

# Mark

The Gospel According to

**H**ave you ever been ridiculed or rejected by others—maybe even your friends—for trying to do something good? Jesus would understand your feelings. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is misunderstood and abandoned by those closest to him. This Gospel was written for early Christians experiencing persecution or death for their faith. The author is reminding them and us to put our total trust in God as Jesus did, despite whatever difficulties we encounter in being a Christian.

## In-depth

The Gospel of Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels and can be easily read in one sitting. It portrays Jesus as a man of action—human in his feelings, and always on the move fulfilling his mission. This Gospel answers two fundamental questions: Who is this Jesus called the Christ? and What does it mean to be his disciple? Because the people hearing this Gospel were in danger of losing their life for what they believed, those questions were a matter of life and death.

To answer the first question, the Gospel of Mark tells stories about Jesus' power to heal and about his compassion for suffering people. It tells about his conflicts with demons and with religious and civil authorities and how he was misunderstood by his own disciples. Through these stories

comes the realization that Jesus is the Messiah, the promised savior. But he did not come as the victorious king many Jews expected. Instead, he accepted the suffering that comes with doing God's will. His painful and shameful death was needed before his glory could be seen. Can we believe in a very human, suffering Messiah?

Mark answers the second question in surprising ways. The disciples Jesus called were initially fearful and hard-hearted. They wanted to be powerful and important, and they wanted the approval of their peers. But gradually, they came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, and to understand his mission. The Gospel of Mark also tells stories about a blind man, a leper, and Gentiles (non-Jews), all of whom were Jesus' disciples because they placed their total trust in him. Whether gradually or quickly, can we place our complete faith in Jesus, becoming his disciples?

## Quick Facts

### Author

a Gentile Christian, possibly a disciple of Peter named John Mark

### Date Written

approximately A.D. 65 to 70; this was the first written Gospel

### Audience

non-Jewish Christians (in Rome?) who were experiencing persecution because of their belief in Jesus

### Image of Jesus

healer and miracle worker who accepts suffering as the cost for following God's will

## At a Glance

- **1.1–15.** John the Baptist's announcement of Jesus' ministry
- **1.16–8.21.** Jesus' preaching and miracles in Galilee
- **8.22–10.52.** Jesus' teaching and healing on the way to Jerusalem
- **Chapters 11–13.** Jesus' teaching in Jerusalem
- **Chapters 14–16.** Jesus' death and Resurrection

# Mark



## The Proclamation of John the Baptist

(Mt 3.1–12; Lk 3.1–20; Jn 1.19–28)

**1** The beginning of the good news<sup>a</sup> of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.<sup>b</sup>

**2** As it is written in the prophet Ī-sāi'ah,<sup>c</sup>  
"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of  
you,<sup>d</sup>

who will prepare your way;

**3** the voice of one crying out in the  
wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.'"<sup>e</sup>

**4** John the baptizer appeared<sup>e</sup> in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. **6** Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **7** He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. **8** I have baptized you with<sup>f</sup> water; but he will baptize you with<sup>f</sup> the Holy Spirit."

## The Baptism of Jesus

(Mt 3.13–17; Lk 3.21–22; Jn 1.29–34)

**9** In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** And just as he was coming up out of the water,

he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. **11** And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved;<sup>g</sup> with you I am well pleased."

## The Temptation of Jesus

(Mt 4.1–11; Lk 4.1–13)

**12** And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. **13** He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

## The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

(Mt 4.12–17; Lk 4.14–15)

**14** Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news<sup>a</sup> of God,<sup>h</sup> **15** and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;<sup>i</sup> repent, and believe in the good news."<sup>a</sup>

## Jesus Calls the First Disciples

(Mt 4.18–22; Lk 5.1–11)

**16** As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. **17** And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish

<sup>a</sup> Or *gospel* <sup>b</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *the Son of God* <sup>c</sup> Other ancient authorities read *in the prophets* <sup>d</sup> Gk *before your face* <sup>e</sup> Other ancient authorities read *John was baptizing* <sup>f</sup> Or *in* <sup>g</sup> Or *my beloved Son* <sup>h</sup> Other ancient authorities read *of the kingdom* <sup>i</sup> Or *is at hand*

## Mark 1.18

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for people.”<sup>18</sup> And immediately they left their nets and followed him.<sup>19</sup> As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zeb’*e*dee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets.<sup>20</sup> Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zeb’*e*dee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

### The Man with an Unclean Spirit

(Lk 4.31–37)

21 They went to Ca’*p*er’*n*a’*u*m; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught.<sup>22</sup> They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.<sup>23</sup> Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit,<sup>24</sup> and he cried out, “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.”<sup>25</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!”<sup>26</sup> And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.<sup>27</sup> They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”<sup>28</sup> At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

### Jesus Heals Many at Simon’s House

(Mt. 8.14–17; Lk 4.38–41)

29 As soon as they<sup>k</sup> left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.<sup>30</sup> Now Simon’s mother-in-law was in

bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once.<sup>31</sup> He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

32 That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons.<sup>33</sup> And the whole city was gathered around the door.<sup>34</sup> And he cured 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.

### A Preaching Tour in Galilee

(Mt 4.23–25; Lk 4.42–44)

35 In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.<sup>36</sup> And Simon and his companions hunted for him.<sup>37</sup> When they found him, they said to him, “Everyone is searching for you.”<sup>38</sup> He answered, “Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.”<sup>39</sup> And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

### Jesus Cleanses a Leper

(Mt 8.1–4; Lk 5.12–16)

40 A leper<sup>l</sup> came to him begging him, and kneeling<sup>m</sup> he said to him, “If you choose, you can

<sup>i</sup> Or A new teaching! With authority he <sup>k</sup> Other ancient authorities read he <sup>l</sup> The terms *leper* and *leprosy* can refer to several diseases <sup>m</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *kneeling*

M  
K

## Called to Follow Jesus

# LIVE IT!

The response of Peter, Andrew, James, and John to Jesus is an example of obedience to God’s call. Jesus calls them because he loves them and trusts them to share in his mission.

The Catholic church believes that through Baptism, all Christians are called to be Jesus’ disciples (followers) in whatever path their life takes. Most people are called to mission as a layperson. A few are called to serve through the priesthood, diaconate, or religious life. So whether you end up a priest or a plumber, married or single, poor or rich, faithfulness to God’s call is the most important loyalty you can have.

It might be hard to imagine how school or a fast-food job is part of your call to follow Jesus. But attitude is everything! Do you see school as a necessary evil to get a job that makes lots of money? Or do you see it as preparation for a career that will allow you to serve others and contribute to society? If you work, do you approach your job halfheartedly, or are you enthusiastic, always giving your best effort? Do you treat coworkers and customers with warmth and respect? Jesus is calling you to be his disciple wherever you are and whatever you might be doing.

▶ Mk 1.16–20



## SPIRITS

Most Native American peoples would not be surprised by all the angels and spirits in the first chapter of Mark. Many Native American cultures believe in the presence of good and bad spirits in the world. They view good spirits as personal helpers and message bearers, like the angels who attend Jesus in verse 13. They believe that spirits often appear as animals, much as the Holy Spirit appears as a dove in verse 10. And many believe that bad spirits influence and control people, just as the unclean spirit does in verse 23.

Isn't it interesting that different cultures can develop such parallel religious beliefs? Whether we call them angels and demons or good and that bad spirits, we share a common understanding about unseen powers influencing our life. It is an understanding of the world that is often rejected in our scientific, technology-filled culture.

► Mk 1.9–39



make me clean." <sup>41</sup> Moved with pity,<sup>n</sup> Jesus<sup>o</sup> stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" <sup>42</sup> Immediately the leprosy<sup>p</sup> left him, and he was made clean. <sup>43</sup> After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, <sup>44</sup> saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." <sup>45</sup> But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus<sup>o</sup> could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

### Jesus Heals a Paralytic

(Mt 9.2–8; Lk 5.17–26)

**2** When he returned to Ca-per-na-um after some days, it was reported that he was at home. <sup>2</sup> So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Then some people<sup>q</sup> came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. <sup>4</sup> And when

<sup>n</sup> Other ancient authorities read *anger* <sup>o</sup> Gk *he*

<sup>p</sup> The terms *leper* and *leprosy* can refer to several diseases

<sup>q</sup> Gk *they*

## Faithful Friends

**LIVE IT!**

We are not given many details about the paralyzed man in the story in Mk 2.1–12, but we might conclude one thing: he had at least four good friends! The main point of this story is that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins, a power that belongs only to God. But what can be said about the four friends who carried the paralyzed man to Jesus?

First, their actions show that they were convinced that Jesus could do something for their paralyzed friend. Second, they were committed to their friend. And last, they didn't let a seemingly insurmountable obstacle—the crowded doorway—prevent them from getting their friend to the feet of Jesus.

What faithful people in your life have helped you come to know Jesus? For whom might you currently have the opportunity to be that kind of faithful friend?

► Mk 2.1–12

## Mark 2.5

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they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." <sup>6</sup> Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup> "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" <sup>8</sup> At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? <sup>9</sup> Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk?' <sup>10</sup> But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— <sup>11</sup> "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." <sup>12</sup> And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

### Jesus Calls Levi

(Mt 9.9–13; Lk 5.27–32)

<sup>13</sup> Jesus<sup>r</sup> went out again beside the sea; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. <sup>14</sup> As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Al·phae'us sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

<sup>15</sup> And as he sat at dinner<sup>s</sup> in Levi's<sup>t</sup> house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting<sup>u</sup> with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup> When the scribes of<sup>v</sup> the Phar'i-sees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he

eat<sup>w</sup> with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>17</sup> When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

### The Question about Fasting

(Mt 9.14–17; Lk 5.33–39)

<sup>18</sup> Now John's disciples and the Phar'i-sees were fasting; and people<sup>x</sup> came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Phar'i-sees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" <sup>19</sup> Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. <sup>20</sup> The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.

<sup>21</sup> "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. <sup>22</sup> And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."<sup>y</sup>

### Pronouncement about the Sabbath

(Mt 12.1–8; Lk 6.1–5)

<sup>23</sup> One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. <sup>24</sup> The Phar'isees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" <sup>25</sup> And he said to them, "Have

<sup>r</sup> Gk He <sup>s</sup> Gk reclined <sup>t</sup> Gk his <sup>u</sup> Gk reclining <sup>v</sup> Other ancient authorities read and <sup>w</sup> Other ancient authorities add and drink <sup>x</sup> Gk they <sup>y</sup> Other ancient authorities lack but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins

## Getting Personal

It is one thing to be seen hanging out with certain groups of people, but it is another to be seen eating with them. Jesus was often criticized for eating with the wrong kind of people, a charge he answers in Mk 2.13–17. He knew that the only way to help someone grow was to get to know him or her—personally.

It did not matter to Jesus whether the person was rich or poor, well known or unknown, regarded as a saint or as a sinner. It did not matter to him whether the person was black or white, male or female, young or old. What did matter to Jesus was whether the person he approached was interested in getting to know him—and his heavenly Father—personally.

Are you ready to get to know Jesus personally? If so, take a few minutes to close your eyes and think about what it says in this passage. Talk to Jesus about what is going on in your life and in your family's life. When you are done talking, spend some time quietly listening for what Jesus has to say to you—personally.

▶ Mk 2.13–17

# LIVE IT!

you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? <sup>26</sup> He entered the house of God, when A•bi•a•thar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.” <sup>27</sup> Then he said to them, “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; <sup>28</sup> so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.”

beyond the Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon. <sup>9</sup> He told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush him; <sup>10</sup> for he had cured many, so that all who had diseases pressed upon him to touch him. <sup>11</sup> Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, “You are the Son of God!” <sup>12</sup> But he sternly ordered them not to make him known.

## Trusting God

**LIVE IT!**

Have you ever read the book *Johnny Tremain*? Its main character is a boy whose hand is severely burned, and the story is about how he learns to live with a disfigured limb. At many points in the story, Johnny hides his hand from others to avoid feeling embarrassed.

In Mk 3.1–6, among those gathered in the synagogue is a man with a “withered hand.” There is no indication that he is seeking out Jesus or that he commands any special attention. Jesus notices him and invites him to come forward. Jesus then asks the man to stretch out his disfigured hand for all to see.

Like Johnny Tremain, the man, we might guess, probably did not feel proud of his hand. It certainly would be understandable if, when invited by Jesus to stretch out his hand for all to see, the man had stormed out of the synagogue in anger and shame. Instead, he did what Jesus asked, and through his trust in Jesus, his hand was restored to wholeness.

Whether physically, emotionally, or spiritually, we are all “disfigured” in some ways. What source of pain or shame in your own life might Jesus be inviting you to share with him? Can you risk becoming vulnerable and trusting him with it?

▶ Mk 3.1–6

### The Man with a Withered Hand

(Mt 12.9–14; Lk 6.6–11)

**3** Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. <sup>2</sup> They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. <sup>3</sup> And he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come forward.” <sup>4</sup> Then he said to them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. <sup>5</sup> He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. <sup>6</sup> The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

### A Multitude at the Seaside

(Mt 12.15–21)

<sup>7</sup> Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed him; <sup>8</sup> hearing all that he was doing, they came to him in great numbers from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea,

### Jesus Appoints the Twelve

(Mt 10.1–4; Lk 6.12–16)

<sup>13</sup> He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. <sup>14</sup> And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles,<sup>z</sup> to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, <sup>15</sup> and to have authority to cast out demons. <sup>16</sup> So he appointed the twelve:<sup>a</sup> Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); <sup>17</sup> James son of Zeb•e•dee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Bō•a•ner•gēs, that is, Sons of Thunder); <sup>18</sup> and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Al•pha•e•us, and Thad•da•e•us, and Simon the Cā•na•na•e•an, <sup>19</sup> and Judas Is•car•i•ot, who betrayed him.

### Jesus and Beelzebul

(Mt 12.22–32; Lk 11.14–23)

Then he went home; <sup>20</sup> and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat.

<sup>z</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *whom he also named apostles*

<sup>a</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *So he appointed the twelve*

## Mark 3.21

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<sup>21</sup> When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind." <sup>22</sup> And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Bê•el'ze•bul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." <sup>23</sup> And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? <sup>24</sup> If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup> And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. <sup>26</sup> And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. <sup>27</sup> But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

<sup>28</sup> "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; <sup>29</sup> but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" — <sup>30</sup> for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

### The True Kindred of Jesus

(Mt 12.46–50; Lk 8.19–21)

<sup>31</sup> Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. <sup>32</sup> A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters<sup>b</sup> are outside, asking for you." <sup>33</sup> And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" <sup>34</sup> And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! <sup>35</sup> Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

### The Parable of the Sower

(Mt 13.1–23; Lk 8.4–15)

**4** Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. <sup>2</sup> He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: <sup>3</sup> "Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup> Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup> And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. <sup>8</sup> Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." <sup>9</sup> And he said, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

## Catholic Connections

### HOLY ORDERS

Jesus appoints twelve men as the Apostles (the word *apostle* means "sent out"). Their mission—to preach the Good News, drive out demons, and cure the sick—is an extension of Jesus' mission. The Catholic church considers bishops as the successors of the Apostles. Bishops are responsible for the church's mission, for its organization, and for seeing that Jesus' message is taught and lived faithfully from generation to generation.

Bishops are ordained by other bishops as a sign of their unbroken connection with the first Apostles. Bishops also ordain priests and deacons for service in the church, especially for sacramental ministry. These ordinations happen in the sacrament of Holy Orders, one of the seven sacraments of the church. In the sacrament of Holy Orders, the bishop places his hands on the head of the man being ordained and prays for a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

► Mk 3.13–19

### The Purpose of the Parables

(Mt 13.10–17; Lk 8.9–10)

<sup>10</sup> When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. <sup>11</sup> And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret<sup>c</sup> of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; <sup>12</sup> in order that

'they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.' "

<sup>13</sup> And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? <sup>14</sup> The sower sows the word. <sup>15</sup> These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes

<sup>b</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *and sisters* <sup>c</sup> Or *mystery*

and takes away the word that is sown in them. <sup>16</sup> And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup> But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.<sup>d</sup> <sup>18</sup> And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, <sup>19</sup> but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. <sup>20</sup> And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."

#### A Lamp under a Bushel Basket

(Lk 8.16–18)

<sup>21</sup> He said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand? <sup>22</sup> For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. <sup>23</sup> Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" <sup>24</sup> And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. <sup>25</sup> For to those who have, more will be given; and

from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away."

#### The Parable of the Growing Seed

<sup>26</sup> He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, <sup>27</sup> and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. <sup>28</sup> The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. <sup>29</sup> But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

#### The Parable of the Mustard Seed

(Mt 13.31–32; Lk 13.18–19)

<sup>30</sup> He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? <sup>31</sup> It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; <sup>32</sup> yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

<sup>d</sup> Or *stumble*



## JESUS TEACHES US THROUGH STORIES!

**In Mark, chapter 4, Jesus teaches about God's Reign through parables (see "Parables," Mt 13.10). In some Hispanic families, it is customary for young people to hear their *abuelita* (grandmother) tell stories about their family history, traditions, and faith. Many of the stories are true, others may be created to give a moral teaching, like the parables. Here is a true story:**

**A little girl's father died, leaving her family in extreme poverty. Her mother never lost faith in God, daily prayed to the Divine Providence, and asked other people to pray with her. Her prayers were always answered: food appeared miraculously in front of the family's door, and her six children were accepted free in Catholic schools.**

**Eventually, the mother married a creative businessman. When the business prospered, she remembered the way God had moved the hearts of people so that her family could have food and education, and with great confidence in God, she started a boarding school for boys. Whenever there was not enough food, she prayed and invited other people to pray. The Divine Providence always responded. The school has sheltered and educated two hundred boys each year for the last seventy years.**

- Which stories of faith, love, and service have marked the history of your family?
- How are you honoring your family's tradition of bringing the Gospel to people in need?

► Mk 4.1–34

## Mark 4.33

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## The Use of Parables

33 With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; <sup>34</sup> he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

## Jesus Stills a Storm

(Mt 8.23–27; Lk 8.22–25)

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” <sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup> A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. <sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” <sup>39</sup> He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to

them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” <sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

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## PRAY IT!

### Life's Storms

**S**torms on the Sea of Galilee are a common occurrence. They are a fisher's nightmare, and the one described in Mk 4.35–41 was really bad! It is no wonder the Apostles felt fearful and powerless. As part of your prayer, try this meditation:

Begin by closing your eyes and relaxing. Then visualize yourself standing on the beach with Jesus and the disciples. Join them as they board the boat. When the squall comes, experience the rocking of the boat, the waves crashing on deck, and the winds blowing. Feel the disciples' anxiety and fear as the boat is tossed and water pours into the boat. Go with the disciples to wake Jesus, and watch as Jesus calms the storm. Now, experience the peacefulness and tranquility of the miracle you have witnessed.

All of us have storms we must face, that is, parts of our life that are filled with anxiety or fear. Think about your life. What are the storms that batter and rock your world? Who in your family or in your community can calm your fears? How would you respond to Jesus' question, “Have you still no faith?” (Mk 4.40).

► Mk 4.35–41

## PRAY IT!

### Everyone's Welcome!

**I**n Mark, chapters 5–8, Jesus expands his mission into Gentile territory, the region on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. Three miraculous healings of Gentiles—the Gerasene demoniac (5.1–13), the Syrophenician's daughter (7.24–30), and the deaf man from Tyre (7.31–37)—extend the promises of the Reign of God to all who have faith in Jesus. In arranging these stories, the author of the Gospel emphasizes that God's salvation is available to everyone, not just to the Jews.

In your prayer, reflect or journal on the following questions:

- How do you treat people from a different race, culture, or religion?
- How could you be more welcoming toward them, more like Jesus?

Write a prayer expressing your desire.

► Mk 5.1–8.30

### Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac

(Mt 8.28–9.1; Lk 8.26–39)

**5** They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Ger'a•sēnes.<sup>e</sup> <sup>2</sup> And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. <sup>3</sup> He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; <sup>4</sup> for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. <sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. <sup>6</sup> When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; <sup>7</sup> and he shouted at the top of his voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.” <sup>8</sup> For he had said to him, “Come out of the

<sup>e</sup> Other ancient authorities read *Gergesenes*; others, *Gadarenes*

man, you unclean spirit!"<sup>9</sup> Then Jesus<sup>f</sup> asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many."<sup>10</sup> He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.<sup>11</sup> Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding;<sup>12</sup> and the unclean spirits<sup>g</sup> begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them."<sup>13</sup> So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.

14 The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened.<sup>15</sup> They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid.<sup>16</sup> Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it.<sup>17</sup> Then they began to beg Jesus<sup>h</sup> to leave their neighborhood.<sup>18</sup> As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him.<sup>19</sup> But Jesus<sup>f</sup> refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you."<sup>20</sup> And he went away and began to proclaim in the De·cap'·o·lis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

#### A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (Mt 9.18–26; Lk 8.40–56)

21 When Jesus had crossed again in the boat<sup>i</sup> to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea.<sup>22</sup> Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jā·r'us came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet<sup>23</sup> and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live."<sup>24</sup> So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.<sup>25</sup> Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years.<sup>26</sup> She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse.<sup>27</sup> She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak,<sup>28</sup> for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well."<sup>29</sup> Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.<sup>30</sup> Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?"<sup>31</sup> And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'"<sup>32</sup> He looked all around to see who had done it.<sup>33</sup> But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling,

## did you KNOW? Demon Possession

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all have stories about Jesus curing people of unclean spirits, or demons. Many cultures believe in spirits, both good and bad (see "Spirits," Mk 1.9–39), which can influence or even control people's decisions and actions. In the Bible, a demon is first mentioned in the Book of Tobit, which was written about two hundred years before Jesus' birth. Demons represented evil—mysterious powers hostile to God, health, and goodness. Jesus' ability to free people of demonic influence was a sign of the arrival of the Reign of God (see "Miracles and the Reign of God," Mt 8.1–9.34).

Over time, the explanation for evil or illness shifted from unclean spirits to Satan (see "Satan," Job 1.6–2.10), the leader of all demonic forces. The Gospel of John does not mention unclean spirits at all but instead refers to Satan's influence in the evil leading to Jesus' death (see Jn 13.2).

What the Bible calls demon possession might, at times, have been mental or physical illness. But many people are becoming aware of what the ancient people already knew: that illness and evil are part of the spiritual reality that can affect our life.

► Mk 1.23–34; 5.1–20

fell down before him, and told him the whole truth.<sup>34</sup> He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

35 While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?"<sup>36</sup> But overhearing<sup>j</sup> what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe."<sup>37</sup> He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.

<sup>f</sup> Gk he <sup>g</sup> Gk they <sup>h</sup> Gk him <sup>i</sup> Other ancient authorities lack in the boat <sup>j</sup> Or ignoring; other ancient authorities read hearing

## Mark 5.38

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<sup>38</sup> When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup> When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." <sup>40</sup> And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. <sup>41</sup> He took her by the hand and said to her, "Tal'i·tha cūm," which means, "Little girl, get up!" <sup>42</sup> And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. <sup>43</sup> He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

## The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

(Mt 13.54–58; Lk 4.16–30)

**6** He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup> On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! <sup>3</sup> Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary<sup>k</sup> and brother of James and Jō'sēs and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense<sup>l</sup> at him. <sup>4</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own

kin, and in their own house." <sup>5</sup> And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. <sup>6</sup> And he was amazed at their unbelief.

## The Mission of the Twelve

(Mt 10.5–15; Lk 9.1–6)

Then he went about among the villages teaching. <sup>7</sup> He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. <sup>8</sup> He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; <sup>9</sup> but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup> He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. <sup>11</sup> If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." <sup>12</sup> So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. <sup>13</sup> They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

## The Death of John the Baptist

(Mt 14.1–12; Lk 9.7–9)

<sup>14</sup> King Her'od heard of it, for Jesus<sup>m</sup> name had become known. Some were<sup>n</sup> saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." <sup>15</sup> But others said, "It is E·li'jah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." <sup>16</sup> But when Her'od heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

<sup>17</sup> For Her'od himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of He·rō'di·as, his brother Philip's wife, because Her'od<sup>o</sup> had married her. <sup>18</sup> For John had been telling Her'od, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." <sup>19</sup> And He·rō'di·as had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, <sup>20</sup> for Her'od feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed;<sup>p</sup> and yet he liked to listen to him. <sup>21</sup> But an opportunity came when Her'od on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. <sup>22</sup> When his daughter He·rō'di·as<sup>q</sup> came in and danced, she pleased Her'od and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." <sup>23</sup> And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." <sup>24</sup> She went

## When the Good News Comes Calling

**W**e often can choose whether to allow into our life the people bearing the Good News of Jesus, just as the people to whom the disciples were sent in Mk 6.6–13 could. Why might we turn away such guests? Perhaps their message is too challenging or upsetting to our lifestyle. Maybe we are not ready to accept what God is offering to us through them. Maybe we are too busy to realize that they have something to offer us.

**Open your hands as if to receive a gift, and offer a prayer to God for the openness to welcome God's messengers and to receive the Good News they bring.**

▶ Mk 6.6–13

<sup>k</sup> Other ancient authorities read *son of the carpenter and of Mary* <sup>l</sup> Or *stumbled* <sup>m</sup> Gk *his* <sup>n</sup> Other ancient authorities read *He was* <sup>o</sup> Gk *he* <sup>p</sup> Other ancient authorities read *he did many things* <sup>q</sup> Other ancient authorities read *the daughter of Herodias herself*

out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer."<sup>25</sup> Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."<sup>26</sup> The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her.<sup>27</sup> Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's<sup>r</sup> head. He went and beheaded him in the prison,<sup>28</sup> brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother.<sup>29</sup> When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

### Feeding the Five Thousand

(Mt 14.13–21; Lk 9.10–17; Jn 6.1–14)

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught.<sup>31</sup> He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.<sup>32</sup> And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves.<sup>33</sup> Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them.<sup>34</sup> As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.<sup>35</sup> When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late;<sup>36</sup> send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat."<sup>37</sup> But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii<sup>s</sup> worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?"<sup>38</sup> And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish."<sup>39</sup> Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass.<sup>40</sup> So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties.<sup>41</sup> Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all.<sup>42</sup> And all ate and were filled;<sup>43</sup> and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish.<sup>44</sup> Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

### Jesus Walks on the Water

(Mt 14.22–33; Jn 6.15–21)

45 Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Beth•sá•í•da, while he dismissed the crowd.<sup>46</sup> After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray.

## Those Thickheaded Disciples

The disciples in the Gospel of Mark seem unable to do anything right. During a storm at sea, they fail to put their trust in Jesus (4.35–41). Then they cannot understand about the miracle of the bread because their hearts are hardened (6.52). When Jesus gives them private tutoring sessions, they still fail to understand his teachings. Later, Peter proclaims that Jesus is the Messiah, but he ends up arguing with him after Jesus predicts that he will be a suffering Messiah (8.27–33). Finally, when Jesus is arrested, the disciples all desert him (14.50).

The author of Mark intentionally emphasizes the lack of faith of the original disciples in order to contrast it with the unexpected faith of people like the Syrophenician woman in 7.24–30. The Gospel makes the point that Jesus' true disciples are the ones who hear Jesus and place their faith in him. But don't count out the original disciples. Their journey is like most of ours, a lifelong experience of growing in faith and understanding. The Acts of the Apostles tells how they fearlessly preached the news about the risen Christ. Despite their human weakness, God works through them. That goes for us too!

► Mk 6.30–52

47 When evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land.<sup>48</sup> When he saw that they were straining at the oars against an adverse wind, he came towards them early in the morning, walking on the sea. He intended to pass them by.<sup>49</sup> But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out;<sup>50</sup> for

<sup>r</sup> Gk *his* <sup>s</sup> The denarius was the usual day's wage for a laborer

## Mark 6.51

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they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."<sup>51</sup> Then he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded,<sup>52</sup> for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

### Healing the Sick in Gennesaret

(Mt 14.34–36)

53 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gen-nes'a-ret and moored the boat.<sup>54</sup> When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him,<sup>55</sup> and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was.<sup>56</sup> And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

### The Tradition of the Elders

(Mt 15.1–20)

**7** Now when the Phar'i-sees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him,<sup>2</sup> they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them.<sup>3</sup> (For the Phar'i-sees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands,<sup>t</sup> thus observing the tradition of the elders;<sup>u</sup> and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it;<sup>v</sup> and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.)<sup>w</sup> <sup>5</sup> So the Phar'i-sees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live<sup>w</sup> according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" <sup>6</sup> He said to them, "I'sai'ah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

"This people honors me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me;

<sup>7</sup> in vain do they worship me,  
teaching human precepts as doctrines.'

<sup>8</sup> You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

<sup>9</sup> Then he said to them, "You have a fine way of

rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition!<sup>10</sup> For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.'<sup>11</sup> But you say that if anyone tells father or mother, 'Whatever support you might have had from me is Cor'ban' (that is, an offering to God<sup>x</sup>)—<sup>12</sup> then you no longer permit doing anything for a father or mother,<sup>13</sup> thus making void the word of God through your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many things like this."

<sup>14</sup> Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand:<sup>15</sup> there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile."<sup>y</sup>

<sup>17</sup> When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable.<sup>18</sup> He said to them, "Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile,<sup>19</sup> since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.)<sup>20</sup> And he said, "It is what comes out of a person that defiles.<sup>21</sup> For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder,<sup>22</sup> adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly.<sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

### The Syrophenician Woman's Faith

(Mt 15.21–28)

<sup>24</sup> From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre.<sup>z</sup> He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice,<sup>25</sup> but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard

<sup>t</sup> Meaning of Gk uncertain <sup>u</sup> Other ancient authorities read *and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they purify themselves* <sup>v</sup> Other ancient authorities add *and beds* <sup>w</sup> Gk *walk* <sup>x</sup> Gk *lacks to God* <sup>y</sup> Other ancient authorities add verse 16, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen" <sup>z</sup> Other ancient authorities add *and Sidon*

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## Sin's Source

Some people believe that spiritual depth is measured by how well certain rules or religious practices are followed. Jesus reminds us in Mk 7.14–15 that our greater concern ought to be with what is in our heart. What is in our heart should have a greater effect on our spiritual life than do outside sources.

► Mk 7.14–23

# LIVE IT!

about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. <sup>26</sup> Now the woman was a Gentile, of Sÿrō-phoe•ni'ci•an origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup> He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." <sup>28</sup> But she answered him, "Sir,<sup>a</sup> even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." <sup>29</sup> Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." <sup>30</sup> So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.



**Jesus Cures a Deaf Man**  
(Mt 15.29–31)

<sup>31</sup> Then he returned from the region of Tÿre, and went by way of Sî'don towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the De•cap'o•lis. <sup>32</sup> They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. <sup>33</sup> He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup> Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Eph'pha•tha," that is, "Be opened." <sup>35</sup> And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup> Then Jesus<sup>b</sup> ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup> They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

**Feeding the Four Thousand**  
(Mt 15.32–39)

**8** In those days when there was again a great crowd without anything to eat, he called his disciples and said to them, <sup>2</sup> "I have compassion for

the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. <sup>3</sup> If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way—and some of them have come from a great distance." <sup>4</sup> His disciples replied, "How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?" <sup>5</sup> He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven." <sup>6</sup> Then he ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute; and they distributed them to the crowd. <sup>7</sup> They had also a few small fish; and after blessing them, he ordered that these too should be distributed. <sup>8</sup> They ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. <sup>9</sup> Now there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. <sup>10</sup> And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dal•ma•nū'tha.<sup>c</sup>

**The Demand for a Sign**  
(Mt 16.1–4)

<sup>11</sup> The Phar'i•sees came and began to argue with him, asking him for a sign from heaven, to test him. <sup>12</sup> And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation." <sup>13</sup> And he left them, and getting into the boat again, he went across to the other side.

**The Yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod**  
(Mt 16.5–12)

<sup>14</sup> Now the disciples<sup>d</sup> had forgotten to bring any bread; and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. <sup>15</sup> And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out—beware of the yeast of the Phar'i•sees and the yeast of Her'od."<sup>e</sup> <sup>16</sup> They said to one another, "It is because we have no bread." <sup>17</sup> And becoming aware of it, Jesus said to them, "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? <sup>18</sup> Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear? And do you not remember? <sup>19</sup> When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" They said to him, "Twelve." <sup>20</sup> "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" And they said to him, "Seven." <sup>21</sup> Then he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

<sup>a</sup> Or Lord; other ancient authorities prefix Yes <sup>b</sup> Gk he

<sup>c</sup> Other ancient authorities read Mageda or Magdala

<sup>d</sup> Gk they <sup>e</sup> Other ancient authorities read the Herodians

## Total Commitment

**LIVE IT!**

**In Mk 8.34–38, Jesus calls for a total commitment requiring great sacrifice. He tells the disciples that to be truly alive, they must be willing to deny themselves and take up their own crosses. The cross symbolizes denying the way of the world and embracing the way of Jesus. It means tough self-sacrifice and, at times, a willingness to suffer for what is right.**

**But what does it mean to deny ourselves and take up our own crosses?**

**When we deny ourselves, it means that we cannot be fooled by what the world says about being truly alive. The world tells us to buy our happiness with wealth, power, prestige, or selfish pleasure. But those things actually make us feel less alive and more anxious.**

**Taking up our own crosses means that we need to be willing to cling to the right things—forgiveness, justice, service, and compassion for the poor and unpopular—even if it brings us suffering and pain. Being committed to Jesus and these virtues or “right things” will bring us real life, true freedom, joy, and inner peace.**

**The way of the cross is the path to resurrection and eternal life.**

► **Mk 8.34–38**

### Jesus Cures a Blind Man at Bethsaida

22 They came to Bethsá'í·da. Some people<sup>f</sup> brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. <sup>23</sup> He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, “Can you see anything?” <sup>24</sup> And the man<sup>g</sup> looked up and said, “I can see people, but they look like trees, walking.” <sup>25</sup> Then Jesus<sup>h</sup> laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. <sup>26</sup> Then he sent him away to his home, saying, “Do not even go into the village.”<sup>h</sup>

### Peter's Declaration about Jesus

(Mt 16.13–20; Lk 9.18–20)

27 Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caes·a·rē'a Phi·lip'pí; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” <sup>28</sup> And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, E·lí'jah; and still others, one of the prophets.” <sup>29</sup> He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.”<sup>i</sup> <sup>30</sup> And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

### Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

(Mt 16.21–28; Lk 9.21–27)

31 Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. <sup>33</sup> But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get be-

hind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

34 He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, <sup>j</sup> will save it. <sup>36</sup> For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? <sup>37</sup> Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? <sup>38</sup> Those who are ashamed of me and of my words<sup>k</sup> in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his **9** Father with the holy angels.” <sup>1</sup> And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with<sup>l</sup> power.”

### The Transfiguration

(Mt 17.1–8; Lk 9.28–36; 2 Pet 1.16–18)

2 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, <sup>3</sup> and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one<sup>m</sup> on earth could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared to them E·lí'jah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make

<sup>f</sup> Gk They <sup>g</sup> Gk he <sup>h</sup> Other ancient authorities add or tell anyone in the village <sup>i</sup> Or the Christ <sup>j</sup> Other ancient

authorities read *lose their life for the sake of the gospel*

<sup>k</sup> Other ancient authorities read *and of mine* <sup>l</sup> Or in

<sup>m</sup> Gk no fuller

three dwellings,<sup>n</sup> one for you, one for Moses, and one for E·li'jah." <sup>6</sup> He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. <sup>7</sup> Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved;<sup>o</sup> listen to him!" <sup>8</sup> Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

### The Coming of Elijah

(Mt 17.9–13)

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean. <sup>11</sup> Then they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that E·li'jah must come first?" <sup>12</sup> He said to them, "E·li'jah is indeed coming first to restore all things. How then is it written about the Son of Man, that he is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt? <sup>13</sup> But I tell you that E·li'jah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written about him."

### The Healing of a Boy with a Spirit

(Mt 17.14–21; Lk 9.37–43a)

<sup>14</sup> When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. <sup>15</sup> When the whole crowd saw him, they were immediately overcome with awe, and they ran forward to greet him. <sup>16</sup> He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" <sup>17</sup> Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to

speak; <sup>18</sup> and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so." <sup>19</sup> He answered them, "You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me." <sup>20</sup> And they brought the boy<sup>p</sup> to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy,<sup>p</sup> and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. <sup>21</sup> Jesus<sup>q</sup> asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. <sup>22</sup> It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes." <sup>24</sup> Immediately the father of the child cried out,<sup>r</sup> "I believe; help my unbelief!" <sup>25</sup> When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!" <sup>26</sup> After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." <sup>27</sup> But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand. <sup>28</sup> When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" <sup>29</sup> He said to them, "This kind can come out only through prayer."<sup>s</sup>

<sup>n</sup> Or tents <sup>o</sup> Or my beloved Son <sup>p</sup> Gk him <sup>q</sup> Gk He

<sup>r</sup> Other ancient authorities add *with tears* <sup>s</sup> Other ancient authorities add *and fasting*

## The Transfiguration: On Top of the World

# LIVE IT!

The story of the Transfiguration takes place after Jesus tells his disciples about his coming suffering, death, and Resurrection (Mk 8.31). They need hope and a boost of faith. Jesus takes three disciples to a mountaintop to see the Kingdom of God coming in power. The three disciples see Jesus in a glorious state talking with Moses and Elijah.

God revealed the secret about Jesus to three of his disciples. The two Old Testament figures are key symbols: Moses represents the Law, and Elijah, the prophets. The message is clear: Jesus is the person who fulfills the Law and who realizes God's promises to the prophets. It was a profound religious experience. The disciples glimpsed Jesus' glory, but they could not understand it. Understanding came only after Jesus' Resurrection.

It is understandable to want to found our faith on mountaintop experiences (see "Spiritual Highs," Lk 9.28–36). But though profound religious experiences enliven our faith, listening and following Jesus' words daily are what really fortify our faith and give us a new life.

► Mk 9.2–8

## PRAY IT!

### "I Believe, Help My Unbelief!"

**S**aying that we believe in something may not be enough to prove that we truly believe. Faith in God means knowing that God is totally with us even when it doesn't seem that way!

When we have nagging doubts whether even God can help us in a particular situation—like the father in Mk 9.24—we can turn to God by praying for faith. We don't have to have our faith or our life perfectly together before we ask God for help. The test of faith is trusting that God cares for us and provides what we need, even when our prayers are not answered in the way we desire.

▶ Mk 9.14–29

### Jesus Again Foretells His Death and Resurrection

(Mt 17.22–23; Lk 9.43b–45)

30 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; <sup>31</sup> for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." <sup>32</sup> But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

### Who Is the Greatest?

(Mt 18.1–5; Lk 9.46–48)

33 Then they came to Ca-per'na-um; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" <sup>34</sup> But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. <sup>35</sup> He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." <sup>36</sup> Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup> "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

### Another Exorcist

(Mt 10.40–42; Lk 9.49–50)

38 John said to him, "Teacher, we saw some-one<sup>e</sup> casting out demons in your name, and we tried

to stop him, because he was not following us." <sup>39</sup> But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. <sup>40</sup> Whoever is not against us is for us. <sup>41</sup> For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

### Temptations to Sin

(Mt 18.6–9; Lk 17.1–2)

42 "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me,<sup>u</sup> it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. <sup>43</sup> If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell,<sup>v</sup> to the unquenchable fire.<sup>w</sup> <sup>45</sup> And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell.<sup>v,w</sup> <sup>47</sup> And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell,<sup>v</sup> <sup>48</sup> where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

49 "For everyone will be salted with fire.<sup>x</sup> <sup>50</sup> Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it?<sup>y</sup> Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

### Teaching about Divorce

(Mt 19.1–9)

**10** He left that place and went to the region of Judea and<sup>z</sup> beyond the Jordan. And crowds again gathered around him; and, as was his custom, he again taught them.

2 Some Phar'i-sees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" <sup>3</sup> He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" <sup>4</sup> They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." <sup>5</sup> But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. <sup>6</sup> But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' <sup>7</sup> 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,<sup>a</sup> <sup>8</sup> and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

<sup>i</sup> Other ancient authorities add *who does not follow us*

<sup>u</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *in me* <sup>v</sup> Gk *Gehenna*

<sup>w</sup> Verses 44 and 46 (which are identical with verse 48) are

lacking in the best ancient authorities <sup>x</sup> Other ancient

authorities either add or substitute *and every sacrifice will be*

*salted with salt* <sup>y</sup> Or *how can you restore its saltiness?*

<sup>z</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *and* <sup>a</sup> Other ancient

authorities lack *and be joined to his wife*

10 Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. <sup>11</sup> He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; <sup>12</sup> and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

#### Jesus Blesses Little Children

(Mt 19.13–15; Lk 18.15–17)

13 People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. <sup>15</sup> Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." <sup>16</sup> And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

#### The Rich Man

(Mt 19.16–30; Lk 18.18–30)

17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>18</sup> Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" <sup>20</sup> He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." <sup>21</sup> Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money<sup>b</sup> to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." <sup>22</sup> When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" <sup>24</sup> And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is<sup>c</sup> to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." <sup>26</sup> They were greatly astounded and said to one another,<sup>d</sup> "Then who can be saved?" <sup>27</sup> Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

28 Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." <sup>29</sup> Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news,<sup>e</sup> <sup>30</sup> who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in

the age to come eternal life. <sup>31</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

#### A Third Time Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

(Mt 20.17–19; Lk 18.31–34)

32 They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, <sup>33</sup> saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; <sup>34</sup> they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again."

#### The Request of James and John

(Mt 20.20–28)

35 James and John, the sons of Zeb'edee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." <sup>36</sup> And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" <sup>37</sup> And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one

<sup>b</sup> Gk lacks *the money* <sup>c</sup> Other ancient authorities add *for those who trust in riches* <sup>d</sup> Other ancient authorities read *to him* <sup>e</sup> Or *gospel*

Catholic  
Connections  
TRUE GREATNESS

The disciples think that Jesus is going to be a great king, and they want to share in his power and glory. Instead, Jesus tells them that they must be servants. Servanthood is the true mark of greatness. That is why the pope is sometimes called the servant of the servants of God. Jesus not only taught true servanthood but lived it by giving up his life as a ransom for all.

► Mk 10.35–45

## Mark 10.38

1166

at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”<sup>38</sup> But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”<sup>39</sup> They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized;<sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

41 When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John.<sup>42</sup> So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them.<sup>43</sup> But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant,<sup>44</sup> and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.<sup>45</sup> For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

### The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

(Mt 20.29–34; Lk 18.35–43)

46 They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Ti•mae’us, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside.<sup>47</sup> When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”<sup>48</sup> Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”<sup>49</sup> Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.”<sup>50</sup> So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.<sup>51</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.”<sup>52</sup> Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

### Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

(Mt 21.1–11; Lk 19.28–40; Jn 12.12–19)

**11** When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Beth’pha•gē and Beth’a•ny, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples<sup>2</sup> and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it.<sup>3</sup> If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’”<sup>4</sup> They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it,<sup>5</sup> some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?”<sup>6</sup> They told them what Jesus had said; and they al-

lowed them to take it.<sup>7</sup> Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it.<sup>8</sup> Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields.<sup>9</sup> Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

<sup>10</sup> Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

<sup>11</sup> Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Beth’a•ny with the twelve.

### Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

(Mt 21.18–19)

<sup>12</sup> On the following day, when they came from Beth’a•ny, he was hungry.<sup>13</sup> Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.<sup>14</sup> He said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard it.

### Jesus Cleanses the Temple

(Mt 21.12–17; Lk 19.45–48; Jn 2.13–22)

<sup>15</sup> Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves;<sup>16</sup> and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.<sup>17</sup> He was teaching and saying, “Is it not written,

‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’?

But you have made it a den of robbers.”

<sup>18</sup> And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching.<sup>19</sup> And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples<sup>s</sup> went out of the city.

### The Lesson from the Withered Fig Tree

(Mt 21.20–22)

<sup>20</sup> In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots.<sup>21</sup> Then Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.”<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered them, “Have<sup>h</sup> faith in God.<sup>23</sup> Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and

<sup>f</sup> Aramaic *Rabbouni*    <sup>s</sup> Gk *they*; other ancient authorities read *he*    <sup>h</sup> Other ancient authorities read “If you have

thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. <sup>24</sup> So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received<sup>i</sup> it, and it will be yours.

<sup>25</sup> "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."<sup>j</sup>

### Jesus' Authority Is Questioned

(Mt 21.23–27; Lk 20.1–8)

<sup>27</sup> Again they came to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him <sup>28</sup> and said, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?" <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>30</sup> Did the

baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me." <sup>31</sup> They argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' <sup>32</sup> But shall we say, 'Of human origin?'"—they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet. <sup>33</sup> So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

### The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

(Mt 21.33–46; Lk 20.9–19)

**12** Then he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. <sup>2</sup> When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. <sup>3</sup> But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>4</sup> And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted. <sup>5</sup> Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. <sup>6</sup> He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' <sup>7</sup> But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' <sup>8</sup> So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. <sup>9</sup> What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. <sup>10</sup> Have you not read this scripture:

"The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone;<sup>k</sup>

<sup>11</sup> this was the Lord's doing,  
and it is amazing in our eyes?"

<sup>12</sup> When they realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowd. So they left him and went away.

### The Question about Paying Taxes

(Mt 22.15–22; Lk 20.20–26)

<sup>13</sup> Then they sent to him some Phar*'i*•sees and some He•rō'di•ans to trap him in what he said. <sup>14</sup> And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? <sup>15</sup> Should we pay them, or should we not?"

<sup>i</sup> Other ancient authorities read *are receiving* <sup>j</sup> Other ancient authorities add verse 26, "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

<sup>k</sup> Or *keystone*

## PRAY IT

### Unanswered Prayer

**D**id you ever want something so badly that you prayed for it?

Sometimes when things turn out the way we want, we say that God has answered our prayers. But when things don't turn out the way we want, we say that God didn't answer our prayers.

In Mk 11.24, it seems that we have the power to obtain what we want from God—just by stating our wishes. This is a dangerous thought, though, especially when someone else might be praying for the exact opposite of what we're praying for. Why should God answer our prayers and not someone else's? In addition, when something horrible happens, despite all our prayers, it is dangerous to think that God willed such pain and suffering. For example, sometimes we hear people saying, "God must have wanted me to learn some lesson from this tragedy." God never causes tragedy. Tragedy just happens.

People often ask, and we may be asking ourselves, "Why pray at all if it isn't going to change anything?"

Here's a good response: "Prayer doesn't change things. Prayer changes people, and people change things."

► Mk 11.24

## Mark 12.16

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But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it." <sup>16</sup> And they brought one. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to them, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were utterly amazed at him.

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## PRAY IT!

### What Do You Want from Me?

**D**ear God, Jesus tells us to give to you what is yours. What do you want from me, God? What can I give to you?

*As a young person still growing and developing, I don't have much to offer financially. I can make a small financial contribution to the church, to poor people, . . . but is it enough, Lord? What more can I give?*

*I can offer my time and talents to serve my faith community. I can sing, play an instrument, draw posters, greet visitors, clean, decorate, organize, cook, bake, and telephone. I can help teach children, lector, or usher, . . . but is it enough, Lord? What more can I give?*

*I can reach out to serve and share your love at home, in my neighborhood, my school, my community, . . . but is it enough, Lord? What more can I give?*

*I want to serve you better, Lord. Speak to me, and I will listen. Amen.*

► Mk 12.13-17

### The Question about the Resurrection

(Mt 22.23-33; Lk 20.27-40)

18 Some Sad'dū•cees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, saying, <sup>19</sup> "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, the man<sup>l</sup> shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. <sup>20</sup> There were seven brothers; the first married and, when he died, left no children; <sup>21</sup> and the second married the widow<sup>m</sup> and died, leaving no children; and the third likewise; <sup>22</sup> none of the seven left children. Last of all the woman herself died. <sup>23</sup> In the resurrection<sup>n</sup> whose wife will she be? For the seven had married her."

24 Jesus said to them, "Is not this the reason you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God? <sup>25</sup> For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. <sup>26</sup> And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? <sup>27</sup> He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong."

### The First Commandment

(Mt 22.34-40; Lk 10.25-28)

28 One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; <sup>30</sup> you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup> The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." <sup>32</sup> Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; <sup>33</sup> and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself;—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup> When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

### The Question about David's Son

(Mt 22.41-46; Lk 20.41-44)

35 While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Messiah<sup>o</sup> is the son of David? <sup>36</sup> David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared,

"The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet." "

<sup>37</sup> David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?" And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.

### Jesus Denounces the Scribes

(Mt 23.1-7; Lk 20.45-47)

38 As he taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, <sup>39</sup> and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of

<sup>l</sup> Gk his brother <sup>m</sup> Gk her <sup>n</sup> Other ancient authorities add when they rise <sup>o</sup> Or the Christ

honor at banquets! <sup>40</sup> They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

#### The Widow's Offering

(Lk 21.1-4)

41 He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. <sup>42</sup> A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. <sup>43</sup> Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. <sup>44</sup> For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

#### The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

(Mt 24.1-8; Lk 21.5-11)

**13** As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" <sup>2</sup> Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

<sup>3</sup> When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup> "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?" <sup>5</sup> Then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. <sup>6</sup> Many will come in my name and say, 'I am

he!'" <sup>7</sup> and they will lead many astray. <sup>7</sup> When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. <sup>8</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

#### Persecution Foretold

(Mt 24.9-14; Lk 21.12-19)

<sup>9</sup> "As for yourselves, beware; for they will hand you over to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. <sup>10</sup> And the good news<sup>g</sup> must first be proclaimed to all nations. <sup>11</sup> When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. <sup>12</sup> Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; <sup>13</sup> and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

#### The Desolating Sacrilege

(Mt 24.15-28; Lk 21.20-24)

<sup>14</sup> "But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; <sup>15</sup> the one on the housetop must not go

<sup>p</sup> Gk I am <sup>g</sup> Gk gospel



## SACRIFICIAL GIVING

**Native Americans can appreciate the widow's offering in Mk 12.41-44. For example, the Lakota tribe has a custom called *otuhan*, or "giveaway." During important occasions, a person honors the other members of the tribe by giving away much of what he or she has. Sometimes, everything is given away. To be called stingy is the worst insult.**

**Think about your own circumstances. How easy would it be to share or give away your favorite possessions? Could you give away something you really value? Why or why not?**

**Many Native Americans believe that all we have belongs to the Great Spirit and is a gift to be shared with others. Make a decision! Follow the example of the widow, and be generous to others to the point of sacrifice.**

► Mk 12.41-44



## Mark 13.16

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down or enter the house to take anything away; <sup>16</sup> the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. <sup>17</sup> Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! <sup>18</sup> Pray that it may not be in winter. <sup>19</sup> For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never will be. <sup>20</sup> And if the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he has cut short those days. <sup>21</sup> And if anyone says to you at that time, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!' <sup>r</sup> or 'Look! There he is!'—do not believe it. <sup>22</sup> False messiahs <sup>s</sup> and false prophets will appear and produce signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. <sup>23</sup> But be alert; I have already told you everything.

## The Coming of the Son of Man

(Mt 24.29–31; Lk 21.25–28)

<sup>24</sup> "But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light,  
<sup>25</sup> and the stars will be falling from heaven,

and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

<sup>26</sup> Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

## The Lesson of the Fig Tree

(Mt 24.32–35; Lk 21.29–33)

<sup>28</sup> "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he <sup>t</sup> is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. <sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

## The Necessity for Watchfulness

(Mt 24.36–44; Lk 21.34–36)

<sup>32</sup> "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup> Beware, keep alert;<sup>u</sup> for you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup> It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. <sup>35</sup> Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, <sup>36</sup> or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. <sup>37</sup> And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

## The Plot to Kill Jesus

(Mt 26.1–5; Lk 22.1–2; Jn 11.45–53)

**14** It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus <sup>v</sup> by stealth and kill him; <sup>2</sup> for they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

## The Anointing at Bethany

(Mt 26.6–13; Jn 12.1–8)

<sup>3</sup> While he was at Beth <sup>a</sup>ny in the house of Simon the leper, <sup>w</sup> as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. <sup>4</sup> But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? <sup>5</sup> For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred

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 did you **KNOW?**  
**Signs and Omens**

The community for which the author of Mark's Gospel wrote saw its sufferings as part of the troubles that would come with the end time. However, the author didn't intend that his readers take Jesus' signs and omens of wars and earthquakes literally to mean that the end of the world was at hand. Rather, these descriptions were used symbolically (see "Apocalyptic Literature," Daniel, chapters 7–10) to help the community make sense of its persecutions. The message of this Gospel is that Christians who were getting beaten up and thrown in jail would be saved by God. And ultimately, human history would climax in the perfect Reign of God. It was their job to hang on and endure to the end. All they had to worry about was spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ, and God would take care of the rest.

► Mark, chapter 13

<sup>r</sup> Or the Christ <sup>s</sup> Or christ <sup>t</sup> Or it <sup>u</sup> Other ancient authorities add and pray <sup>v</sup> Gk him <sup>w</sup> The terms leper and leprosy can refer to several diseases

denarii,<sup>x</sup> and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her. <sup>6</sup> But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. <sup>7</sup> For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. <sup>8</sup> She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. <sup>9</sup> Truly I tell you, wherever the good news<sup>y</sup> is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

#### Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

(Mt 26.14–16; Lk 22.3–6)

<sup>10</sup> Then Judas Is-car'i-ot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. <sup>11</sup> When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

#### The Passover with the Disciples

(Mt 26.17–25; Lk 22.7–13; Jn 13.21–30)

<sup>12</sup> On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" <sup>13</sup> So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, <sup>14</sup> and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" <sup>15</sup> He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." <sup>16</sup> So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

<sup>17</sup> When it was evening, he came with the twelve. <sup>18</sup> And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." <sup>19</sup> They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?" <sup>20</sup> He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread<sup>z</sup> into the bowl<sup>a</sup> with me. <sup>21</sup> For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born."

#### The Institution of the Lord's Supper

(Mt 26.26–29; Lk 22.14–23; 1 Cor 11.23–26)

<sup>22</sup> While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." <sup>23</sup> Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. <sup>24</sup> He said to them, "This is my blood of the<sup>b</sup> covenant, which is

## PRAY IT! Mass Prayer

**D**ear Jesus, "Take it; this is my body. . . . This is my blood." Those words make me feel guilty because I should be hearing them at Mass. And you know I often find excuses not to go to Mass. The church pews are uncomfortable; I'd rather sleep late; I don't like the music or the homily; it is too nice outside; it's boring. My parents have even quit trying to get me to go.

Why is it so easy to forget that you gave us this special invitation to share in the eucharistic meal? It is a way of participating in your death and Resurrection and strengthening our faith and renewing our hope until you come again in glory. It is a privilege to be invited to the eucharistic table and to connect with both the present church and all the saints of the past who have shared this sacred meal.

Thank you for your invitation, Lord. Help me to value the Eucharist more, and give me the desire to meet you there. Amen.

For more on the Eucharist, see the articles for Mt 26.26–29; Lk 22.14–20; Jn 13.1–17.

► Mk 14.22–25

poured out for many. <sup>25</sup> Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

#### Peter's Denial Foretold

(Mt 26.30–35; Lk 22.31–34; Jn 13.36–38)

<sup>26</sup> When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. <sup>27</sup> And Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters; for it is written,

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

<sup>28</sup> But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." <sup>29</sup> Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not." <sup>30</sup> Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times."

<sup>31</sup> But he said vehemently, "Even though I must die

<sup>x</sup> The denarius was the usual day's wage for a laborer

<sup>y</sup> Or gospel <sup>z</sup> Gk lacks bread <sup>a</sup> Other ancient authorities

read same bowl <sup>b</sup> Other ancient authorities add new

## Mark 14.32

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with you, I will not deny you." And all of them said the same.

### Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

(Mt 26.36–46; Lk 22.39–46)

32 They went to a place called Geth•sem'a•nē; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. 34 And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." 35 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 He said, "Abba,<sup>c</sup> Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." 37 He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? 38 Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial;<sup>d</sup> the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 39 And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. 41 He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

### The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

(Mt 26.47–56; Lk 22.47–53; Jn 18.1–11)

43 Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief

priests, the scribes, and the elders. 44 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45 So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. 46 Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. 47 But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 48 Then Jesus said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? 49 Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled." 50 All of them deserted him and fled.

51 A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, 52 but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

### Jesus before the Council

(Mt 26.57–68; Lk 22.66–71; Jn 18.12–14, 19–24)

53 They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. 54 Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire. 55 Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. 56 For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. 57 Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, 58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in

<sup>c</sup> Aramaic for *Father*    <sup>d</sup> Or *into temptation*

## A Friend's Betrayal



Imagine that you are facing a difficult time. Your best friend promises to be with you no matter what. This is the one person you rely on, who has been there for you and has been the most loyal and faithful of all your friends. You have spent the last three years together . . . working, studying, enjoying holidays, traveling, and sharing countless meals and discussions. Now, imagine that this friend completely lets you down.

Peter was one of Jesus' best friends. As the story is told in the Gospel of Mark, the relationship has its difficult times, but Jesus continuously tries to reach Peter. Knowing Peter is going to deny him, Jesus even tries warning Peter that things would happen this way (14.30).

Probably just like some of your friends, Peter had good intentions but could not follow through with his assurances to Jesus (verses 66–72). But Jesus did not give up on Peter (Jn 21.15–19), and Peter became one of the greatest heroes of our church. Don't give up on your friends either.

► Mk 14.66–72

# LIVE IT!

three days I will build another, not made with hands.' " 59 But even on this point their testimony did not agree. 60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?" 61 But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah,<sup>e</sup> the Son of the Blessed One?" 62 Jesus said, "I am; and

'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.' "

63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "Why do we still need witnesses? 64 You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?" All of them condemned him as deserving death. 65 Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophesy!" The guards also took him over and beat him.

#### Peter Denies Jesus

(Mt 26.69–75; Lk 22.54–62; Jn 18.15–18, 25–27)

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 stared at him and said, "You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about." And he went out into the forecourt.<sup>f</sup> Then the cock crowed.<sup>g</sup> 69 And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." 70 But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean." 71 But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know this man you are talking about." 72 At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

#### Jesus before Pilate

(Mt 27.1–2, 11–14; Lk 23.1–5, 13–16; Jn 18.28–38a)

**15** As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. 2 Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." 3 Then the chief priests accused him of many things. 4 Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." 5 But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

#### Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified

(Mt 27.15–26; Lk 23.18–25; Jn 18.38b–19.16)

6 Now at the festival he used to release a pris-

oner for them, anyone for whom they asked. 7 Now a man called Ba•rab•bas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. 8 So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. 9 Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" 10 For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Ba•rab•bas for them instead. 12 Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do<sup>h</sup> with the man you call the King of the Jews?" 13 They shouted back, "Crucify him!" 14 Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" 15 So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Ba•rab•bas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

<sup>e</sup> Or the Christ <sup>f</sup> Or gateway <sup>g</sup> Other ancient authorities lack Then the cock crowed <sup>h</sup> Other ancient authorities read what should I do <sup>i</sup> Other ancient authorities lack the man you call

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## PRAY IT!

### Facing the Hard Times

**L**ord, you really do know what it is like to be beaten, teased, pushed around, and rejected.

**If you could put up with this torment, then maybe there is hope for others who feel the same way at times. Like when we are made fun of or rejected because of the way we look or act or for what we believe in. Or when we feel all alone or that no one understands what we are feeling.**

**But now, I know that you understand, Lord. You took these difficult steps even before we did. You have been there. You show us a way through these tough times.**

**Teach me to pray as you did: "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup [suffering] from me, yet, not what I want, but what you want" (Mk 14.36). Give me the strength to overcome my despair. Give me faith to abandon myself in God's hands as you did. Give me hope to see a new life beyond these moments of pain and hopelessness. Amen.**

► Mk 15.16–20



## WE WERE THERE

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According to Mk 15.21, the Roman soldiers compelled a North African black man from Cyrene by the name of Simon, a passerby, to carry the cross of Jesus. We do not know anything more about Simon of Cyrene, except that Mark identifies him as the father of Alexander and Rufus. The reference to Simon's sons by name and the possibility that Rufus is the same person Paul greets in Rom 16.13 indicate that they were known among the early Christians. This is significant for African Americans because it is evidence of the prominence and influence of African people in the early Christian church.

African people were there from the beginning of Christianity (see also Acts 8.26–40). They were not latecomers to the Christian faith. Thank God, somebody always remembers! African Americans and other people who have experienced oppression are in danger of forgetting who they are and where they come from. Not because they are forgetful peoples, but because the oppressors have tried to erase their culture and identity in order to cripple and control them. Yet despite all of this, somebody always remembers.

*We praise you, God, for having African people there from the beginning of your plan of salvation. We praise you in knowing that people of all races will be with you at the end. Hallelujah. Amen!*

### ► Mk 15.21



#### The Soldiers Mock Jesus

(Mt 27.27–31)

16 Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. 17 And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. 18 And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 19 They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. 20 After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

#### The Crucifixion of Jesus

(Mt 27.32–44; Lk 23.26–43; Jn 19.16b–27)

21 They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of C̄y·rē'nē, the father of Alexander and Rufus. 22 Then they brought Jesus<sup>k</sup> to the place called Gol'go·tha (which means the place of a skull). 23 And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

25 It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. 26 The inscription of the charge

against him read, "The King of the Jews." 27 And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left.<sup>l</sup> 29 Those who passed by derided<sup>m</sup> him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days,<sup>30</sup> save yourself, and come down from the cross!" 31 In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. 32 Let the Messiah,<sup>n</sup> the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

#### The Death of Jesus

(Mt 27.45–56; Lk 23.44–49; Jn 19.28–30)

33 When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land<sup>o</sup> until three in the afternoon. 34 At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Ē'lō·ī, Ē'lō·ī, le·ma' sa·bach'tha·ni?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"<sup>p</sup> 35 When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling

<sup>i</sup> Gk the praetorium <sup>k</sup> Gk him <sup>l</sup> Other ancient authorities add verse 28, *And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "And he was counted among the lawless."* <sup>m</sup> Or blasphemed <sup>n</sup> Or the Christ <sup>o</sup> Or earth <sup>p</sup> Other ancient authorities read *made me a reproach*



for E·lī'jah." <sup>36</sup> And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether E·lī'jah will come to take him down." <sup>37</sup> Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. <sup>38</sup> And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup> Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he<sup>q</sup> breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"<sup>r</sup>

<sup>40</sup> There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Mag'da·lēne, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of

Jō'sēs, and Sa·lō'mē. <sup>41</sup> These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

#### The Burial of Jesus

(Mt 27.57–61; Lk 23.50–56; Jn 19.38–42)

<sup>42</sup> When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Ari·ma·thē'a, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. <sup>44</sup> Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. <sup>45</sup> When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. <sup>46</sup> Then Joseph<sup>s</sup> bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body,<sup>t</sup> wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. <sup>47</sup> Mary Mag'da·lēne and Mary the mother of Jō'sēs saw where the body<sup>t</sup> was laid.

#### The Resurrection of Jesus

(Mt 28.1–10; Lk 24.1–12; Jn 20.1–10)

**16** When the sabbath was over, Mary Mag'da·lēne, and Mary the mother of James, and Sa·lō'mē bought spices, so that they might go

<sup>q</sup> Other ancient authorities add *cried out and* <sup>r</sup> Or a son of God <sup>s</sup> Gk he <sup>t</sup> Gk it

## Alone!



One summer weekend several years ago, eight teenagers went on a hiking trip to the high country in the mountains of New Mexico. After an argument, one of the girls wandered off by herself and became separated from the group. When her absence was discovered, a search party quickly formed. Everyone was worried and anxious.

**Afraid! Vulnerable! Lost and alone!** She later described her feelings as the worst she had ever had in her life. She had no way of changing the situation. She even screamed at the sky and begged God to save her! All she could do was just pray and wait and hope.

Jesus may have had similar feelings. He may have felt lost, and he may have felt completely abandoned by his friends and even by God. He had to face his death alone. Can you imagine anything more lonely? His prayers did not change his circumstances but gave him a way to lament, to cry out to God to express his distress.

What makes you the most lonely and afraid? Have you ever felt abandoned? It is always okay to lament. When do you most feel the need to do so? Crying out does not always change our circumstances, but it can help remind us that we are not truly alone—God is with us.

► Mk 15.33–34

**LIVE IT!**

## Jesus Strengthens Our Faith

**LIVE IT!**

**A group of faithful women accompany Jesus from afar when he dies on the cross, and they look to see where he is buried (Mk 15.40–47). They are witnesses to the terrible violence of Jesus' death. Two days later, after the Sabbath, three of the women go to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body, giving him a proper burial. When they receive the good news that Jesus is alive, they flee from the tomb terrified and amazed.**

**This is where the original Gospel of Mark ends. Immediately, we want to ask lots of questions. What happened to the disciples? Did they go to Galilee? How did the word get out that Jesus had risen from the dead? Apparently, early Christians found this abrupt ending troublesome, and so they added other endings similar to those of the other Gospels.**

**These additions, starting at Mk 16.9, emphasize the surprise of the disciples. It seems as if they are paralyzed. Only a strong scolding by Jesus and being commissioned to proclaim the Good News to the whole creation brings them around.**

**How do doubts and confusion paralyze you in living your faith? Pay attention to Jesus! Hear his voice! He is telling you to carry his message of love to other people. By doing so, you will strengthen your faith, and your life will be full of joy!**

▶ Mk 16.1–20

M  
K

and anoint him. <sup>2</sup> And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup> They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" <sup>4</sup> When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. <sup>5</sup> As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup> But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." <sup>8</sup> So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.<sup>u</sup>

### THE SHORTER ENDING OF MARK

[And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.<sup>v</sup> ]

### THE LONGER ENDING OF MARK

#### Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (Jn 20.11–18)

<sup>9</sup> [Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Mag'da·lène, from whom he had cast out seven demons. <sup>10</sup> She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. <sup>11</sup> But when they

heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

#### Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

(Lk 24.13–43; Jn 20.19–23)

<sup>12</sup> After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. <sup>13</sup> And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

#### Jesus Commissions the Disciples

(Mt 28.16–20; Lk 24.44–49; Jn 20.19–23;  
Acts 1.6–8)

<sup>14</sup> Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.<sup>w</sup> <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, "Go into

<sup>u</sup> Some of the most ancient authorities bring the book to a close at the end of verse 8. One authority concludes the book with the shorter ending; others include the shorter ending and then continue with verses 9–20. In most authorities verses 9–20 follow immediately after verse 8, though in some of these authorities the passage is marked as being doubtful. <sup>v</sup> Other ancient authorities add *Amen* <sup>w</sup> Other ancient authorities add, in whole or in part, *And they excused themselves, saying, "This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal your righteousness now"—thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, "The term of years of Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was handed over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, that they may inherit the spiritual and imperishable glory of righteousness that is in heaven."*

all the world and proclaim the good news<sup>x</sup> to the whole creation. <sup>16</sup> The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup> And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; <sup>18</sup> they will pick up snakes in their hands,<sup>y</sup> and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

### The Ascension of Jesus

(Lk 24.50–53)

<sup>19</sup> So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. <sup>20</sup> And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.<sup>z]</sup>

<sup>x</sup> Or *gospel* <sup>y</sup> Other ancient authorities lack *in their hands*

<sup>z</sup> Other ancient authorities add *Amen*