus look like?

2:20 *"The bridegroom will be taken from them"*

There is coming a time when Jesus will be taken from them. Verses 18-22 seeks to communicate a shift in what was to be.

2:24 *"Why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"*

The Pharisees were always asking "why?" Questions are necessary, yet the motive behind the asking is primary.

2:27, 28 *"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."*

The Sabbath is a great servant but a horrible master.

3:1, 2 *"Heal him on the Sabbath"*

Some stories are arranged with others for the purpose of emphasis (2:23).

3:2 *"Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus"*

From the very beginning of His ministry, people were out to get Him (v. 6).

3:4 *"To save a life or to kill?"*

The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

3:5 *"After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart,"*

This is also said of His disciples.

3:6, 11 *"The Pharisees. . . began to plot. . . . how they might kill Jesus"*

This is pretty quick! Notice the contrast with verse 11. One cannot help but note the intentional narrative contrast between the religious leaders (vv. 2, 6) and the demons (v. 11). The Pharisees plotted Jesus' death; the evil spirits fell down before Him. The tone has been set, "kill Him."

3:7-12 This is a summary statement concerning the ministry.

3:13 *"Jesus went up on a mountainside"*

Jesus went up on a mountainside to pray and be alone (v. 7).

3:13, 14 *"Called to him those he wanted"*

There are broad and sweeping invitations, but there are also very narrow and specific invitations.

All Christians are disciples, but not all disciples are apostles. All apostles are elders, but not all elders are apostles (Eph. 4:11).

3:14 *"Designated them apostles"*

Jesus begins intentionally to multiply Himself by authorizing apostles.

3:20 *"Again a crowd gathered"*

Crowds were quick to gather for many reasons. One was because He healed the diseased (vv. 9-12). Compare this with other times when there was constant opposition (2:6; 3:21, 22).

3:20 *"Not even able to eat"*

His intent in 3:7 was for some downtime. He (they) never got any. Compare 3:20, 21 with 1:35. Jesus maintained a devotional life in the midst of a taxing life.

3:21 *"He is out of his mind"*

The family was concerned for His physical and emotional well-being. His family thought Him crazy (vv. 31-35). I believe there was concern for His physical well being; He pushed Himself to exhaustion. Nevertheless, they also might have been concerned for their reputation. His family was probably protective of Him and their family name. I would think most people did not want a sibling walking around saying he was the fulfillment of a centuries old promise.

3:29 *"But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness,"*

Apparently, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is attributing to Satan the works of God or saying the work of God is of the devil.

3:30 *"He has an evil spirit" versus "you are the Son of God" (v 11).*

Why the blindness in one and affirmation in the other?

3:35 *"For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."*

Consider the implications of that statement. I, by faith, am in the family of God whereby Jesus is a fellow-sibling and God is my Father.

4:3 *"A farmer went out to sow his seed"*

This is the parable of the soils. Within the large crowd of 4:1, only one out of four will actually become a disciple (8:34-38). Remember, there is no Christianity without discipleship. We must see the parable of Mark 4 and the statements of 8:34-38 as the same.

4:9 *"He who has ears to hear"*

The only one who had ears to hear was the good soil.

4:11 *"The secret of the kingdom of God"*

There are many "secrets" within Christianity that others are not privy to. The hard statement of v.12 corresponds to the three soil types in vv. 4-7. What are the mysteries

of the kingdom? Jesus Himself makes a distinction between those “within” and those “without.” See also verse 34.

4:12 *“Hearing, but never understanding”*

The parable served its purpose in the first three soils. These people are not forgiven.

4:13 *“Don’t you understand”*

Throughout Mark’s gospel, Jesus chides His disciples for not understanding.

4:14 *“The sower sows the word.”*

The word has life in itself. When it germinates, it brings forth life.

4:15 *“Satan comes and takes away the word”*

Satan is active in the hardness of men’s hearts (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3, 4). Satan is actively involved in prohibiting people from believing – we are engaged in spiritual warfare.

4:16, 17 *“They quickly fall away”*

This is an example of non-perseverance in persecution (cf. John 6:66). The trials/persecutions are on account of the Word. These events are not the circumstances of life. They are a direct result of believing. Those who fall away because life is hard were never a genuine part of the believing community to begin with.

4:18, 19 *“Choke the word”*

Wealth chokes the seed (cf. 1 Tim. 6:9). The Creator versus the created. Both clamor for our affections but only one may have it.

Why do we consider these three soil types as Christians or even representative of discipleship? Only the fourth soil is described as good. This presupposes the previous three were bad.

4:21, 22 *“Whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed”*

How does the lamp shining support His statement in verses 4:11 and 12? He urges people to hear even though He speaks in parables in order that they would not understand (cf 4:23 with 4:12). Can God with sincerity invite the non-elect to salvation even though they will not hear and thus come?

4:23 *"Let him hear"*

The point of this illustration is the same as verse 9.

4:24, 25 *"With the measure you use it . . ."*

Look at this idea in light of the parable. If the word does not find reception in our souls, it will be removed. However, if the word finds reception, it will multiply. We have four examples of those who "heard" who either received none or had removed from them what they initially received.

Seek to understand what you have or even that will be removed from you. It is only as we come to understand what we know that we increase in our knowledge and our stewardship. Perhaps this explains why some professing Christians, who have been "saved" for decades, still know so little, and others much younger in the faith know much.

4:26-29 *"A man scatters seed"*

Compare with 1 Corinthians 3:6. The parables are not saying different ideas. They are all saying the same thing. We are invited to scatter seed generously. God's intent is that His sowers sow seed. The outcome of that seed is God's work; the size of the harvest is up to God (vv. 20, 25, 29). The seeds growth and harvest is to be understood in terms of making and maturing disciples.

Our responsibility is to sow and harvest. God is the one who grows the crop and determines the size of the harvest (cf. vv. 8, 20). In the purpose of God, there is a time of harvest (v. 29). God uses us to harvest His crop.

4:30 *"The kingdom of God is like"*

- The kingdom has saved and unsaved people in it (vv. 1-8).
- The kingdom is growing (vv. 26-29) and moving toward a final harvest.
- The kingdom has humble beginnings but exceeds our expectations (vv. 30-32). The kingdom of God appears small and insignificant, but its impact and influence is inclusive and broad.

4:30-32 *"Seed you plant in the ground"*

The size of the harvest is inside the seed. Only the seed can produce life. The soil is the context for this life, but life is in the seed.

4:34 *“He explained everything”*

Compare with verse 13. Although He is the Savior of the world, His actions toward the world are of interest (cf. 1:43). Jesus wanted His disciples to know the truth.

4:36 *“Leaving the crowd behind”*

The ever-present crowd – perhaps ministry training must/should include a study of the gospel of Mark.

- Always surrounded by the people’s needs.
- Opposition will often come from the religious establishment.
- Those closest to you will often not understand you.
- You must get apart for rest, prayer, and meditation.

4:35-41 *“Who is this?”*

You cannot help but see that the storm “experience” was as instructional as the parables. Note the question of the disciples (v. 41) compared to the beliefs of the demons (1:24; 3:11; 5:17) and the religious leaders (3:22). Why did they not know the truth (cf. 4:10-12)? Somehow, the idea of rejection and reception must be tied into John 6.

Notice the contrast between the two ideas. A boat filling up preparing to sink and Jesus sleeping in the same boat. Is it possible to find rest in the midst of life’s storms? Yes! Prior to the disciples awakening Him, He was asleep!

5:1ff *“What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!”*

I am always impressed with the response of the demoniacs. They clearly knew the certainty of His person and the certainty of their punishment.

5:5 *“And gashing himself with stones”*

Notice his self-destructive behavior and immediate deliverance. Our difficulty is when the deliverance we seek is not immediate and the condition of pain is chronic.

In this story, Jesus brought immediate deliverance. In the previous storm, Jesus was not going to stop the storm. He did it per the request of His disciples.

5:12, 13 *"[The demons] began to implore Him earnestly"*

Jesus answered the prayer of the demons. Why would Jesus honor the prayer request of the demoniac? What makes their request different than prayer? Apparently, their request furthered His purpose. The mercy of God extends even to the condemned/damned.

5:13 *"The herd . . . drowned"*

The pig herder's (owner's) loss was substantial. What would our response be if our source of financial gain or livelihood was destroyed by God in "ministry?" This is the "dark" side of the truth. We can celebrate the deliverance of the individual, but the event did not happen in a vacuum. The impact this one event had spiritually, physically, and financially on the community was significant - and not everyone was happy (v. 17).

Why was Jesus willing to destroy 2,000 pigs? Because one individual delivered is worth more than 2,000 pigs (cf. Luke 15:1-32)! Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (2:23-28).

Although I believe Jesus was kind to animals, He willingly sacrificed 2,000 pigs to honor the request of the demoniac.

5:15 *"They came to Jesus and observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the 'legion'; and they became frightened."*

The people could not grasp the life-altering change that came over the individual.

5:22 *"One of the synagogue officials named Jairus came up, and on seeing Him, fell at His feet."*

This is the only proper response when confronted by the presence and power of Jesus Christ (cf. v. 6)

5:21, 24 *"A large crowd"*

O Father, may you grant to us the "large crowd!" His name had become well known (6:14).

5:28, 34 *"Your faith has healed you"*

The woman's faith in Jesus was significant. The woman believed what she heard and acted on it.

5:30 *"Who touched My garments?"*

Why did Jesus ask? Why was He determined to know who it was who touched Him?

5:36 *"Just believe"*

Jesus calls Jairus to faith.

5:42 *"And immediately they were completely astounded"*

The event knocked them off their emotional feet.

5:43 *"Strict orders not to let anyone know"*

Notice the contrasting instructions with verses 18-20. Why? See note for 4:34.

6:2 *"And the many listeners were astonished"*

Amazement is a constant theme. Every time Jesus taught or acted, His audience was amazed.

6:2 *"What's this wisdom. . . even does miracles"*

Notice the connection between wisdom (words) and miracles (works).

6:2, 3 *"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?' And they took offense at Him."*

Second verse same as first (cf. 1:27; 2:7; 4:41). Many did not believe in His virgin birth.

6:3 *"They took offense"*

Compare with 3:21, 31-35. Many were offended at what He said. Why were they offended? Was it envy/jealousy? In the absence of their faith, He chose not to cast His pearls before the swine.

6:6 *"And He was going around the villages teaching."*

Jesus traveled as an evangelist or itinerate Bible teacher.

6:7 *"He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs"*

There is something to be said for teamwork in ministry.

6:8 *"Take nothing"*

Why the austere action? They were to live a life of trust and nearness of the kingdom. He multiplied His influence by sending out others.

6:8-13 *"He instructed them"*

His instruction to the disciples. Verses 12 and 13 tell us what they did. What is the difference between the ministry described here and what we are to engage in now? What are the similarities and what are the differences?

When they went, did they go with His authority (Matt. 28:18, 19)? Were they sent in the same manner as He was sent (John 20:21)?

6:14-15 *"John the Baptist has risen from the dead"*

The passage found in 6:14-29 is an interlude between vv. 13 and 30. Notice the similarities between this statement and that of Matthew 16:13-16.

6:18 *"It is not lawful"*

Why was it not lawful for Herod to have his brother's wife? It was not lawful because she was still married to her husband.

6:20 *"He was very perplexed"*

Greatly puzzled (cf. 4:11, 12). He was greatly perplexed and yet heard Him gladly. Notice the conflict of emotion.

6:29 *"When his disciples heard about this, they came and took away his body and laid it in a tomb"*

I find it interesting that John can be martyred and his disciples can still gather his body.

6:31 *"Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while."*

Here we find Jesus in the quiet place. The narrative suggests (vv. 33ff) they did not get the desired rest (cf. 1:35). Father, help me to find my rest in you (cf. 8:1-13). They made it to a remote place (v. 35), but it was not quiet. It was the compassion of God that motivated Him to give (v. 34). Rest, food, and meditation are a consistent theme in Mark.

6:34 *"Sheep without a shepherd"*

Shepherd-less sheep are unhealthy sheep (cf. Matt. 9:36). Shepherd-less sheep are exposed and vulnerable to attack. Our Lord's response to the situation was to *teach* them. Sheep need shepherds and shepherds need to teach the sheep.

6:37 *But He answered them, "You give them something to eat!"*

Why did Jesus make this request of the disciples? Was it to show their inability or to reveal His sufficiency? In light of what they did in verses 12 and 13, did he know they could feed the multitude? If we are messengers of spiritual healing, are we not also to be messengers of physical healing as well?

In our Lord's temptation, He was told to turn rock into bread. The issue is never ability. God can create food from nothing. Why does world hunger exist? World hunger exists because God wills it so.

I continue to be impressed with the abundance of God. He exceeds the need and leaves us satisfied (vv. 42, 43).

6:39-44 *"Jesus directed them"*

Structure and organization were very intentional to Jesus. There is nothing wrong with organization.

6:44 *"Five thousand"*

The total number fed was easily between 5,000 and 10,000. Wow! It is easy for us to say numbers matter, but we need to be careful in not concluding that these were believers. A large crowd does not mean a believing crowd.

6:46 *"He went up on a mountainside to pray"*

The intent of Jesus was still for His disciples to rest (v. 31).

6:48 *"He was about to pass them by"*

Why was He going to walk by them while they were toiling (v. 48) when He wanted them to rest (v. 31)? He wanted to teach them something in their toiling.

6:48 *“He saw they were making headway painfully”*

He meant to pass by them. God is always fully aware of our deepest hurts and heartaches, but He does not always desire to see us delivered from them. He knows. He gives rest and strength in the storm. He is our rest and strength. Life is the strong wind against us, and He is not always looking to stop the wind. The wind is of His design. He desires for us to trust Him in the wind.

Sometimes life is like that. Every advancement is met with resistance and every inch gained is painful. Jesus is aware of our troubles and He does not always want to deliver us from them, but He does not wish us to be afraid. He is with us.

6:50 *“For they all saw Him and were terrified.”*

Apparently Jesus was not intending to engage His disciples at this time. It appears they only trusted what they saw.

6:51 *“Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped”*

It does not appear that He spoke words to silence the waves like He did in 4:39.

6:52 *“Not understood about the loaves”*

Somehow the loaf incident was to teach them something that was applicable to this situation.

6:56 *“Edge of His cloak”*

See verse 5:28 and Isaiah 6:1ff (word got around). This is a summary statement (cf. 1:45). Just the fringe of His garment, how simple, how powerful. Is this power still available today? I still think it would be a significant “wow” factor to have healing by the fringe of His garment. I recognize we have the Holy Spirit, but what is the difference in impact between the presence of Christ and that of the Holy Spirit?

I know plenty of people who look for physical healing from chronic conditions but never find it.

6:56 *“All who touched Him were healed”*

No faith healer can make such a claim today. Our world is filled with charlatans. This same idea is present in 5:23-34.

7:1-5 *"Thus observing the traditions of the elders"*

Compare to 2:18-22. Do we live by the Word of God only or do we add the traditions of men? The issue was "tradition/culture." Was it wrong to wash one's hands? No. When or why did it become wrong? It became wrong when it was elevated to a plan of equality or superiority to the Word of God. It became wrong when it became binding over the conscience of men. It was wrong because it made demands that the Scripture did not make.

No tradition is wrong simply because it is a tradition. Why they are kept and what happens when broken is the bigger concern. When tradition cancels the Word, it is problematic (v. 13).

7:6, 7 *"You hypocrites"*

Notice their religious hypocrisy - external conformity without internal renewal. Tradition is not wrong. It becomes wrong when it replaces the clear teaching of Scripture.

7:8 *"You have let go of the commands of God and are holding to the traditions of men."*

This is why hypocrisy "works."

7:9-13 *"You nullify the word of God by your traditions"*

Religious irresponsibility and negligence are fleshly, yea worse than fleshly. They are actions worse than the actions of the infidel. The "for" of verse 10 illustrates His point. Verse 13 works as a conclusion/application.

7:14-16 *"Listen to Me, all of you, and understand"*

This is Jesus' Biblical teaching on the issue raised by the religious leaders in verses 9-13.

7:17 *"His disciples questioned Him about the parable."*

Apparently parables are stories/illustrations.

7:18 *"Are you so dull"*

See 4:13, 41; 6:37, 52. Ouch! Jesus fully expects us to understand what He is saying. We strive to understand but only He can make us understand. Jesus appears harsh and short with His disciples. Jesus occasionally violated the dietary laws of the Mosaic Code.

7:21, 22 *“What comes out . . . is what makes him unclean.”*

What comes out are expressions of the flesh (vv. 18-23). Motive weighs heavier than action. Why you do what you do carries more weight than what you do. Both the drunk and the alms giver can be wrong or both right depending on why they did what they did.

The wickedness of man is intrinsic to him. He is wicked and does wickedness.

7:24 *“When He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice.”*

Jesus sought solitude. Compare with 6:31.

7:24-30 *“The woman was a Greek”*

Notice the Gentile inclusion. How did she know her daughter was demonically possessed? Notice the sharp, harsh nature of His response (cf. v. 18). To the Jew first, then to the Gentile.

7:32 *“There some men brought to Him a man. . .”*

See 1:32; 2:3, 5. Friends interceding for a friend. Jesus honored their faith. Who are we, who am I, bringing to Jesus? Was the man reluctant? He was not a cripple. Why did Jesus put His finger in the man’s ear, spit, and touch his tongue (v. 33)? It appears unusual, but apparently necessary (cf. 8:23).

7:36, 24 *“Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone”*

Why did He not wish for people to know? Perhaps they were going to do something with Him that He did not want. See 5:43 (cf. note on 4:34).

7:37 *“People were overwhelmed with amazement”*

Father, break into our hearts and minds and cause us to be overwhelmed with amazement. (cf. 9:15 “overwhelmed with wonder”) This is a summary statement.

8:1 *“Another large crowd”*

Jesus drew masses of people (cf. 6:30-44). This was a common occurrence.

8:2 *"I feel compassion for the people"*

Jesus was moved when He saw shepherd-less sheep. See also 6:34. Compare 8:5 with 6:38.

8:8 *"The people ate and were satisfied"*

Jesus satisfies those who come to Him. Those who come to Him minister to others from the overflow.

8:11 *"The Pharisees came . . . to test Him."*

There was constant tension between Jesus and the religious leaders. Compare 8:10 with 6:45.

8:12 *"Why does this generation seek for a sign?"*

Was this a sign of frustration or was it a sign of disappointment?

8:14 *"And they had forgotten to take bread"*

They had what they needed in what Jesus provided, but they forgot to access it. See also 8:8.

8:15 *"Watch out; beware of the leaven . . ."*

In His explanation (vv. 17-21) He does not explain what He meant.

8:17 *"Do you still not see or understand?"*

Jesus chides them for not getting it (cf. 7:18, 4:12). God fully expects us to understand His Word.

8:22, 23 *"And they brought a blind man to Jesus"*

Compare with 7:32, 33. I continue to be impressed with the idea of intercessory living. The blind man was brought by his friends. They interceded for their friend. For whom am I interceding?

8:26 *"Do not even enter the village."*

This is a reoccurring theme in Mark's Gospel. Why? There is a constant theme of secrecy even though He is surrounded by enormous crowds.

8:27-38 Does verses 27-38 explain the issue of secrecy? Was popular opinion so wrong that Jesus did not desire to cultivate it?

8:31 *"He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things."*

Jesus already knew who was going to kill Him and how it was going to happen. It is clear from the beginning that the religious leaders wished Him dead. This was the plan of God all along.

8:32 *"He spoke plainly"*

Plainly – openly – the redemptive purpose of God is singular and immutable.

8:34 *"He must . . . take up his cross"*

Not only must Jesus die, but you must die as well. In the absence of this, we are lost.

9:1 *"There are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."*

How does this verse relate to 8:34-38?

9:2 *"They were all alone"*

Jesus often isolated Himself from others (cf. vv. 30, 31). The answer to the question in verse 1 is in the following events on the Mount of Transfiguration. "Quietness is the classroom where you learn to hear my voice." (Sarah Young, Jesus Calling, 10/30). See also 6:30, 31.

9:3 *"His garments became radiant and exceedingly white."*

His pre-incarnate glory.

9:6 *"For he did not know what to answer."*

Peter simply ran off at the mouth. How many times do I do the same?

9:7 *"This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!"*

See also 1:11. "This is – you are." The first was spoken to Jesus; the second was spoken of Jesus. One assures and the other identifies.

9:9 *“Not to tell anyone”*

This is a consistent theme in Mark (cf. 7:24, 36; 8:26). There will be a proper time and place for all of it. Now was not the time or the place.

9:10 *“Discussing with one another what rising from the dead meant.”*

Resurrection truth was not commonly believed.

9:10-13 *“Elijah does first come and restore all things. Elijah has indeed come.”*

See also John in 1:2-8. The inauguration of the Kingdom with John and Jesus cannot be so easily dismissed.

9:14 *“They saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them.”*

This is a consistent thought throughout Mark (cf. 8:1). What were they arguing about (vv. 16, 17)? Is this what we have been reduced to? Yes, sadly we argue about how the work is to be done and allow the work to be left undone.

9:19 *“How long shall I put up with you?”*

Jesus appears harsh toward His disciples in that they failed to see Him for what He was and what He could do (cf. 7:18; 8:17). How are we different from them? Do we believe God? Jesus desires for our trust in Him to blossom.

9:23, 24 *“Everything is possible for him who believes.”*

What a powerful exchange. Note the context – Jesus has already reprimanded His audience for unbelief. Jesus expected His disciples to be able to cast out demons (vv. 23, 28, 29). Jesus challenges the unbelieving grief of the father and the father throws himself at the feet of Jesus saying, “Help me overcome my unbelief.” This is where most of us live. Jesus is startled by the comment. “All things are possible.” What does this mean?

9:28, 29 *“This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.”*

Connect this statement with vv. 18-19 and vv. 22-24. Father, like the father of the possessed child, I ask you to help me overcome my unbelief. Cause me to pray in faith for the impossible (cf. Eph. 3:20, 21).

9:30, 31 *“He was teaching His disciples”*

Notice the seclusion and the explanation for the seclusion in verse 31 (cf. 9:2). Compare the content of what He shared in 9:31 with 8:31. Jesus spent time with His disciples, teaching them in order that they might understand what was to come (cf. 4:10, 34).

9:32 *“They . . . were afraid to ask”*

They were chided so often for their lack of understanding (cf. 8:21) that they were now afraid to ask! They were afraid to ask because they were rebuked for not understanding (cf. 8:17).

9:34 *“They had argued about who was the greatest”*

Apparently the disciples were often found discussing “theology” among themselves (cf. 9:10). Compare 9:33 with verse 16. Jesus probed with questions. His disciples were embarrassed by their pettiness. Verses 33-50 is a complete thought.

In life and ministry, one’s ego must be kept in check. God spare me from comparing myself to others. “Comparison kills contentment.” We must embrace John’s attitude when he said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” Each believer has a gifting and role; each is unique and special, but not superior or better. There must be no talk about “greater” without concluding that it is Jesus.

9:37 *“Whoever welcomes me . . . welcomes the one who sent me”*

Notice the connection between Jesus and the Father. He that receives one of these receives me (vv. 37, 40, 42).

9:38-41 *“He was not one of us”*

There is no “us” versus “them.” All Christians are on the same side.

9:50 *“Be at peace with each other”*

How does verse 50 answer the scenario beginning in verse 38 and following? Compare Matthew 5:27-30 with 9:42-50. Jesus uses the same information but in a different context with a different application.

Why must the body persistently splinter? Father, force us to show the unity that is already true in Christ.

10:1 *"He taught them"*

Again, notice the crowds of people, how Jesus was popular among the people.

Jesus persistently taught. His custom was to teach – as a Rabbi, teacher, he taught. Jesus was always teaching. What did He teach? Probably the Christ-centered message of the Hebrew Scripture: the truth about Himself. He taught the fulfillment of the promises. He taught the beginnings of the New Covenant.

10:3-9 *"It is because your hearts are hard"*

Divorce exists because sin exists; God's intent is one woman, one man, for one lifetime. Marriage is a one-flesh union that God creates. We are called to "hold fast to our wives." What an incredible statement.

10:10 *"The disciples asked Jesus"*

Jesus engaged in private tutoring (cf. 9:34).

10:11, 12 *"Anyone who divorces . . . and marries another. . . commits adultery"*

Jesus makes a very plain, no-clutter statement regarding divorce. It appears to be straightforward.

10:14 *"He was indignant"*

Jesus showed real emotion.

10:15 *"Like a child"*

Like a child – by faith. No child can work enough to merit heaven. It must be by grace through faith.

10:17 *"A man ran up and knelt."*

There was a sincerity in the rich young ruler.

10:21 *"Loved him"*

Jesus loved the rich young man. He expressed a range of emotions (cf. 10:14). To be saved you have to give up who you are and embrace who He is. What Jesus says here in 10:21 is no different than what He said in 8:34-38. You exchange your identity for His. The rich young ruler is an illustration of His point. Jesus "felt" the rejection of the rich young ruler.

10:24 *“Children . . .”*

Jesus calls His disciples “children” (cf. 13-16).

- “were amazed” (v. 24)
- “were even more amazed” (v. 26)
- “were astonished” (v. 32)

This inner discussion is seen throughout Mark.

10:28 *“we have left everything”*

Peter’s response was in response to verse 21. Peter said, “We have done what you asked.”

10:30 *“[No one] will fail to receive a hundred times as much”*

Our Lord’s response says “Jesus is enough *in* this life and *in* the life to come.” The blessing of being “in Christ” is 100 times as much as whatever temporal sacrifices are required or faced in this life.

10:31 *“The first will be last, and the last first”*

Who was first? The rich man?

10:32 *“The disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid”*

The emotional reaction of His disciples and those who followed must be noted. Jesus evokes a mixture of emotion.

10:33 *“The Son of Man will be betrayed”*

Compare to 8:31 and 9:12.

10:35, 36 *“Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You.”*

There appears to be a limit to what was said earlier in 9:23 and 14:36. There are some requests God will not answer.

10:37 *“Let one of us sit at your right hand”*

They do not get it! (cf. 9:34). It does not appear that they understood about greatness and humility. In light of 9:34 it seems odd they would do this again. Our vanity knows no limit. Ego must always be restrained, it must be slain (v. 42ff). Part of **biblical** leadership is the gift of humility. The office of Pastor leads by default. O God, cause us to lead humbly.

10:42 *“Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them”*

Jesus “managed” inner disciple squabbles.

10:41-45 *“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant”*

True greatness is found in service – large crowds (v. 46). Notice the contrast between the rich young ruler and the blind man.

10:48 *“He shouted all the more”*

Inability drives us to despair and desperation. Blind Bartimaeus had nothing to lose and everything to gain. He gladly accepted the conditions of the cross. Think again about the Rich Young Ruler and 8:34-38.

10:51 *“I want to see”*

Jesus met His need and did beyond what He could have hoped (Eph. 3:20, 21). What are you asking Jesus for?

11:1 *“Sent two of his disciples”*

We must always work in, at least, pairs.

11:8-10 *“Many people”*

Once again, notice the crowds (cf. v.18). The statements made by the crowd indicate their expectancy. Throughout Mark great crowds gathered and equally so Jesus told people not to spread the word about Him. Perhaps this is what He wanted to avoid or postpone until this moment in time?

11:11 *“He looked around at everything”*

What did He see? Was anything overlooked? Did He notice the money changers (v. 15)?

11:13, 14 *“May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”*

Why does He “judge” the fig tree for something it was not supposed to do?

11:17 *"A house of prayer versus a den of robbers"*

What were they doing that was so terrible? Is the church, in any way, to be a place of prayer? What place does the building have in biblical Christianity? Lydia prayed by the river (Acts 16). That place was noted as a place of prayer.

11:18 *"Looking for a way to kill Him"*

From the very start, they rejected His ministry. The threat to them was significant. Their venom was highly toxic.

11:22 *"Have faith in God."*

Is this the point of the cursed fig tree?

11:23 *"Whoever says to this mountain"*

The idea that "real faith moves mountains" is restricted by the immutable decrees of God. Faith can only move mountains that God wants moved.

11:24 *"Therefore"*

This word implies application. Pray - believe - receive. If faith is measurable, how little do we have? If faith is measured by its "product," how great is our faith? God answers all prayers that are prayed according to His will. See also 9:23; 10:35, 36; and 14:36.

11:25 *"Forgive him. . . may forgive you"*

You are forgiven as you forgive. God forgives those who forgive. Non-forgiveness is a sign of unbelief. The issue is whether or not forgiveness is causal or conditional. You forgive because you have been forgiven, or you forgive in order to be forgiven.

11:28 *"By what authority"*

Why, after all this time, do they challenge His authority?

11:32 *"But shall we say, 'From men'? -- they were afraid of the people"*

Why would the religious leaders reject John as a prophet?

12:1-12 *"Speak to them in parables"*

The entire story of Israel is a parable (cf. 3:23; 4:2).

- A man - God
- A vineyard/harvest/inheritance - kingdom/salvation?
- The farmers - Israel
- A servant - prophets
- A Son - Jesus Christ
- Others - Gentiles

This parable illustrates “the story line” found in the Old Testament and what is happening in the Gospels.

12:9 *“And will give the vineyard to others.”*

He speaks of Gentile inclusion. Although Gentiles were always included, this statement “excludes” Jews.

12:18-23 The Sadducees thought they were clever. Notice the contrasting statements concerning the Scribes. Compare verse 34 with verse 38.

12:24 *“The power of God”*

The power of God does the unimaginable; what appears to be insurmountable or irreconcilable, God does. We struggle in knowing how a sovereign God can give man a will that appears free, and yet God still holds man responsible for his actions - the power of God. We struggle against the weight of theodicy - the power of God. We struggle to make sense of our own inability - the power of God.

12:26 *“Have you not read in the book of Moses”*

By saying, “Have you not read” and “what did Moses say” (10:3), Jesus pushed His audience to the text of Scripture.

12:27 *“He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken.”*

The dead are not “dead” nor are they atheists. God rules over all things whether visible or invisible.

12:28 *“What commandment is the foremost of all?”*

“The most important of all commandments” is no different than repent and believe the gospel (1:15). Both ideas bring you into the kingdom of God.

12:29 *"THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD;"*

Monotheism demanded.

12:30 *"YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART"*

This is a singular and complete devotion. Somehow we fail to connect verse 30 with 8:34-38 and 10:21-31. Turning your back to self and your face toward Jesus is what this is all about. Different language and imagery is used to say the same thing.

12:31 *"The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'"*

The second flows from the first. Being who you are where you are at is the essence of witnessing.

12:32 *"You are right"*

This clarity comes from God. Man's capacity to think comes from being an image bearer; his conclusion from the thinking comes from God.

12:34 *"You are not far from the kingdom of God."*

Jesus taught exclusively about the Kingdom. Did this idea stop with His rejection and redemptive purpose or was His rejection/the cross still part of the Kingdom program? Jesus Christ is David's greater/greatest Son (v. 35). Jesus Christ comes from the line of David.

12:37 *"Listened to Him with delight"*

A great throng gathered. When the word of God is opened, do we find delight in the word and its application by the Holy Spirit?

12:40 *"Punished most severely"*

To whom much is given, much will be required. Those who prey on the people of God and make merchandise (11:17) of and in the house of God receive greater condemnation. Religious hypocrisy is a horrible sin and a punishable crime.

12:43, 44 *"This poor widow"*

It is not the size of the gift but the motive of the heart that matters when giving. It is not the amount but the motive that determines the size of the offering. The widow illustrated vv. 28-34. The anointing of vv. 14:1-11 also illustrated vv. 28-34. Father, move me to love you above all else.

13:1, 2 *“Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down.”*

Jesus, indirectly, debunks our fixation with buildings.

13:10 *“The gospel must first be preached to all the nations.”*

The gospel must be preached to all nations. This is not the *goal* of Christianity. This is the *audience*.

13:13 *“He who stands firm to the end”*

Is this verse dealing with the tribulation or some other period? Maybe A.D. 70?

13:19 *“Days of distress – never to be equaled”*

This is reminiscent of the Flood (Gen. 6-9). I would have to believe the flood was pretty radical.

13:20 *“But for the sake of the elect, whom He chose”*

Election is God choosing man.

13:22 *“In order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.”*

The delusional activity of demonic presence will be strong. Much devilish work has been done in the name of God and faith (cf. Matt. 7:22). The elect are a special and distinct group and although Scripture *never* uses the word non-elect, it only stands to reason that if there is an elect or election there must be some non-elect (vv. 22, 27).

13:30 *“This generation”*

Does verse 30 assure us that A.D. 70 is the fulfillment of Chapter 13? Note the fig tree (cf. Mark 11:12 [v. 28]). What immediate application does chapter 13 have to His disciples?

13:32 *“Nor the Son”*

The Son, as man, does not know the hour. The Son, as God, does. This verse has created problems for the full deity of Jesus Christ. Jesus in His humanity did not know, but Jesus in His deity did know.

13:34 *“Each with his assigned task”*

Each of us has an assigned task and is to stay alert.

13:1-37 Is there a connection between chapter 12 and 13?

13:37 *"Be on the alert!"*

As believers we are never to be sleeping in our faith – rest, yes; but apathetic, never.

14:1 *"The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth and kill Him"*

Anytime you are doing something sinful your actions become hollow because your motive is impure. Honesty, transparency, vulnerability, and accountability come from humility, teach-ability, and charity.



Love, Acceptance, Forgiveness, Service (Grace)

When this happens. . . this happens:
Humility, Teach-ability, Charity (love)

When this happens. . . this happens:
Honesty, Transparency, Vulnerability, Acceptance

In the absence of grace, people will not be honest or transparent because of fear of judgment and condemnation. Biblical humility can only happen where grace reigns.

14:1 *"The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth and kill Him"*

The impression one gets of the religious leaders is very negative. Consider the graphic words used in the biblical text: "stealth" (v. 1), "indignantly" (v. 4), and "scolded" (v. 6).

14:1-11 *"There came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head."*

The anointing illustrated (12:28ff).

14:6 *"She has done a beautiful thing to me"*

Consider the statement of 14:9 with 13:10 and 16:15.

- *"Wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world." (14:9)*
- *"And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations." (13:10)*
- *"Go into all the world and proclaim." (16:15)*

14:11 *"They were delighted to hear this"*

These words were from the chief priests to whom Judas betrayed Jesus. We see two different motives for delight (cf. 12:37). Why would I be glad with deception and betrayal?

14:12 *"Where do you want us to go"*

Jesus commands and all obey (cf. chapter 11). Jesus knew exactly where everything was and ordered what exists to carry out His purpose (14:13; see also 11:2). Why are we always surprised to find what God does surprising (v. 16)? **He will always do what He says and fulfill what He promises.**

14:19 *"They were saddened"*

Their reaction to the news that one of them would betray Him seems uneventful.

14:21 *"For the Son of Man is to go just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."*

The clash of divine predestination and human responsibility. Neither one negates the other.

14:22-26 *"This is my body. . ."*

The Lord's Table is an illustration, a picture, before the actual event it symbolized. Jesus uses the Passover as an illustration of His impending death. Have we forgotten the realism/symbolism of the elements? Why is it so hard to believe the covenant is new?

14:25 *"Until that day"*

There is a fuller or later phase of the kingdom that is future to this event.

14:27 *"I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP SHALL BE SCATTERED."*

Notice the relationship between the Shepherd and His sheep. The Shepherd protects the sheep *and* the sheep need a Shepherd for a sense of security and well-being.

14:29 *"I will not"*

Our flesh is always blind to its own ability and deceived by its own deficiency (cf. v.38).

14:30 *"You yourself will disown me"*

The denial of Peter is the reality of all flesh. Peter's experience is my experience - all who trust in the flesh will perish in the flesh.

14:31 *"I will never disown you"*

The flesh makes great boasts and promises much, but in the end will always be met with failure and disappointment. **What we promise or commit to in the light is often sorely tested in the dark.** Be careful what you promise.

14:33 *"Deeply distressed and troubled"*

All the Gospels paint a real picture of Jesus in His humanity. He was like human nature in all points yet without sin.

14:36 *"Everything is possible"*

What God can do and what He will do are different. We know what He can do; we do not know what He will do. In theory, God could have redeemed His people in some other way, but before the foundation of the world His method was set. Nothing other than what happened could have been. There was no possible way for the Father to comply with the request of His Son.

I am still impressed with the impossible nature of His request. Was 9:23 not true? Was 11:20 and following not true? The Son asked what was impossible. The Son was slain before the foundation was poured and thus it was now impossible to stop. What was foreordained and foreknown cannot be undone (cf. Acts 2:23; 4:28).

All things are possible, but not all things I desire find expression in the eternal purpose of God.

14:36 *"This cup"*

It is the cup of man's redemption. His humanity loathed the coming cross. His deity embraced it.

14:39 *“Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words.”*

Repetition is not wrong, only “vain” repetition is wrong.

14:49 *“But the Scripture must be fulfilled”*

Is this the first time this phrase is used in Mark? Scripture is quoted in 14:27.

14:50 *“And they all left Him and fled”*

So much for “peacock promises.” There was lots of fanfare, but no substance.

14:54 *“Peter had followed Him at a distance”*

Peter’s betrayal takes up significant Scripture. God wants us to see promise, failure, repentance, and restoration.

14:55 *“Looking for evidence”*

The chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law were looking for evidence against Jesus, but could not find any. Jesus sat in a courtroom, and no charge could be brought against Him no matter how hard they tried – nothing, nada.

14:61 *“Jesus remained silent and gave no answer”*

When do we answer our critics? When do we “set the record straight?” Is it necessary? How blameless do I live? Father, help me to hate my flesh and to war against it (1 Pet. 2:11). If Jesus did not answer the falsehoods brought against Him, why do I believe I must? Father, forgive me for my own towering arrogance. I neither have to be honored nor heard. There is nothing in my reputation that is worth “saving.” My position/standing is secure in Christ. Beyond that, nothing else matters.

14:64 *“Condemned Him”*

The Prince of Peace, the Bread of Life, the Living Water, the Spotless Lamb of God – “worthy of death!” O the weight of such contradiction. He had to die if His people would live before the Father accepted (This is 8:31-38). The venom from the religious leaders is our shame (vv. 63-65).

14:65 *" . . . beat Him"*

Why do I believe I am worthy of more than this? Why do I cringe at personal rejection when my Savior and Lord received such treatment at the hands of those He came to save (cf. 15:16-20)?

14:71, 72 *"He called down curses. . . he remembered. . . he broke down and wept"*

Peter's repentance was real. To whom could he go for confession? Who would become his confidant, his comforter, his advocate? Jesus Christ who alone is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse (1 John 1:9). The very one he disowns is the one to whom he flees.

15:1 *"Reached a decision"*

What conclusion other than the one they came to were they going to reach? Pilate thought there was no way they would take Barabbas over Jesus. He intentionally chose the least likely.

15:4 *"Do You not answer? See how many charges they bring against You!"*

Jesus still remained silent (cf. 14:60, 61).

15:5 *"Pilate was amazed."*

His silence forced them to question the nature and motive of their questioning. They believed what they were doing was right and necessary. Pilate understood the motive behind their actions (v. 10). The Scripture does not correct his statement.

15:14 *"Why, what evil has He done?"*

There was nothing blameworthy in Jesus (cf. 14:55, 56). They concluded He was "worthy of death" (14:64), but Pilate knew that He was blameless of any crime, let alone the crime resulting in a capital offense.

15:15 *"Wanting to satisfy the crowd"*

This is where leadership will always err. You cannot please God and man equally. The crowd will never be satisfied, and the majority is often a bad place to be. Many wrongs and much injustice are done by one such thought. When we bow and kneel to the Baal of popular appeasement, we place our conscience on the altar of impending judgment.

15:29 *"Destroy the temple"*

Compare to 13:2.

15:32 *"That we may see and believe"*

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Sight does not produce faith. Sight and faith are mutually exclusive. We either walk by faith or by sight. "See and believe" versus "Blessed are those who, in not seeing, believe."

15:34 *"Why have you forsaken me?"*

This is the true agony of sin bearing. Although we fail in our attempts to understand this separation, it was real and painful.

15:37 *"Jesus breathed His last"*

At this point, His soul and spirit were separated from His body. Jesus died in His humanity.

15:38 *"The curtain. . . was torn"*

The work of reconciliation was finished (cf. Eph 2:11-22). The curtain was torn, "top to bottom," a rent only God could make.

15:41 *"Cared for His needs"*

In His humanity, Jesus had needs. Jesus looked to others to meet His needs. The Father worked through secondary causation to meet the needs of His Son. The statement is a consequence of the incarnation.

15:43 *"Waiting for the Kingdom of God"*

His waiting came to an end.

16:7 *"Go and tell"*

See also 16:10.

16:8 *"They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid."*

Up to this point, Jesus told people not to tell; now He does instruct them to spread the good news, and they do not!

16:11 *"They did not believe it"*

The contradicting narrative is interesting. We are always fighting against our own unbelief (v. 14 - ouch!).

16:14 *"He rebuked them"*

This is consistent in Mark. Our Lord expects us to believe.

16:15 *"Believe and is baptized"*

Is baptism, as used here, a work or term or condition to salvation or an expression of salvation? Is this baptism Holy Spirit or water?

16:20 *"The disciples. . . preached"*

They preached repentance and confession.

A FINAL WORD

I trust you have taken the time to read each of the passages noted above. Each of our journeys is different but very much alike. Often our experiences are different, but the experiences make up the journey, and each of us must see our lives in light of God's absolute truth. I pray (if you have not already a practice of "musing") this will begin a journey of "musing" for you. May the Holy Spirit move you to create your own "Museum of Thought."

May you find in your journey those who are of a kindred spirit, and may God use them as tools of encouragement and strength when you find yourself in the deep place, the dark place, and the steep place. The message of the Bible is a message of Christ. He loves us without condition, He accepts us without requirement, He forgives us without limit, and He serves us without reward. May you always find Him to be enough in this life and in the life to come.