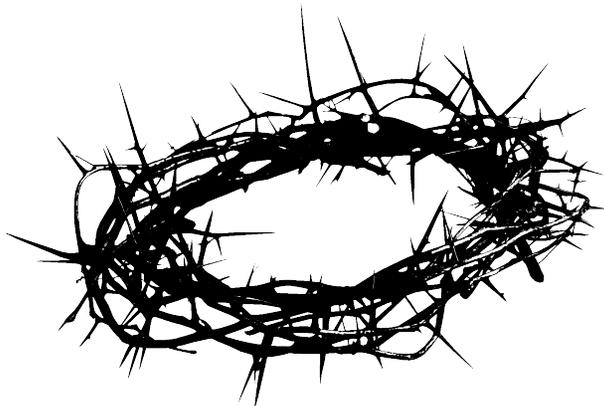


# Read through the Bible

Mark  
Week 4



*Monday, March Twenty-Third*

In the movie *Toy Story*, Woody and Buzz Lightyear end up getting lost at a gas station. Believing he is an actual space ranger, Buzz attempts to contact Star Command for help. Woody disagrees with this plan and attempts to clue Buzz in on a sobering reality: “You. Are. A. Toy! You are a child’s plaything!” Buzz’s response? “You are a sad, strange little man!” In today’s passage, Peter disagrees with Jesus’ plan. Jesus’ response? “Get behind me, Satan!”

*Read:* Mark 8:27 – 9:1

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- How did Peter describe Jesus? (see 8:29)

Up until this point, Peter had witnessed Jesus do a lot of miraculous things. He had seen him heal lepers, paralytics, the blind, the deaf, the mute, a woman with a bleeding issue, and even a young girl who was presumed dead. He had also seen Him walk on water, calm a storm, and feed thousands of people with just a few loaves of bread and fish. In each of these situations and more, Peter had a front row view of how Jesus was making Himself known to the world as the Messiah (the Christ) that they had been waiting for.

- Why did Jesus rebuke Peter? (see 8:33)

Peter did not like that Jesus would have to suffer and die, and in typical Peter fashion, he candidly voiced his concerns. However, Jesus saw this as an attempt to discourage Him from fulfilling His mission, and thus, called him out for it: “You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men” (8:33).

- What is required of someone who wishes to follow Jesus? (see 8:34)

*Respond:* Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

In light of today’s passage, how would you describe to someone what it means that Jesus is ‘the Christ’?

## Tuesday, March Twenty-Fourth

For a president's inauguration, it is customary for past presidents to come to the event. While they don't necessarily play an active role during the ceremony, they are still considered guests of honor. In today's passage, some folks from the past attend a miraculous moment during Jesus' ministry.

*Read:* Mark 9:2-13

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- After Jesus was transfigured on top of the mountain, who appeared? (see verse 4)

Wait...of all the people from the past who could have showed up to talk with Jesus, why were Moses and Elijah chosen? Since there wasn't a "New" Testament yet, the people living in Jesus' time often referred to the Old Testament as 'the Law and the Prophets.' The Law – the first five books of the Bible – was given by God to Moses, and Elijah was considered one of the greatest prophets of all time. Thus, on the top of this mountain, you had a representative of the Law (Moses) and you had a representative of the Prophets (Elijah). In this sense, the symbolic message was that the entire history of Israel – the Law and the Prophets – pointed to and acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah.

- When were Peter, James, and John permitted to speak about this event? (see verse 9)
- How does Jesus reply to His disciples' question in verse 11?

In Malachi 4:5-6, the prophet states that Elijah would return before the Messiah comes. Now that the disciples had figured out that Jesus was the Messiah, they were curious as to why Elijah hadn't shown up yet. Jesus confirms that he has (v. 13), but Mark does not provide us with the detail that Jesus was referring to John the Baptist (instead, we get this detail in Matthew 17:10-13).

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take some time to bring your questions and concerns to God.

## Wednesday, March Twenty-Fifth

In 1998, Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey recorded the song "When You Believe" for the animated movie, *The Prince of Egypt*. The song became so popular that many people today don't know that it came from a movie about the life of Moses. Nonetheless, the song itself speaks of a certain relationship between faith and miracles as evidenced by the refrain: "There can be miracles, When you believe, Though hope is frail, It's hard to kill, Who knows what miracles, You can achieve, When you believe somehow you will, You will when you believe." In today's passage, Jesus discusses the relationship between faith and His miracles of healing.

*Read:* Mark 9:14-32

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What was the crowd arguing about? (see verses 16-18)
- Compare the request of the boy's father in verse 22 with the request of the man with leprosy in 1:40. How are their requests different?

Back in chapter 1, the man with leprosy believed that Jesus could heal him ("You *can* make me clean"). However, in today's passage, the boy's father was not fully convinced that Jesus could help his son ("If you can do anything"). Jesus' response in verse 23 ("Everything is possible for him who believes") highlights the important relationship between faith and healing. In fact, if you look back throughout Mark's account, you will see time and time again that Jesus healed people because they believed that He could (for example, see 2:1-5; 5:25-34; 7:24-30; 7:31-33; 8:22-24).

- How did the man's request change after Jesus spoke to him? (see verses 23-24)

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

In today's passage, Jesus reminds us that it is important to bring our requests to Him *in faith* (v. 23). How might the man's response in verse 24 help you in your daily practice of prayer?

## Thursday, March Twenty-Six

Last week, Tom Brady, the greatest quarterback of all time, signed a two-year deal with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Now, perhaps you read that first sentence and agreed with it (“Of course. Tom Brady is the GOAT!”). Or perhaps you read it and had a very different reaction (“There’s no way Tom “Cheating” Brady is the greatest of all time! Peyton Manning and Joe Montana were far better.”) In today’s passage, Jesus’ disciples argue over who is the greatest.

*Read:* Mark 9:33-37

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What were the disciples arguing about? (see verses 33-34)

At first glance, this argument amongst the disciples seems rather childish. Who is the greatest? Really? Who cares? The reality, though, is that as people, we are regularly comparing ourselves with those around us. Who is smarter? Who is faster? Who is prettier? Who is funnier? Who is louder? Who is richer? These sorts of comparisons can sometimes dominate the way we think about ourselves and other people.

- How did Jesus define what it means to be great? (see verse 35)
- How did Jesus use the example of children to demonstrate His principle of greatness? (see verses 36-37)

Back then, children in Jewish society were not considered important. They were often overlooked and did not have many rights. In this sense, they had a lowly position. Thus, if Jesus’ disciples were to be considered ‘great’, they would need to humble themselves by putting everyone – even the lowly – before them.

*Respond:* Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

As you go throughout your day (or tomorrow), consider how you might practice Jesus’ principle in verse 35 with those around you. Given the current situation we find ourselves in, this is an excellent opportunity to be the light of Jesus to others!

## Friday, March Twenty-Seven

On the TV show *Intervention*, producers follow the daily life of a person with a serious addiction (often alcohol or drugs). After following the person around for a few days, the producers work with the family to stage an intervention. During the intervention, the person is given an ultimatum: either she or he checks into rehab, or she or he will be cut off from depending on family members for things like money and a place to stay. The goal is that the person will check into rehab as a first step in removing the addiction from her or his life. In today’s passage, Jesus talks about how we remove temptations from our own lives.

*Read:* Mark 9:38-50

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- How did Jesus respond to John’s concern that someone was driving out demons in His name? (see verses 39-41)

Remember what happened in Wednesday’s reading (9:14-32)? Jesus’ disciples had failed to cast the demon out of the young boy. You can imagine, then, how frustrating it must have been for John and the other disciples to see other people doing what they were unable to do.

- What did Jesus say we should do when something is causing us to stumble? (see verses 42-48)

Every now and then, you’ll hear a story in the news of someone who read these verses and decided to cut off a part of her or his body. It’s important to note that Jesus is not commanding people to literally cut off their body parts. Instead, He is saying that we should remove the thing causing us to stumble (often a temptation) so that we do not bring lasting harm to ourselves.

*Respond:* Apply what you’ve learned in prayer and action

What temptation or stumbling block might you need to remove from your life? How might you ask Jesus for strength and help?

## Saturday, March Twenty - Eighth

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife (or husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy law, and this is my solemn vow." In today's passage, Jesus discusses why marriage should be regarded as a lasting commitment between a husband and a wife.

*Read:* Mark 10:1-16

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- According to Jesus, why did Moses permit a man to divorce his wife? (see verses 3-5)
- How did Jesus answer the Pharisees' question on divorce? (see verses 6-9)

In this exchange with the Pharisees, Jesus provided an explanation of what happens in marriage. Specifically, two distinct people – a man and a woman – become "one flesh" when they are married before God (vv. 7-8). Because it is God who has joined them together (v. 9), this sacred bond should not be broken easily.

- How did Jesus respond to His disciples' question? (see verses 11-12)

Jesus' words remind us that marriage is not something to be entered into lightly. It requires sacrifice, forgiveness, and perseverance (to name a few!).

- What does Jesus do for the children? (see verses 14-16)

You may have noticed that during communion, pastors will often give the children a blessing, such as, "May the Lord bless you and keep you all of your days." This practice is largely modeled after Jesus' actions in verse 16.

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take some time to pray for the marriages of the people in your life.

## Sunday, March Twenty - Ninth

Now that people are staying home, not only are some learning to cook for this first time (☺), but they are also quickly figuring out that recipes can sometimes require lots of ingredients ("Wait, what in the world is cumin? And why do I need turmeric?"). In today's passage, Jesus details what is required to inherit eternal life.

*Read:* Mark 10:17-31

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What question did the man have? (see verse 17)
- What did Jesus say the man should do? (see verses 18-21)
- How did the man react to Jesus' directive to sell all he had? (see verse 22)

When asked to give up all he had, the man realized that he did indeed have an idol in his life – his love of money.

- How did the disciples react to Jesus' teaching on money and earthly treasures? (see verse 26) How did Jesus respond? (see verse 27)

The disciples' reaction – "Who then can be saved?" – demonstrates their realization that nobody can receive eternal life on their own merit. In other words, it's impossible for people to follow all of the commandments and give up everything they have in order to follow Jesus. But, as Jesus points out, "with man this is impossible, but not with God; things are possible with God" (v. 27). In this way, we are saved by God's grace and not by our own works. Even the rich man in this passage can be saved by the perfect work of Jesus.

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take time in prayer today to thank God for making eternal life possible with Him through the perfect work of His Son, Jesus. Then, ask Him to prepare your heart for the coming week.

Questions? Comments? Contact Pastor Chris at [chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org](mailto:chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org) or (727) 344-2684.