

The Gospel of Mark

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April 29, 2024

Introduction

Mark is a very succinct, quick, gospel. He focuses on Jesus as a worker, the deeds of Jesus. That's the significance of this book. Mark was not part of the 12 disciples. He was a young boy during the life and ministry of Jesus. The early church of Jerusalem met in Mark's home. He accompanied the apostle Paul and Barnabas on the first part of their missionary outreach. Mark later became a sort of assistant to the apostle Peter. And most of these events were an eyewitness testimony of Peter, because Mark was so young during the time.

1 Chapter 1

1.1 John Appeared, Baptizing in the Wilderness

¹The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
(Mark 1:1)

This gospel of which we are concerned, is the only everlasting good news. Without Jesus, our mentality becomes very materialistic, happiness becomes the end. There would be no meaning to life, and everyone tries to be happy, so they will end up doing bad stuff.

²As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

”Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
Who will prepare your way,
³The voice crying in the wilderness:
Prepare the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight,”

(Mark 1:2)

Mark is referring to the prophecy given by Isaiah.

¹Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

³A voice cries:

In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

(Isaiah 1:1-3)

This is one of many Old Testament prophecies that actually has a dual fulfillment in that this prophecy relates to the first coming of Jesus, and also the second coming of Christ. And that is many case with many Old Testament prophecies. Mark is pointing out the fact that Isaiah prophesied of one who would come and prepare the way. And we're told who that is.

⁴John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

(Mark 1:4-5)

This is a huge move of God, because people were gathering, for one purpose: to confess their sins. It's not easy to get people to get together to talk about their sin, even more so repenting of it. It's a miracle! What does it mean to repent though? Repent means to have a change of mind, to change your actions based on your change of mind. What is this move of God going to do? How does repentance prepare the way of the Lord? We have to go to another gospel account to answer this question.

1.1.1 Why is repenting important?

²⁹When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John, ³⁰but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

(Luke 7:29-30)

The power of repentance is that it opens our hearts to hear God, and respond to him in a positive manner. If there is a hardness of heart that refuses to repent, the Word of God just kind of bounces off us. The people who received Jesus and understood him, they prepared by repenting.

1.2 The Spirit of Elijah

⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey.
(Mark 1:6)

Elijah wore much of the same clothes. But more interesting than that is that, in Luke, when the angel prophesied to Zechariah about John the baptist, that John would go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah. But John never performed a miracle, yet the Bible tells us he goes forth in the spirit and power of Elijah, which is shown in his clothing.

⁷And he preached, saying,

"After me comes he who is mightier than I,
the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop
down and untie."

(Mark 1:7)

To the Jew particular statement elevated Jesus and humbled John. The teachers in Judaism used to say that a teacher could ask pretty much anything of his student except to help him off with his shoes. That was supposed to be beneath any student. John comes along and to speak of the greatness of the one who comes after and says I am not worthy to take off his shoes. He further goes on to contrast his ministry and continues with verse 8.

⁸"I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you
with the Holy Spirit."

(Mark 1:8)

John is immersing you in water, and he's preparing you to meet Jesus. But Jesus is going to immerse you in God. Jesus is going to bring God into your life. Baptism doesn't change your life, the spirit of God does. Living in him. Baptism won't change the condition of your heart, but being filled with the Holy Spirit will.

1.3 The Baptism of Christ

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

(Mark 1:9–11)

Jesus came to the midst of the Jordan river filled with sinful people, and identified with them. Jesus would hang on the cross after 3 years for these sinners. The bible says he became sin, that we might become the righteousness of God.

1.4 Driven into the Wilderness

¹²The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

(Mark 1:12)

Jesus had 40 days of temptation, even though we only learn of 3 particular temptations. Imagine being tempted for 40 days. This is Jesus going through what we go through. Most of our lives we have to deal with temptation and the enemy trying to bring us further from God. Jesus came to drink the entire cup of the condition of man.

1.4.1 The sympathy of Jesus

¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

(Hebrews 4:15)

He not only experienced what we experienced, but also gave the way not to fall into temptation. With the word of God, and faith, he came through with victory. Which can now become our victory. To be victorious over sin, its not a method, we look to Jesus. We enter into his victory. The source is a person, not a few steps. (As we see on facebook or whatever)

1.5 Jesus Proclaims the Gospel

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

(Mark 1:14–15)

Jesus spoke repentance as well. He also said the time was fulfilled, the coming of Messiah!

1.6 Follow Jesus

¹⁶Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will

make you become fishers of men.”¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

(Mark 1:16–18)

This is actually the second time Jesus has spoken to them, and Mark does not record the first time. But now that he has started his Galilean ministry, he called them and they immediately followed him. And Mark loves to use this word “immediately”, uses it about 40 times. Peter had a family, and they dropped everything and immediately followed Jesus, even though he was probably the only breadwinner. When Jesus calls us, it’s nay or yay. It’s impossible to do both. It’s a decision, are you going to follow Jesus?

¹⁹ And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets.

²⁰ And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

(Mark 1:19–20)

And he says, “I’m going to make you fishers of men.” We all talents, what he’s saying is take the things he has given you and follow him to the kingdom of God. These guys were fishermen, Jesus said “Fine, let’s go fish, but we’re gonna fish for different things. You’re a bulider, let’s go build different things. You’re a banker, let’s go invest in different things.” What you are in the world, bring it into the kingdom, that has eternal scope and value. New goals for old powers.

1.7 The Authority Of Jesus

²¹ And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²² And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.

(Mark 1:21–22)

The Jewish teachers back in those days, they would spend a lot of time quoting other teachers. And sometimes give opposing viewpoints of different Rabbis, but Jesus didn’t do that, he just spoke by the authority of his own word. We forget sometimes when we get into debates, that truth is not a debate process, truth is a person. When we get into debates, it’s important to remember not to get caught up in the conversation of opinion, but rather let the words of Jesus to speak for itself. Because Jesus spoke with authority. Don’t get lost in other people’s and your own opinion. It’s not just important to tell others what Jesus said, it is also important to pinpoint it for others.

²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out,

(Mark 1:23)

The word unclean is a borrowing from an Old Testament concept of ceremonially unclean. But here it just sort of means possessed by demonic spirit. Mark uses language in the greek, which is similar to the language Paul uses when he describes a believer who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Be possessed by the Lord's spirit, it will bring you freedom, peace, and eternal life.

1.7.1 How does one get possessed by a demon?

The Bible doesn't really explain it. Is it possible for me as a Christian, to be possessed by a demon? Stay invested in God's spirit, the two cannot dwell together. You never even see or hear of the mention of an exorcism for a believer in the Bible. But rather a testing of faith, and to repent if you sin. You can't blame demonic possession.

¹⁸We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. (John 5:18)

"He" refers to Jesus. When it comes to believers, its a hands off approach when it comes to the work of the enemy. That does not mean we won't have spiritual battles, or testing.

⁸Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

(1 Peter 5:8-9)

So the reality of satanic activity real according scripture.

¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

(Ephesians 6:12)

Battles are a lot in life. But as a believer, possession is not in the cards for you

1.8 The Authority Of Jesus

²⁴"What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God." (Mark 1:24)

The demons would often speak through the host to expose Jesus, and then start freaking out. Jesus always commanded to be silent, not to tell who he was. But why? The Jews wanted to be free of Roman leadership, Jesus knew that the Zealots would jump at the opportunity to go against the Roman Empire.

²⁵But Jesus rebuked him saying,

”Be silent, and come out of him!”

²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.

(Mark 1:26)

This guy has authority, his exorcism is short. Which is different from other exorcisms.

²⁷And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying,

”What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”

²⁸And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

(Mark 1:27–28)

²⁹And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. ³¹And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

(Mark 1:29–31)

What does she do with the new life and the healing that was given her? She just starts serving him. God wants to restore to us what we have lost, and serve him with it. Just like this woman. What has God restored in your life? Serve the Lord with all of your heart, give it to him.

³²That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

(Mark 1:32–34)

This is God’s compassion, trust in the compassion of God. We do not need to pray him into compassion. His heart is moved by people with faith in him.

1.8.1 The Demons know Jesus

¹⁹You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe — and shudder!

You believe in God? Even demons believe in God. Do not rest in the superficiality of knowing Jesus, or even just believing that he exists. Do not stop at the superficial, it has to be personal.

¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

(John 1:12)

Communion is a picture of receiving Jesus. It is not intellectual, but it is of partaking, and now it is inside of you. Have you received him as your saviour? It is going past religion, to relationship.

1.9 The Inconvenience of Following God

³⁵And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

³⁶And Simon and those who were with him searched for him,

³⁷and they found him and said to him,

”Everyone is looking for you.”

³⁸And he said to them,

”Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.”

³⁹And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

(Mark 1:35–39)

A long day of ministry, goes into the night, Jesus probably lays down to get some rest and before the sun even rose, he went out to pray. This shows his heart toward prayer. Some of us wait for prayer to be convenient, it is not convenient. It is never convenient to pray. It’s hard work, its challenging, and you may have to give something up to do it. For Jesus, he gave up his sleep, which we hang onto so tightly. Prayer for Jesus meant sacrifice too. No one likes getting up when its dark. But let’s do it because it needs to be done.

1.10 Talking to God

⁴⁰And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, ”If you will, you can make me clean.” ⁴¹Moved with pity, he

stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." ⁴²And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. (Mark 1:40-42)

When you think about what this man said to Jesus, think about it like a prayer. We don't have to use eloquent speech. There is an expectation that they have to say it right. Prayer is nothing but talking, but talking to God. No King James English is okay. Let's dissect this man's prayer.

1. It was sincere and desperate — "imploing him"
2. It was reverent — "and kneeling said to him"
3. It was humble and submissive — "If you will"
4. It was believing — "you can"
5. It acknowledged his need — "MAKE me clean"
6. It was specific — "make me CLEAN"
7. It was personal — "make ME clean"
8. It was brief — just five words in the greek

Five short words and it got God's attention. He's not waiting for you to be flowery, he just wants a relationship with you and for you to talk to him. We need to get over our American Idol approach to prayer that elevates one person's prayer above another just because we think they are more spiritual. That is a worldly attitude, not a biblical one. You need to see people from the perspective of the kingdom of God. You wanna know who's the greatest? The least among you. Everyone has the same access to the throne of Grace. The bible says,

¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (James 5:16)

And in Jesus we are all made righteous. Because you have made him Lord of your life, and you have put on the robe of righteousness. So your prayers are powerful and effective.

What's even more wonderful is that Jesus took pity on the leper, and even touched him, and healed him! In that day, no one would even greet a leper not mentioning touching them. But Jesus with such compassion, with such grace, reached down, touched him and healed him. This is God's heart towards those who are hurting.

⁴³And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, ⁴⁴and said to him,

”See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”

(Mark 1:43–44)

Jesus told this man, in keeping with the law of Moses, to go and have his physical condition examined by the priest, so that he may be declared clean and be able to enter the temple and worship with the people. But also communicate with the priest that a miracle had taken place! Not what he did though.

1.11 The People Need Jesus

⁴⁵But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

People are still seeking out Jesus. There seems to be a lot of darkness in the world. But there seems to be some amazing compelling effect of being in darkness, to push you toward the light. And we are the light of the world. People are drawing to the light of Christ. God intended for you to be alive today, people need to hear about Jesus Christ. Let your light shine wherever you are.

2 Chapter 2

¹And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ²And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. ³And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. ⁴And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.

(Mark 2:1–4)

2.1 The Authority Of Jesus

⁵And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ”Son, your sins are forgiven.” ⁶Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷”Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” ⁸And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, ”Why do you question these things in your hearts?” ⁹Which is easier,

to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven, or to say 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'?" (Mark 2:5-9)

To a Jewish mind, this was like a trick question, in their mind, both of these questions are equally difficult to do. To put yourself in the place of God by saying "Your sins are forgiven" would be blaspheming. And to say "rise up, take your bed and walk." would be to do a miraculous work of healing. Jesus was going to prove that he has the authority to do that which is unseen — forgive sins, to do that which is seen — healing the man.

¹⁰"But you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the paralytic — ¹¹"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." ¹²And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!" (Mark 2:10-11)

Since Jesus can do what you can see, then he can do what you cannot see, which is say that an individuals sins are forgiven. And we can do it too, through Jesus.

2.1.1 Your Sins are Forgiven

³⁸Let it be know to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. (Acts 13:38)

We have been given permission to speak on the authority of God's word. To say, "Your sins are forgiven."

2.2 Levi Called

¹³He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. ¹⁴And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. (Mark 2:13-14)

Levi is the same as Matthew, in that he was a Jew, and a tax collector by trade. He was despised by the Jews, because they collected taxes for Rome — tyrannical governmental structure. Some tax collectors would also overcharge people, and then pocket the difference. But Jesus says to him, "Follow me."

2.3 Jesus came not for the righteous

¹⁵And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax

collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹⁷And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

(Mark 2:15–17)

It doesn't excuse the behaviour of those he was eating with. But those people were his mission. Keeping the law got in the way for the Pharisees to accept Jesus, and repent of their sins.

2.4 Fasting

¹⁸Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. And people came and said to him,

"Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

¹⁹And Jesus said to them,

"Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. ²⁰The days will come when the bridegroom is taken from them, and then they will fast in that day."

(Mark 2:18–20)

Jesus is the bridegroom, and we are the bride. Who thinks of fasting during a joyous celebration? And indeed it was a joyous celebration, the gospel is here. Fasting expressed sorrow, grief, mourning. In verse 20, I think Jesus is referring to the time between his death and resurrection.

2.5 The Old and New Covenants

²¹No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. ²²And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins — and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins.

(Mark 2:21–22)

Christians are not to base their faith on Judaism, although the Law is important. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

2.6 The Sabbath

²³One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain.
(Mark 2:23)

To the Jews, that meant harvesting, which was considered to be work on the Sabbath.

²⁴And the Pharisees were saying to him,

”Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”

²⁵And he said to them,

”Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: ²⁶how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?”

And he said to them,

”The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

(Mark 2:24–28)

Human need should take precedence over the ceremonial law. Jesus made the same point about the priests on the Sabbath with circumcision. The Sabbath was intended to serve the people, not for people to serve the Sabbath. It should be a blessing to the people.

¹²And the Lord said to Moses, ¹³”You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ’Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout the generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. ¹⁴You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. ¹⁶Therefore the

people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout the generations, as a covenant forever.”

(Exodus 31:12–16)

It was a covenant between God and Israel. It is wisdom to hang out in God’s presence and take a day of rest. But more than that, the Sabbath is part of the ceremonial law, that point to Jesus Christ. That we should rest in the finished work of the cross. Rest in what Jesus did.

⁹So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. ¹¹Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

(Hebrews 4:9–11)

If you’re constantly feeling condemned, you are not resting in his works. That’s a works-based salvation. We do not enter into salvation by our own works. So he says, whoever has entered into God’s rest, has rested from his own works. We who have believed entered that rest, by faith in Jesus, and what he has accomplished on the cross. Peace and joy are only found in Christ. Having a legalistic view tends to make one struggle with the belief that they are really saved. But deeds are not a guarantee of your salvation.

3 Chapter 3

3.1 The Hardness of Heart

¹Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. ²And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.” ⁴And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent.

(Mark 3:1–4)

The Jews came to see that keeping the Sabbath as more important than people. And that’s what happens when you get caught up in legalism. It creates a culture of always looking down on people, judging and condemning because they don’t keep the rules.

⁵And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. ⁶The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

(Mark 3:5–6)

This is the hardness of heart of the Pharisees. Upon seeing the goodness of God, they walk out and try to kill him. What grieves God is hardness of heart. So do not harden your heart against his word.

⁷Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea ⁸and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon. When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. ⁹And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him, ¹⁰for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. ¹¹And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." ¹²And he strictly ordered them not to make him known. ¹³And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. ¹⁴And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach ¹⁵and have authority to cast out demons. ¹⁶He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); ¹⁸Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

(Mark 3:7–19)

Apostle means one sent forth with authority. Jesus chose them to send them out, and to have authority. Jesus also chose Judas. There are some people who believe that Judas was born to be a betrayer. But God's foreknowledge does not dictate the outcome. And we are still the product of our choices. He made the choice to lie and to steal.

²⁰Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. ²¹And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."

(Mark 3:20–21)

This is how we know that Mary and Joseph had a normal marital relationship. Even Jesus' brother, did not accept Jesus as the Messiah until he appeared to him after his resurrection.

³⁶And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

(Matthew 10:36)

Jesus' family also did not seem to support him. He understood what it meant to have a divided home.

²²And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." ²³And he called them to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" ²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. ²⁶And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. ²⁷But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house. ²⁸"Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, ²⁹but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" — ³⁰for they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

(Mark 3:22–30)

This is not a condemnation, but this is all given in the context of the hardness of heart. This is what happens when the hardness of heart goes so far, that it can no longer be reached. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is seeing the goodness, and power of God, but attributing it to the devil. But that only comes from such a hardness of heart, if you are concerned about blaspheming the Holy Spirit, you wouldn't even care about blaspheming the Holy Spirit. But why is this sin unforgivable?

⁸And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement:

(John 16:8)

The Holy Spirit's role is to convict the world concerning sin. If God convicts you on a daily basis about the things you are doing wrong, you are made aware of that through the Holy Spirit. If your heart is so hard, that resist the Holy Spirit, you can never be convicted of your sin.

"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you."

(Acts 7:51)

³¹And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. ³²And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." ³³And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" ³⁴And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!" ³⁵"For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

(Mark 3:31–35)

This is a reminder, that if you are a Christian, you are born not only as child of God, but into his family. Look at the people in the church as your family, don't stray away. This connection in Christ goes on forever.

4 Chapter 4

4.1 To Tremble At God's Word

¹Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. V2 And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: ³"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came down and devoured it. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." ⁹And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." ¹⁰And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, ¹²so that

"They may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven."

(Mark 4:1–12)

Parables give some sort of spiritual sifting process. To see who is in the inside, and to see who is in the inside. Those who are on the inside, who understand the scriptures, have humbled themselves before God. There are many that listen but do not hear, because they don't want to hear. With anyone with a heart to learn, God responds quickly.

¹⁶But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

(Matthew 13:16–17)

The prophets wished to see it, but couldn't because Messiah had not yet arrived. But now Messiah is here. Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" And Jesus said nothing. For Pilate wasn't wanting an answer.

¹³And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"

(Mark 4:13)

This parable will provide a key to understand all parables. Get this one, and it will give you greater understanding.

¹⁴The sower sows the word. ¹⁵And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.

(Mark 4:14-15)

The seed that is being sown is the word of God.

¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.

(Matthew 13:19)

This parable is about the different conditions of your heart. The seed hit a place where there was no place for it to enter in. There was no place to plant the seed because the heart was hard.

¹⁶And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

(Mark 4:16-17)

This is the shallow heart. The seed germinates, but there's no place for the root. Because there's no place for the root to grow, or depth in their lives for the word of God. They have no place to hear and store up what has been sown in their lives, and quickly fall away when trouble arrives. And where does the hardship come from? It is trouble and hardship that comes on account of the word. It is someone who doesn't want to have inconvenience or discomfort, because they are a believer. In work, family, friends, people can treat you different because you are a believer.

¹⁸And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, ¹⁹but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

(Mark 4:18-19)

This is where the seed doesn't even have a chance to grow. Their hearts are so tied to this world. The heart of the world are too deeply engrained in their hearts. They hear the word of God, and their hearts are already too overcrowded from the desires of this world.

²⁰But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.

(Mark 4:20)

This is the heart that is open, humble, and teachable. The one that comes to Jesus and says, "I want to learn, I want to know." There are sometimes that God allows things to happen to us, to change our heart. It is often when we are at the bottom of our lives that we become open and responsive.

²¹And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand?"

(Mark 4:21)

There are many Christians, who cover up the fact that they are Christian. Maybe to avoid standing out, or trying to blend in. Why am I perhaps hiding the light? Am I embarrassed?

²²"For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light."

(Mark 4:22)

God's word is meant to be understood. If God's word is hidden to you, its probably a problem on your end. Its because we are not seeking him. Truth is made to be known.

²³"If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

(Mark 4:23)

What do you need to hear the truth? Ears to hear. How to get ears to hear? You ask God. A child can understand the scriptures. And they usually do better than adults, because their hearts are open.

⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

(Matthew 7:8)

That's a promise from God, just knock!!! We're not talking about knocking and then assuming no one is home. We are talking about pressing in.

¹My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, ²making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; ³yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, ⁴if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, ⁵then you will

understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

(Proverbs 2:1–5)

What does it take? Not a quick knock. Look at all the action terms used there, . Put that kind of effort into knowing his word. But what do we do? We just depend on other people to study it for us.

²⁴And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you."

(Mark 4:24)

A believer grows in proportion to the understanding and application of what they have already received. You've received the word of God? What do you do with it? Pay attention to what you have received, to the measure that you have opened and received it, that is how it will be measured to you.

²⁵For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

(Mark 4:25)

Whoever hasn't pondered, or opened his heart to what he has received, even what he has received will be taken away. Is it possible for someone to go to church and end up with a blank slate? It definitely is.

²All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.

(Isaiah 66:2)

4.2 The Kingdom of God in Power

The Kingdom of God does not show up like man's kingdoms. So here Jesus uses simple pictures, to speak of the Kingdom.

²⁶He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ^{V27} Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸All by itself the soil produces grain — first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head."

(Mark 4:26–28)

This parable is about the mystery of growth. The Kingdom of God grows according to the purpose and plan of God. Which is why it grows in a mysterious way. The growth of the seed takes place by the hand of God, it is not man's will. It is God who gives the increase, you just need to be faithful. If God wants you to be faithful to one person, you better be faithful to one person.

²⁹As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

(Mark 4:29)

There is an end. There is going to come a time where the harvest will come, and we'll enter another age.

³⁰Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth.”

(Mark 4:30-31)

For us, we are living 2000 years down the road. The mustard seed plant is big and mature. We've seen for a couple of thousand years this mature plant Christianity has planted.

³²Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

(Mark 4:32)

If we follow the idea of expositional constancy, we can see that birds have a negative connotation. What some bible teachers think is that Jesus was not only promising that the kingdom of God was going to start small and grow large, but its also going to be influenced and infested at some point with worldly and even demonic things. Having the benefit of history, is that what has happened?

³³With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. ³⁴He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything. ³⁵That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" ³⁹He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. ⁴⁰He said to the disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" ⁴¹They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

(Mark 4:33-41)

They had not only been listening to Jesus teach all day long. And seen the glory of God manifest all day long. How much of the power of God do you have to see before you have faith that you are in the midst of the power of God? Do we see God as being asleep during in the time of our storm?

²³Awake, Lord! Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever. ²⁴Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression?

(Psalms 44:23–24)

²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

(John 14:27)

5 Chapter 5

5.1 The Dynamic Of Faith

¹They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. ²When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with the stones. ⁶When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. ⁷He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" ⁸For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!" ⁹The Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." ¹⁰And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area. ¹¹A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. ¹²The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." ¹³He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. ¹⁴Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. ¹⁵When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ¹⁶Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man — and told about the pigs as well. ¹⁷Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region. ¹⁸As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your

own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” ²⁰So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

(Mark 5:1–20)

Demons know who Jesus is. Men aren’t so sure. This demon possessed man lived among the tombs, and had some kind of supernatural strength. He would be naked and cry out night and day. He would also cut himself with stones. So where’s the faith here? In this story it seems like the power of God manifests without any expression of faith. It seems like there is only God’s desire to accomplish his own will.

²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

(Ephesians 3:20–21)

He’s abundantly able to do so much more than **what we ask**. He’s even able to be able to do abundantly more than what we think. Aren’t you glad that what we think doesn’t limit our God.

²¹When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²²Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷When she had heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” ²⁹Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. ³⁰At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” ³¹“You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’” ³²But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from

your suffering.” ³⁵While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synangogue leader. “You daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?” ³⁶Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” ³⁷He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” ⁴⁰But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴²Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

(Mark 5:21–43)

Where did she come up with the idea of touching his garment? Well it came from her own heart. And she did it and she was immediately healed. That was her faith. Different people, different faith. Jesus met them at the point of their faith. Jairus wanted Jesus to lay hands on his daughter. God will meet you where you are, God just looks at the heart that is reaching out to him in faith. Those who laughed at the face of God’s power were put outside. The laughers and the mockers got to see nothing.

⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

(Proverbs 3:5–6)

Don’t fixate on what you know and what you understand. God is able to do abundantly more than what you think.