

# THE GOSPEL OF MARK

2018 STUDY NOTES . PART 5 .

In our ongoing study in the Gospel of Mark its worth noting the basic structure of the Gospel. The first half (1:1-8:30) is fast-paced and cram-packed with Jesus performing many miracles and interacting with various people in various places, all the while pressing the question: "Who is this man?" In the second half (8:31-16:8) the story slows down with six of those chapters detailing Jesus' last week in Jerusalem with a concern to answer the question: "What has he come to do?" The answer to this question is both arresting and profound, not only in its implications for Jesus but also for those who dare let him heal them of their spiritual blindness.

## Getting Started

Remember to start and finish with prayer.

Read Mark 7:1-23 below

*The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and 2 saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were “unclean,” that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)*

*5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with ‘unclean’ hands?”*

*6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:*

*“These people honour me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.*

*7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’*

*8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.”*

*9 And he said to them: “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! 10 For Moses said, ‘Honour your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.’ 11 But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban’ (that is, a gift devoted to God), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”*

*14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a man can make him ‘unclean’ by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him ‘unclean.’”*

*17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 18 “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him ‘unclean’? 19 For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods “clean.”)*

20 He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' 21 For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

1. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?
2. What does this passage tell us about who Jesus is?

*think it through*

3. How might we be like the Pharisees and teachers of the law?
4. How might our moral and political convictions communicate to others that they are 'dirty' and 'unclean' and unfit for contact with us?
5. What traditions in the way we do church might alienate outsiders from hearing about Jesus?

Read Mark 7:24-30 below

*Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. 25 In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. 26 The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.*

*27 "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."*

*28 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."*

*29 Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."*

*30 She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.*

6. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

7. What does this passage tell us about who Jesus is?

*think it through*

8. How would you have responded to Jesus suggesting you are a dog?

9. What might this response tell you about you?

10. Assuming you are a Gentile, how do you feel being second to the Jew in Jesus' mind? (see also Romans 1:16; and chapter 11)

11. What does the Gentile woman in this passage teach us when it comes to receiving God's grace from Jesus? (see also Romans 11:25)

Read Mark 7:31-37 below

*Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. 32 There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man.*

*33 After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. 34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!"). 35 At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.*

*36 Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. 37 People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."*

12. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

13. What does this passage tell us about who Jesus is?

What the people say of Jesus seem to echo what the Bible says of God. With "he has done everything well" echoing Genesis 1:31- "God saw all he had made, and it was very good", and "he makes the deaf hear and the mute speak" with Isaiah 35:5-6 - "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy" - a passage found in a broader context of God's promise to restore creation and bring spiritual life. These echoes recall God's promise to restore creation being fulfilled in Jesus and faith in him.

*think it through*

14. In what ways might spiritual deafness be unstopped?

Our own.

And others.

15. List some ways that effectively communicate the gospel that you have experienced.

*Pray*

... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.

## Getting Started

Remember to start and finish with prayer.

Read Mark 8:1-26 below

*During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 2 "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. 3 If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance."*

*4 His disciples answered, "But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?"*

*5 "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked.*

*"Seven," they replied.*

*6 He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and they did so. 7 They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. 8 The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 9 About four thousand men were present. And having sent them away, 10 he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.*

*11 The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. 12 He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it." 13 Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.*

*14 The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. 15 "Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."*

*16 They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread."*

*17 Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? 18 Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? 19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"*

*"Twelve," they replied.*

*20 "And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"*

*They answered, "Seven."*

*21 He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"*

22 They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. 23 He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"

24 He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

25 Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. 26 Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't go into the village."

1. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

2. What does this passage tell us about who Jesus is?

*think it through*

3. How are Jesus' disciples like the blind man at Bethsaida?

4. Can you identify distinct steps in your coming to faith in Jesus?

5. How might the "coming" to faith of others effect the way we treat them?

Read Mark 8:27-9:1 below

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

28 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

29 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Christ."

30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

*31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.*

*33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."*

*34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? 37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*

*9:1 And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."*

6. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

7. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

8. What might it look like to deny yourself in following Jesus?

9. What does it look like to take up your cross and follow Jesus?

10. Make a list of all that you have given up in the last month in the service of Jesus and God's people and the gospel.

11. Could you say you are losing your life for Jesus and the gospel? What might this say about you?

*Pray*

... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.

## Getting Started

Remember to start and finish with prayer.

Read Mark 9:2-13 below

*After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. 3 His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. 4 And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.*

*5 Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." 6 (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)*

*7 Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"*

*8 Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.*

*9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. 10 They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.*

*11 And they asked him, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"*

*12 Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? 13 But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him."*

1. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

2. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

The Transfiguration detailed in this passage has many parallels with Moses' ascent and descent of Mount Sinai (Ex 24:1-18; 34:29-35; 35:30). As such, Jesus is cast as the new Moses who was enthroned on Mount Sinai. That Elijah also met God on this mountain reinforces the link. What's more, Elijah and Moses are both eschatological figures. Moses was Israel's first deliverer and people expected a prophet like him (Deut. 18:15) to appear and liberate Israel. And Elijah was supposed to appear at the beginning of the end time of God's ultimate redemption of Israel (Malachi 4:4-6). As such, transfigured with these figures, we are to see - along with Peter, James and John - that Jesus' recently predicted suffering (Mark 8:31) is not incompatible with his glory and redemptive mission as the Christ.

*think it through*

3. Of what Jesus' says, what particularly do you think the disciples are to listen to? (9:7 and 8:31-38)

Read Mark 9:14-29 below

*When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. 15 As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.*

*16 "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.*

*17 A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. 18 Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."*

*19 "O unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."*

*20 So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.*

*21 Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"*

*"From childhood," he answered. 22 "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."*

*23 " 'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."*

*24 Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"*

*25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."*

*26 The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.*

*28 After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"*

*29 He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer."*

4. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

5. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

6. What do the disciples' ministry failure and Jesus' response offer us as we reckon with our own failures?

It's been suggested there are three kinds of faith. Struggling faith - like a man in deep water desperately swimming; clinging faith - like a man hanging to the side of a boat; and resting faith - like a man safely within the boat able to reach out and help others get in. Many experience all three and can move back and forth between them.

7. Which of these three do you think the father in the passage above had?

8. What was the answer to help him in his faith?

9. How might this help us in whatever kind of faith we find ourselves in now?

Read Mark 9:30-50 below

*They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, 31 because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." 32 But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.*

*33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" 34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.*

*35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."*

*36 He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, 37 "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."*

*38 "Teacher," said John, "we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us."*

*39 "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, 40 for whoever is not against us is for us. 41 I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.*

*42 "And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. 43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. 45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where*

*" 'their worm does not die,  
and the fire is not quenched.'*

*49 Everyone will be salted with fire.*

*50 "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other."*

10. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

11. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

12. As a leader (parent, ministry worker) what would those you seek to serve (children, church family) say about what's important to you? (Maybe ask them)

13. What might the story of the unfamiliar exorcist teach us about our attitude towards other churches and Christian denominations?

*Pray*

... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.

## Getting Started

Remember to start and finish with prayer.

Read Mark 10:1-16 below

*Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.*

*2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"*

*3 "What did Moses command you?" he replied.*

*4 They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away."*

*5 "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. 6 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 7 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8 and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."*

*10 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. 11 He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12 And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."*

*13 People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.*

1. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

2. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

3. Given that Matthew 19:9 and 1 Corinthians 7:15 seem to be legitimate exceptions for divorce and remarriage, why do you think Mark records Jesus saying what he does in 10:11-12?

4. How might the context of Jesus' teaching on divorce here temper the way we talk to those in the throes of divorce? (see John 4:4-29 and 7:53-8:11 as possible insight)

5. How might we demonstrate Jesus' attitude towards the children in our church family? In our society?

Read Mark 10:17-31 below

*As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

*18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honour your father and mother.'"*

*20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."*

*21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."*

*22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.*

*23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"*

*24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."*

26 *The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"*

27 *Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."*

28 *Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!"*

29 *"I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first."*

6. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

7. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

Jane Goodall's famous studies of chimpanzees revealed that although normally placid and cooperative they became contentious when she began to give them bananas. The new surplus of food made the dominant chimps keep it to themselves and the lesser ones had to come begging.

*think it through*

8. How might Jesus' words to the rich man help us to be less like chimpanzees?

9. How might what you give to church reflect where your trust is?

Read Mark 10:17-31 below

*They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. 33 "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will*

*hand him over to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”*

*35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”*

*36 “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.*

*37 They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”*

*38 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”*

*39 “We can,” they answered.*

*Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, 40 but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”*

*41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. 42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

10. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

11. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

12. Share some experiences of those you have seen serving as Jesus serves (perhaps by not mentioning names to protect the guilty). Pray that we would be like them as they have been like Jesus.

Read Mark 10:46-52 below

*Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

*48 Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

*49 Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."*

*So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." 50 Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.*

*51 "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.*

*The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."*

*52 "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.*

13. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

14. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

15. What would be your answer to the question from Jesus "What do you want me to do for you?"

*Pray*

... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.

## Getting Started

Remember to start and finish with prayer.

Read Mark 11:1-11 below

*As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"*

*4 They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, 5 some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" 6 They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. 7 When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. 9 Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,*

*"Hosanna!"*

*"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

*10 "Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"*

*"Hosanna in the highest!"*

*11 Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.*

1. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

2. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

Read Mark 11:12-33 below

*The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. 14 Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.*

*15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, 16 and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. 17 And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written:*

*" 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"*

*18 The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.*

*19 When evening came, they went out of the city.*

*20 In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. 21 Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"*

*22 "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. 23 "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. 25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."\**

*27 They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. 28 "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you authority to do this?"*

*29 Jesus replied, "I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 30 John's baptism—was it from heaven, or from men? Tell me!"*

*31 They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?'" 32 But if we say, 'From*

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\* verse 26 was probably not in Mark's original account but inserted by copyists in imitation of Matt 6:15

*men' . . . ." (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.)*

*33 So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."*

*Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."*

3. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

4. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

Following on the royal procession to the city (Mark 11:1-11), Jesus' subsequent cursing of the fig tree and the driving out of those buying and selling in the temple seem to be symbolic declarations of the beginning of God's promised judgement in the 'last days'. Malachi 3:1-4 anticipates 'the Lord' visiting his temple to purify its worship, and Zechariah 14:21 tells of the 'last days' holiness of Jerusalem in that there shall no longer be traders in the house of the Lord. The coupling of Jesus' action in the temple as a re-enacting of Zechariah 14:21, with the cursing of the fig tree serves to symbolise the Lord come to judge his people, given the use of fig trees and their fruit to symbolise the people of God and their obedience was commonplace in prophecy (Jeremiah 8:13; 24:1-10; Hosea 9:10, 16-17; Micah 7:1).

*think it through*

5. What is significant about Mount Zion? What might be the significance of this mountain being thrown into the sea? (verse 23)

6. Jesus denounced the temple in Jerusalem as it had come to represent a system that disadvantaged the poor and promoted xenophobia, ethnocentrism and profiteering rather than a place for anyone to meet with God and know his mercy. In what ways might the way we do church make it hard for people to meet with God and know his mercy in Jesus?

7. If prayer is asking God to keep his promises, what might we be confident to pray for in the name of Jesus?

Read Mark 12:1-12 below

*He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. 2 At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 4 Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. 5 He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.*

*6 "He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'*

*7 "But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 8 So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.*

*9 "What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. 10 Haven't you read this scripture:*

*" 'The stone the builders rejected  
has become the capstone;  
11 the Lord has done this,  
and it is marvellous in our eyes'?"*

*12 Then they looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.*

8. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

9. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

Read Mark 12:13-44 below

*Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. 14 They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? 15 Should we pay or shouldn't we?"*

*But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. “Why are you trying to trap me?” he asked. “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” 16 They brought the coin, and he asked them, “Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?”*

*“Caesar’s,” they replied.*

*17 Then Jesus said to them, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”*

*And they were amazed at him.*

*18 Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. 19 “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. 20 Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. 21 The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. 22 In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. 23 At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?”*

*24 Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? 25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. 26 Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”*

*28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”*

*29 “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

*32 “Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. 33 To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”*

*34 When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.*

35 While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, “How is it that the teachers of the law say that the Christ is the son of David? 36 David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:

“The Lord said to my Lord:  
“Sit at my right hand  
until I put your enemies  
under your feet.””

37 David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?”

The large crowd listened to him with delight.

38 As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, 39 and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets. 40 They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely.”

41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42 But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny.

43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

10. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

11. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

12. In giving ‘to Caesar what is Caesar’s’ when must we ‘obey God rather than men’ (Acts 5:29)?

Many people, like the Sadducees, do not believe in an afterlife. An example of an ancient tombstone inscription reads:

“I did not exist, I was born; I existed, I do not exist; so much (for that)”

13. As those who believe in the resurrected and resurrecting Jesus, what would you like your tombstone to read?

14. What might it mean for us to love God with all our mind?

*Pray*

... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.

## Getting Started

Remember to start and finish with prayer.

Read Mark 13 below

*As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"*

*2 "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."*

*3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?"*

*5 Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. 7 When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 8 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.*

*9 "You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. 11 Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.*

*12 "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 13 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.*

*14 "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15 Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. 16 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 17 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 18 Pray that this will not take place in winter, 19 because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again. 20 If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. 21 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it.*

22 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect—if that were possible. 23 So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

24 “But in those days, following that distress,  
“ ‘the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light;  
25 the stars will fall from the sky,  
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’

26 “At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

28 “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 29 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. 30 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

32 “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 34 It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

35 “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

1. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

2. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

Commentators are tentative as to which specific historical event 'the abomination that causes desolation' (verse 14) might be referring to as every known option is somewhat problematic. Whatever it was, it would have been some specific first-century phenomenon which included the desecrating of the temple somehow and related to the war against Rome when it made sense to flee Jerusalem.

What is certain is that the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD never to rise again, unlike the man Jesus who has replaced the temple. He is now the place where people can now meet with God and know his mercy as he gathers them to himself from all over the earth.

*think it through*

3. What might it look like for us to heed Jesus' warning of not being found sleeping but instead keeping watch?

*Pray*

... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.

## Getting Started

Remember to start and finish with prayer.

Read Mark 14:1-11 below

*Now the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. 2 "But not during the Feast," they said, "or the people may riot."*

*3 While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.*

*4 Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.*

*6 "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."*

*10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. 11 They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.*

1. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

2. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

3. Since Jesus has died and risen again and is now always with us by his Spirit, where should our gifts for him go? And how much?

Read Mark 14:12-31 below

*On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"*

*13 So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. 14 Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 15 He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."*

*16 The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.*

*17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. 18 While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me."*

*19 They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?"*

*20 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. 21 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."*

*22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."*

*23 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.*

*24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. 25 "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."*

*26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

*27 "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written:*

*" 'I will strike the shepherd,  
and the sheep will be scattered.'*

*28 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."*

*29 Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not."*

*30 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times."*

*31 But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same.*

4. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

5. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

6. What do you think was in the forefront of the disciples mind at the Last Supper? How might this inform what we do when we celebrate the Lord's Supper together in church? (1 Cor 11:28-32)

Read Mark 14:32-52 below

*They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."*

*35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."*

*37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."*

*39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. 40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.*

*41 Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"*

*43 Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.*

*44 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45 Going at once to Jesus,*

*Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. 46 The men seized Jesus and arrested him. 47 Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.*

*48 "Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." 50 Then everyone deserted him and fled.*

*51 A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, 52 he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.*

7. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

8. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

9. What might it look like for us to 'sleep' as Jesus' disciples now?

Read Mark 14:53-72 below

*53 They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together. 54 Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.*

*55 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. 56 Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.*

*57 Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: 58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.'" 59 Yet even then their testimony did not agree.*

*60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" 61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"*

62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

63 The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. 64 "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

They all condemned him as worthy of death. 65 Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him.

66 While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. 67 When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

"You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said.

68 But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about," he said, and went out into the entryway.

69 When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." 70 Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean."

71 He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about."

72 Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times." And he broke down and wept.

10. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

11. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

12. How might we be like Peter in this passage?

13. What comfort might we take from this account of Peter's denials? (see Mark 16:7)

*Pray*

... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.

## Getting Started

Remember to start and finish with prayer.

Read Mark 15:1-20 below

*Now Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision. They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.*

*2 "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate.*

*"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied.*

*3 The chief priests accused him of many things. 4 So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of."*

*5 But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.*

*6 Now it was the custom at the Feast to release a prisoner whom the people requested. 7 A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. 8 The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.*

*9 "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, 10 knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.*

*12 "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them.*

*13 "Crucify him!" they shouted.*

*14 "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.*

*But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"*

*15 Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.*

*16 The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. 17 They put a purple robe on*

*him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. 18 And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" 19 Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.*

1. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

2. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

3. It has been noted that the name Barabbas meaning 'son of a father' could represent general humanity in this passage. What is the significance of this for you personally?

Read Mark 15:21- below

*A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. 22 They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull). 23 Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.*

*25 It was the third hour when they crucified him. 26 The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27 They crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. \* 29 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30 come down from the cross and save yourself!"*

*31 In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! 32 Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.*

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\* Some manuscripts read: '... his left, 28 and the scripture was fulfilled which says, "he was counted with the lawless ones"'. However, the earliest and best manuscripts lack verse 28. Copyists probably added the sentence in the margin from Luke 22:37 where it is in the text itself.

33 *At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

35 *When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."*

36 *One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.*

37 *With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.*

38 *The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"*

40 *Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.*

42 *It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 44 Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. 45 When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. 46 So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.*

4. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

5. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

6. Why does Jesus' cry out what he does in verse 34? (see Mark 14:49 and Psalm 22 noting verse 1)

7. What does the cross reveal about humankind?

8. What does the cross reveal about God?

9. What does the cross reveal about a Christian's new way of life?

*Pray*

... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.

## Getting Started

Remember to start and finish with prayer.

Read Mark 16:1-8\* below

*When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb 3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"*

*4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.*

*6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"*

*8 Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.*

1. Is there anything that strikes you as interesting or confusing in this passage?

2. What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has come to do?

*think it through*

3. How does the abrupt ending of Mark make you feel?

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\* in some manuscripts there are expanded endings to Mark. However, the best and earliest manuscripts all end at verse 8. Indeed, the strange variety of dissimilar alternative endings from verse 9 attest to the probability that early copyists had a copy of Mark that ended at verse 8.

4. How do you interpret the womens' fear and silence?

5. What would you have done if you were in the women's shoes?

6. What will you do now that you have been let in on the good news?  
personally?

with your church family?

*Pray*

... for the link missionary and church ministry your growth group has adopted for this term.