



MARK

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# Servant Sacrificed

<i>The Servant is...</i>		
<b>SET APART</b>	<b>SERVING</b>	<b>SACRIFICED</b>
1:13	4:40; 6:62 8:16,21	15:31,32; 16:4
1	1-8	8-16

*"Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve." 10:45*

## **Welcome to the book of Mark!**

To begin your study of Mark, meditate upon the contents of the book represented in the overview chart above. How is the Servant set apart? What are the evidences of His **service**? What was the basis of His **sacrifice**? Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." The emphasis of Mark is on what Jesus **did** more than what He said. This reflects the theme of the book "the Servant and true service." Take this opportunity to refer to and think about the key verse (10:45).

The book of Mark is a book of action, targeting the Greek mind. It is important to see each element of that action in its proper context. Many miracles were accomplished in front of large crowds and explained or used to teach the disciples, often in a more intimate moment. It is important to ask the question, "What is Jesus trying to teach me about faith?" as you consider each miracle. The theme of "true faith" parallels the Master's example of "true service." Understanding this is key to experiencing spiritual growth through your study of the book of Mark.

## *The Writer and Setting*

Mark was probably written sometime in the 60's. The message of Mark is captured in a single verse: "For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many". (10:45) Throughout the book, Mark unfolds the two-fold focus on Christ's life: **service and sacrifice**. Over and over Mark uses words like "straightway, immediately, forthwith" (all translating the same Greek word) which not only accelerates the pace of the story but reveals the immediate obedience of the perfect servant. Mark omits details of Christ's genealogy and childhood since they are of no concern to a servant and plunges immediately into Christ's powerful ministry in the region of Galilee.

Mark portrays Jesus as a servant on the move, instantly responsive to the will of the Father. By preaching, teaching, and healing, He ministers to the needs of others, and after His resurrection, Christ commissions His followers to continue His work in His power: servants following in the steps of a sacrificial servant.

## **Why the book of Mark?**

1. From this Gospel we discover that *the service that counts is the service that costs*. Mark helps motivate us to sacrifice even more for our Lord in light of His sacrificial example.
2. This Gospel is good for those who desire to be spiritual leaders and are frustrated by not attaining such a status. *The way to leadership is servanthood*. Remember, if you wish to be a leader, you will be frustrated, for very few people wish to be led. If you set your sights on being a servant, you will find peace as a leader.

## **John Mark and his life**

We know that this Gospel was written by a young man named John Mark, who appears several times in the Scriptures. His mother's name was Mary which indicates that she was Jewish. He himself had a Jewish forename (John) and a Roman surname (Mark), so his father may have been a Roman. We know that John Mark was taken by Paul and Barnabas as a young man on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:5) and traveled with them to the island of Cyprus. But when they reached the border of present-day Turkey, Mark "chickened out" and ran home to mama.

Paul was upset about that and evidently felt that Mark was a quitter. When Barnabas wanted to bring Mark along on another trip, Paul would not hear of it and separated from Barnabas over the issue. Nearly 20 years later, Paul is in prison in Rome. He writes to the Colossians, "Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, salutes you, and Mark, sister's son to Barnabas (touching whom you received commandments: if he comes unto you, receive him). These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort to me." (Colossians was 4:10-11) Paul refers now to Mark as a "fellow-worker" and a "comfort." Later, just before Paul was probably martyred he writes, "take Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service," (2 Timothy 4:11). How fitting, then, should Mark be the one to write about the sacrificial servant for he had learned over the years what it means to be a servant. *Mark, the failing servant who wrote about the unfailing servant...Jesus Christ.*

Open your heart as you read!

God has revealed Himself as One who is willing to seek and save that which is lost. Our response to His revelation of Himself must be to seek His presence and serve Him through following His teachings! Carefully examine your faith as you study. Is your faith consistent with the imperishable faith only God's Holy Spirit can give, or is it based on man-made substitute?

## *In Focus*

Matthew opens with a **revelation** of Jesus as King and closes with our **response** of obediently telling His story and following Him as a disciple. Mark opens with revelation of God-action through miracles (1:21) and closes with reproach for the disciple's hard-hearted faith (16:14). Matthew reveals true authority (7:28,29; 28:18) to rule and Mark reveals true authority to reign supreme over all that has been created (3:22-30; 4:41)!

## The Servant is Set Apart!

Read Chapters 1-4

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
1		
2		
3		
4		

### Chapter 1

1. How many different ways do you see Jesus being set apart in chapter 1?  
Why is each way important to His ministry?
2. Take this opportunity to review the insert on the Miracles of Christ. If we put together all the accounts and chronicled the events of Christ's life we come up with somewhere around forty days. What does this tell you about Christ's four-year public ministry?
3. How do you feel about supernatural miracles?
4. In what ways does Christ work miracles today?

### Chapter 2

1. How is the teaching of 2:23-28 related to the miracle of the withered hand?
2. What do you learn about the hearts and lives of the people involved from these related events?

### Chapter 3

1. Examine the miracle in 3:1-6 and answer these questions:
  - How did this man happen to be present?
  - What were the heart feelings of the participants in this scene?
  - What did Jesus state as the true problem of the Pharisees?
2. What principles of service to God can be gleaned from the account in 3:13-15?

### Chapter 4

1. What is the main point of what Jesus is saying in 4:11,12?
2. How do you think the disciples felt about what He said?
3. Why couldn't some of His followers understand Him?
4. Explain to someone the parable of the sower in your own words.  
(you may want to write it out in your own words first)

My thoughts about the serving teachings from these chapters:

# The Servant is Serving!

# Read Chapters 5-7

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
5		
6		
7		

## Chapter 5

1. What was it that frightened the people in verse 15?
2. Why did Jesus allow the man to follow Him?
3. Why do you think the miracles of this chapter are recorded where they are and in this particular order?

## Chapter 6

1. How does the feeding of the 5000 relate to the two water incidents (4:35-41; 6:45-52)?
2. What are the similarities regarding the events and instructions involved in the two water incidents?
3. Why does Jesus make the statement, "you give them something to eat"?
4. Why does He intend to pass them by in 6:48?

## Chapter 7

1. How is Jesus' authority over the traditions of the Pharisees displayed in this chapter?
2. How does the teaching in 7:24-30 relate to Jesus' teaching in 7:14-23?

**My thoughts about the condition of my own faith in light of these chapters:**

# The Servant Prepares for Sacrifice!

# Read Chapters 8-10

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
8		
9		
10		

## **Chapter 8**

1. Why another food feeding (4000) and how does it relate to Christ's relationship to the Pharisees?
2. What makes the miracle in 8:22-26 unique and how does it relate to the previous teachings on leaven and faith?

## **Chapter 9**

1. Why couldn't the disciples cast out the unclean spirit (9:14-29)?
2. What is Jesus trying to teach His disciples with His instruction on children (9:33-50)?

## **Chapter 10**

1. Compare 9:35 with 10:43-45. What principles of obedience can we learn from these passages?
2. Why do you think that 10:46-52 is placed where it is?

## **WHAT ABOUT TODAY?**

The concept of faith and belief (and unbelief) is a recurring one in Mark. Review and note each mention of the subject in chapters 1-8 and list them on a sheet of paper.

***What does each chapter tell you about the topic of faith?***

# The Servant Teaches Sacrifice!

# Read Chapters 11-13

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
11		
12		
13		

## Chapter 11

1. Why is the account of the "big tree" placed where it is?
2. What formed the basis for the chief priests, scribes, and elders questioning of Jesus?  
Why did they hate Him so?

## Chapter 12

1. Reread 12:28-34. What did this man know that placed him "not far from the kingdom of God?"
2. What is Jesus referring to when He indicates that they do not understand the power of God? (12:24)

## Chapter 13

1. What is the Lord's purpose in instructing about future things?
2. What place does an understanding of the future have in the life of a believer?

My thoughts about future events:

What feelings do they evoke and what actions do they provoke?

# The Servant is Sacrificed!

# Read Chapters 14-16

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
14		
15		
16		

## Chapter 14

1. Why was it inevitable that Peter would deny Christ? Why was it necessary?
2. What kind of man do you think Peter was?
3. How does the account in 14:53-65 make you feel about Jesus? The officers? Peter?

## Chapter 15

1. Why is the suffering necessary?
2. How long was Jesus subjected to this final experience of physical suffering? How long did He hang on the cross? Carefully consider each element of this familiar section.

## Chapter 16

1. Why didn't Jesus appear to His disciples and Peter first?
2. Why do you think Peter is singled out here (16:7)?
3. How many people actually saw the risen Christ?

## WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

How can principles from the book of Mark make you a better servant? Honestly make a list that helps to honestly evaluate yourself as a servant. What can you do to become more effective yourself or to encourage others in being a servant?

# **MARK: DUMPED DISCIPLE**

To study the life of John Mark, the author of the Gospel according to Mark, is to watch Humpty Dumpty fall off the wall, be shattered into a million pieces, and while all the King's men stand shaking their heads, the King carefully puts him back together again. A study of Mark should give us courage to climb the wall and to step out in faith, knowing that our God is compassionate and able to heal even the greatest fall or failure.

**Acts 13:5** What do you think John Mark's duties might have been? Why was he so critical to the work?

**Acts 13:13** Consider the events between 13:5 and 13:13. Why do you think Mark may have departed? Put yourself in his place. How difficult do you think that it was to leave?

**Acts 15:36-41** What word is used here to describe his leaving? What character flaw does it suggest? What kinds of problems did it cause?

**1 Peter 5:13** What possible significance could this close relationship with Peter have had on John Mark? What similarities do you see between the two men?

**Acts 12:12** What pressures and encouragement could this family situation have yielded? What effect could his Jewish heritage have exerted?

## **Colossians 4:10, Philemon 24, 11 Timothy 4:11**

After Paul had rejected Mark for service, how hard would it be for either man to return to the kind of relationship described in these verses? What mature character qualities would be needed in Mark? In Paul?

In what ways does fear of failure keep you from doing what God asks of you?

### **What about me?**

Is a failure or a sin of the past rendering you useless in the present?

Are you harboring a bad feeling toward anyone because they deserted or failed you?

Do you ever try anything at which you might fail?

There are those like the wicked and lazy slave in the parable of the talents. They bury the faith and talents given by God in the dirt of the world so they won't lose them, rather than investing them in the Kingdom of God. We should never be afraid to try or to fail. Our works are not our worth or wealth. Our worth is based upon God's love; our wealth is God Himself!

# SCRIBES & PHARISEES

The scriptures name four groups of religious leaders with which Jesus had conflicts. Two were offices in the Jewish system: Priests and Scribes. Two were sects reflecting opposite views of theology and it's practice: the Pharisees and Sadducees (Acts 23:7-9). The majority of the Priests were Sadducees who were trying to widen 'the way' so they could enjoy 'the finer things' of life, and yet their judgments on individuals were usually harsh.

The Pharisees on the other hand came mostly from the Scribes, narrowing the way by filling in all the logical gaps in the law. This party controlled the course of civil life through most of Israel's post exile, pre-Christ history. Though they were a party in the sense of religious views, they cared little about the government. Their emphasis was on the individual. The name Pharisees means 'to be separate.' The Sadducees, though having specific religious views, were probably primarily a political party.

The Scribes and Pharisees seemed to have their start with Ezra. Using Ezra 7:10 as a standard, compare these leaders of Christ's time to Ezra.

*What two things that were true of Ezra were apparently not true of these leaders?*

*Where do you stand based upon Ezra's standard?*

## **DE - SCRIBE ME!**

Here are the central scriptures that cut to the heart of Jesus' conflict with the religious leaders. We have grouped them for study. What was the main area(s) of conflict and why do you think it was so severe?

Problem 1 - Mark 7:1-13  
John 5:39-47  
Luke 11:39-44

Problem 2 - Luke 11:46-12:1  
Matthew 23:1-36

Additional - Matthew 6:5; 12:14; 15:1-20