

Portraits of Jesus

A Study of the Gospel of Mark

by Gary Fisher

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Jesus Accepts the Lowly

Lesson #7

Jesus Announces His Death, Rebukes Pride

>>> Read Mark 9:30–37. <<<

Please read the text in your Bible as you study each part of the lesson. Jesus wanted to prepare His disciples for the tragedy that was nearing. He warned them that He would be betrayed into men's hands and be killed, but encouraged them by announcing that three days later He would rise again. The disciples did not understand; they were too busy arguing about who would be the greatest in Jesus' coming kingdom. Knowing what they had been disputing, Jesus took a child into His arms and used him as a model of the humility that should characterize disciples. It must have disappointed Him greatly to see the disciples vying for power while He was preoccupied with His coming suffering.

1&2 What did Jesus predict was going to happen to Him? Answer: Men would _____ Him, but on the third day He would _____ from the dead.

3 About what subject were the disciples arguing? Answer: They disputed about which of them was the _____.

4&5 What did Jesus say one should do, if he wants to be first of all (v35)? Answer: He should be the _____ of all and the _____ of all.

Jesus Warns of the Dangers of Stumbling

>>> Read Mark 9:38–50. <<<

John related how he had seen someone expelling demons in Jesus' name and had forbidden him to do so. Evidently John thought that no one should have been doing any work for the Lord who was not following in their immediate company. But Jesus had commissioned many to go out, preach, and expel demons (see Luke 10). He was pleased with those who were faithfully serving Him in other places.

Jesus went on to warn of the danger of causing someone to fall. He said that it would even be better to tie a huge stone around a man's neck and cast him into the sea than for him to cause another to stumble. He also warned of the danger of allowing anything to cause us to stumble. The Lord encouraged radical, decisive action: cutting off a hand or a foot or plucking out an eye in order to avoid abandoning Him. He was not speaking literally—but He was forcefully declaring that we should sacrifice anything that is tempting us to sin. He described Hell as a horrendous place of maggots and perpetual fire that must be avoided at all cost.

6 What had John tried to stop someone else from doing? Answer: Someone was casting out _____.

7 A person would be better drowned in the sea rather than to do what? Answer: It would be better to be thrown into the sea with a millstone around the neck rather than to cause someone to _____.

8 What lesson is taught by Jesus' statements about cutting off a hand, foot, or eye? a) if we pray, He will miraculously restore the missing member; b) He doesn't care if we suffer; c) we should be willing to make great sacrifices to avoid the consequences of sin; d) we won't miss the body part anyway. Answer: _____.

Question about Divorce

>>> Read Mark 10:1–12. <<<

Jesus' opponents decided to test Him with a hard question. They asked Him whether it was right to divorce. In their society as in ours, there was much disagreement, even among religious people, as to whether or not it was right to divorce and, if so, under what circumstances. Jesus answered their question by reminding them that in the beginning God created only one man and one woman. He intended for marriage to be a permanent union. Because God joins people together when they marry, it is wrong for man to separate them. Later He explained to the disciples that it is not only wrong to divorce, but that a divorced person who remarries is committing adultery.

Note — The need for commitment in marriage: Many people today enter marriage with the notion that they will divorce if it doesn't work out. This is wrong. Throw-away marriages are opposed to

God's created order. God forbids divorce. The only exception is when one divorces his mate because of sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9). In any other case, divorce is sinful and remarriage is adultery. The fact that men frequently disobey God does not change what He said.

9 What principle did Jesus use to forbid divorce (v9)? Answer: What God has joined together, man should not _____.

10 In what circumstance did Jesus allow divorce and remarriage (Matt. 19:9)? a) when one of the partners no longer loves the other; b) when there is abuse; c) when one divorces a spouse because he/she committed fornication; d) when irreconcilable differences exist. Answer: _____.

11 If a man or woman divorces his/her spouse (not for fornication) and remarries, what did Jesus say about the remarriage (v11,12)? Answer: It is _____.

Jesus Blesses the Children

>>> Read Mark 10:13–16. <<<

The disciples never seemed to want Jesus to be bothered, so they were constantly trying to keep certain kinds of people away from Him (see 10:46–52). In this case, it was children. When Jesus saw that they were hindering the children from approaching Him, He was indignant and rebuked them. He said that the kingdom of God itself belongs to people who become like children. He took the young people into His arms and began to bless them. He always had time for children.

12 Whom did the disciples try to stop from coming to Jesus? a) Pharisees; b) children; c) sinners; d) tax collectors. Answer: _____.

13 What reason did Jesus give why He wanted to receive children? a) He wanted to baptize them; b) He wanted to give them candy and ice cream; c) He hoped their parents would give Him money; d) the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like little children. Answer: _____.

(Thought question: If the kingdom belongs to those who are like little children, then are little children born guilty of sin?)

Rich Man Considers Cost too High

>>> Read Mark 10:17–31. <<<

A rich young man ran up to Jesus requesting information on how to receive eternal life. Jesus first told him to keep the commandments, which the man said he had done. Then Jesus ordered him to sell all that he owned, give the proceeds to the poor, and start following Him. The man wanted eternal life, but not at that price. He turned away, saddened. Many follow in this young man's steps. They desire eternal life . . . as long as they don't have to make too many sacrifices. Jesus referred to these people when He remarked about how difficult it is for those who are rich to enter heaven. He said that it is easier to thread a camel through a needle than for a rich man to be saved. The disciples were shocked. The Lord explained that with God all things are possible, but that it is hard for rich people to go to heaven, because of the tendency to trust in material possessions and not in God.

Note -- The lack of one thing: *As Jesus talked to the rich man, He observed that he lacked only one thing: he only needed to get rid of his possessions. It became obvious that Jesus had properly diagnosed the man's need, because the man was unwilling to do so. He indeed was valuing his possessions over the Lord. To follow Jesus, we must give up anything in our life that is more*

*important to us than He is. It is interesting that this man lacked only one thing. Some people have the idea that one sin is not all that bad. They think that while they may be failing in one area, at least they serve the Lord faithfully in all the others. This story shows clearly that even one thing can keep a person from being accepted by God. Is there **one thing** in your life that is separating you from faithfulness in the Lord's service?*

14 What did the rich man want Jesus to tell him? Answer: He wanted to know what he should do to inherit _____.

15 What was the rich man's reaction when Jesus told him that he needed to sell all and give the money to the poor? Answer: He went away _____.

16 How many things in our lives that we refuse to repent of does it take to keep us from pleasing God? (a) none, (b) one, (c) we must do more evil than we do good, (d) the Bible does not say. Answer: _____.

Greatness in God's Kingdom

>>> Read Mark 10:32–45. <<<

For the third time, Jesus warned the disciples about what was going to happen when they got to Jerusalem. He gave a detailed description of the suffering He would experience there. Meanwhile, James and John were imagining a different scenario. They asked Jesus to agree to do whatever they would request. Jesus asked them what they wanted; He was not going to sign a blank check by agreeing before they made the request. They replied that they wanted to sit on Jesus' right and left hand; that is, they wanted the chief positions in His administration. Jesus responded by asking if they could drink the cup He was going to drink or be baptized with His baptism, and they said they could. Jesus was referring to His sufferings which were often spoken of as a cup of agony that He would have to drink (see Mark 14:36) and as a baptism (immersion) in pain (see Luke 12:50). They had no clue as to His real meaning, but they enthusiastically accepted the challenge. Jesus then replied that He did not have the authority to grant their request, because He was not the one who assigned the positions of honor in the kingdom.

The other disciples were incensed. James and John had gotten the jump on them. They themselves wished to have the highest positions and resented the fact that the sons of Zebedee had requested them first. Jesus took some time to define what greatness in the kingdom really meant. He said that in human affairs, whether government or business, the greatest have the most authority. But, He explained, it isn't that way in the kingdom of God. Rather, the greatest is the one who humbles himself most and serves most. He pointed to Himself as the model. He had not come to be served, but to serve and to offer Himself as a sacrifice for others.

Note -- True greatness: *We still desperately need these lessons of Jesus. Many, even in religion, are seeking to be great by trying to gain honor, glory and power. Churches are infested with "politicians" who want the limelight and who vie for positions of maximum control and authority. We should be ashamed. Jesus was born in a stable outside a small town. He lived His life as a village carpenter and itinerant preacher. He accumulated neither riches nor worldly power. Yet, today, many of His self-proclaimed followers seek and promise the very things He rejected, as they pursue higher and higher positions in churches. It is hard to imagine that Jesus would feel at home in their costly cathedrals. It is impossible to believe that He would preach the "gospels of health and wealth" so popular today. Jesus said the way to true greatness was the road of service and suffering.*

17&18 What did James and John want Jesus to do for them? Answer: They wanted to sit one at Jesus' _____ and the other at His _____ in His glory (kingdom).

19 According to Jesus, how can you become great in the kingdom? a) attend the biggest church with the most beautiful building; b) give lots of money; c) take a high position of authority in the church; d) humble yourself and serve others. Answer: _____.

Jesus Heals Bartimaeus

>>> Read Mark 10:46–52. <<<

As Jesus passed through Jericho, a blind beggar cried out. The crowds tried to silence him, thinking that the Lord should not be bothered with such unimportant people. But Jesus called the blind man to come to Him and healed him. The beggar began to follow Him. Few rich men followed the Lord (see 10:17–22), but many of the poor and downtrodden did.

20 What was the name of the blind man Jesus healed (v46)? a) Peter; b) Bartimaeus; c) Thomas; d) Andrew. Answer: _____.

21 What did the blind man keep calling Jesus (v48)? Answer: He called Him _____.

Summary: Jesus accepted the humble folks, even though the disciples tried to turn them away. He accepted the man who worked for Him but was not in His personal company; He welcomed the children; He invited the blind beggar. He rejected those we might have accepted: a rich ruler with so much to offer, and all those who sought position and greatness. The great one in the kingdom is the servant.

When you have carefully studied this lesson and written down answers to all the questions, [click on this link to submit your answers.](#)

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To contact the author, write to
Gary Fisher, 8980 Crawford Ct., New Salisbury, IN 47161

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