

APPLICATION JOURNAL for MARK MANUSCRIPT (Part 2)

Mark 8:31-16:8 | 22 Studies: Pages 21-45 | What Does it Mean to Follow Jesus?

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This Application Journal goes second after the observation guide and is separated, one page per study. This journal should be printed on ONE side of the page to provide space on the back side for more journaling. Place them after the Mark manuscript with TWO separating tab—one for the Observation Guide and one for this Application Journal.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> #25: 8:31-9:1 (p. 21-22)
<input type="checkbox"/> #26: 9:2-13 (p. 22-23)
<input type="checkbox"/> #27: 9:14-29 (p. 23-24)
<input type="checkbox"/> #28: 9:30-50 (p. 24-25)
<input type="checkbox"/> #29: 10:1-16 (p. 25-26)
<input type="checkbox"/> #30: 10:17-31 (p. 26-27)
<input type="checkbox"/> #31: 10:32-45 (p. 27-28)
<input type="checkbox"/> #32: 10:46-11:1-11 (p.28-29)
<input type="checkbox"/> #33: 11:11-26 (p. 29-30)
<input type="checkbox"/> #34: 11:27-12:12 (p. 30-32)
<input type="checkbox"/> #35: 12:13-27 (p.32-33)</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> #36: 12:28-44 (p.33-34)
<input type="checkbox"/> #37: 13:1-13 (p. 34-35)
<input type="checkbox"/> #38: 13:14-37 (p.35-36)
<input type="checkbox"/> #39: 14:1-26 (p.36-38)
<input type="checkbox"/> #40: 14:27-52 (p. 38-40)
<input type="checkbox"/> #41: 14:53-72 (p. 40-41)
<input type="checkbox"/> #42: 15:1-20 (p.41-42)
<input type="checkbox"/> #43: 15:21-41 (p. 42-44)
<input type="checkbox"/> #44: 15:42-16:8 & to 20 (p.44-45)
<input type="checkbox"/> #45: Review Mark 8:31-16:8 (21-45)
<input type="checkbox"/> #46: Mark Celebration!</p> |
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STUDY #25 Mark Application Journal: Mark 8:31-9:1, page 21-22

Peter understood what Jesus was saying and did not like it. It did not match up with his Jewish hopes and convictions about the Messiah. He wanted victory but not victory through suffering.

Our temptation, like Peter's, is to look at life through what the world says is GOOD, SUCCESSFUL and IMPORTANT. Trusting God means being open to something different. Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD."

1. Pick a situation in your life at present. In this situation, what would it look like :

Set your mind on "Things of Man"

-
-
-
-
-

Set your mind on "Things of GOD"

-
-
-
-
-

Jesus then calls us all to follow Him, our suffering Messiah. It's an upside down path; counter to human nature.

Live to save your life = forfeit soul Lose life for Jesus and the gospel = save it

2. In what ways can you be tempted to "save your life" ...
by "gaining the world"?

by "being ashamed of Jesus and His word"?

3. PRAY that you would value real life and
Deny yourself (the will of God comes before worldly gain)
Take up your cross (be prepared to suffer, even die for Jesus and gospel)
Follow Jesus, our suffering savior

Romans 8:17 "Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."

#26

STUDY #26 Mark Application Journal: Mark 9:2-13, page 22-23

The disciples have preconceived ideas about the Messiah and Kingdom of God that come from the religious teaching of their day. Jesus continues to reveal himself to them and instruct them, and they continue to struggle with understanding something so different than they expect. In the transfiguration, the veil of humanity is lifted from Jesus and they see him in his heavenly glory. There is much Old Testament imagery here that Peter, James and John would have understood. (See background page for scripture references.)

Peter is obviously struggling with talking more than listening -- even after he has recognized that Jesus is the Messiah. God the Father tells Peter, James and John to LISTEN to His Son, Jesus.

1. How are you doing with listening?

How well are you listening to Jesus through Scripture?

How much time do you spend listening to Jesus during prayer?
Are you doing all the talking?

2. Think of ways that you can improve your spiritual listening skills.**3. Plan a time to practice listening this week.**

#27

STUDY #27 Application Journal: Mark 9:14-29, page 23-24

Jesus makes clear that it is not His ability to ACT that is in question, but our ability to BELIEVE in His power and trustworthiness. Like the possessed boy's father, we wrestle with our desire to believe and our human nature to doubt. We need the help of God to place complete trust in Him.

1. What situation in your life needs a miraculous intervention?

Are you going back and forth between fear/trust, despair/hope, unbelief/belief?
Describe your struggle?

Write out a prayer for yourself in this situation following this father's example:
“I believe, help my unbelief!”

The disciples are baffled that they can't do what they have done before. They didn't pray and that showed that they were trusting in “their gift”, “their past experience”, or “just themselves”, and not in GOD. This can be called presumptuous faith.

2. Are you expecting results on the basis of your efforts, your giftedness, skills, knowledge, etc.? Are you presuming God will work without prayerful reliance on Him? When and how?
3. What does your prayer life reveal to you about the state of your faith?
4. PRAY for dependent faith, lived out in a growing prayer life.
PRAY for discipline, schedule, attitude, help, whatever is needed.

#28

STUDY #28 Application Journal: Mark 9:30-50, page 24-25

The disciples still do not understand what Jesus teaches them about His mission and now they are afraid to ask. They haven't lost their desire to experience the "glory" of the Messiah's Kingdom as is seen in their competitiveness and exclusiveness. Jesus sees a teachable moment and "sits down" to explain that in His Kingdom greatness is not by rank, but through humble service.

1. What is your reaction to Jesus saying "If you want to be first (great) you must be last and servant of all"?

2. Take and inventory:

Where and with whom are you feeling/being competitive?

Where and with whom are you feeling/being exclusive?

Jesus says we are sent as servants (children) representing Him in this world. We are not to present ourselves as better than others, or as having privilege. We are not to seek honor, but be the least. As people receive us (those identified with Jesus), they receive Jesus and His Father.

3. How does this affect your view of evangelism?

4. How can you live as a servant ambassador (in Jesus name)? Be specific.

-at home

-at work

-in neighborhood/etc.

Jesus brings up reward. Both mighty works of exorcism and small acts of hospitality done in Jesus name are seen as participating on the side of God's Kingdome. There's no distinction between "trivial" and "important" tasks. All humble service, in devotion to Jesus, receives His blessing.

5. How does this encourage you?

6. What are you doing to serve? Do an attitude check.
Are you serving humbly and out of devotion to Jesus?

7. Is God opening up an opportunity for you to serve?

It is a very serious matter to do something that destroys the faith of another, or discourages them in the faith they are developing. Jesus says it would be better to die than to undermine the faith of another.

8. Have you seen faith destroyed or undermined in someone?
Have people contributed to this?

9. How can you take this warning to heart?

It is a very serious matter to endanger your own faith! Whatever is in our life that tempts us to lose our allegiance to Jesus, must be gotten rid of. At stake is eternal life in the Kingdom of God or the eternal fire of hell. The analogy is like amputating an injured limb in order to save a person's life.

10. Are you allowing influences into your life that are damaging your faith?
(things you do, places you go, or things you focus on)

Do you need to CUT something out?

We are to live in a way that preserves faith. If we look just like those who do not follow Jesus, we have lost our saltiness, our distinctiveness, and our ability to influence (serve in His name).

11. How can you live against the grain of our culture and be salt in your environment?

Jesus gives us an example here that ties us right back into the first thing he said to the disciples. In the world people compare and compete for position and power, but we are to be at peace with one another. If we follow what Jesus says, and become "last of all and servant of all", there will be peace among us and we will be salt!

12. Think about your relationships with other followers of Jesus.
Are there any you need to "salt" to bring peace between you?
What can you plan to do?

#29

STUDY #29 Application Journal: Mark 10:1-16, page 25-26

In trying to trap Jesus, the Pharisees bring up divorce in the territory that John the Baptist had preached against Herod and Herodias. Jesus points to God's purpose for marriage from the beginning, using Scripture. The Pharisees bring up the exception clause (given to help protect women so they could remarry when rejected), instead of Ex. 20:14 "Do not commit adultery." God intended the unity of husband and wife. Divorce shatters the union. Jesus also equates divorce and remarriage with infidelity and raises the value of women by saying they can be sinned against by husbands, not just the other way around.

1. How does Jesus' value of marriage compare with our culture's view of it?

What is your view of marriage? Has Jesus changed this? How?

2. If you are married, how is the health of your union?

What is something you can do to improve your oneness?

The disciples are still struggling to be inclusive and are trying to keep the "unimportant" children from Jesus, like gatekeepers trying to control his schedule. Jesus is not happy with this. He then uses the children as an object lesson. It is the childlike quality of being able to RECEIVE that allows one to enter the Kingdom of God. It is not earned by status, achievement, or piety. It is a GIFT, given to the helpless and needy - only obtained by receiving.

3. On a scale of 1-10, how good are you at receiving in general?

4. In your relationship with God, do you see yourself as a "receiver"? How?

Are you tempted to try and be the "giver"? How?

5. Spend time journaling about your childlike helplessness and thankfulness for God's Gift. Pray for increased openness to receive from God.

STUDY #30 Application Journal: Mark 10:17-31, page 26-27

A rich man earnestly seeks out Jesus to ask him what he must DO (in our words) to get to heaven. Our human nature wants a formula to follow, or rules to keep, something to help us feel secure that we have achieved the mark, or earned a spot. He may have felt relief when Jesus started quoting the commandments, thinking he had been on the right track.

1. Can you relate to this man (now or in your past)? Do you ever find yourself trying to be “good enough”?

Jesus loved this man too much to leave him with this notion and goes straight to the heart of the matter. He asks him to put aside the thing that is in the way of his dependence on God. With his treasure in heaven he would be able to receive from God, as a child, and follow Jesus. “For to such belong the kingdom of God,” 10:14

2. If Jesus looked at you with love and said, “You lack one thing. . .” what would he prescribe for you? In other words, what is getting in the way of your dependence on Jesus? Where are you depending on yourself, or things of the world?

Jesus says more than once that riches are a hindrance to entering the Kingdom of God! He also says that being saved is NOT something man can DO for himself. God is the one who makes it possible. We are back to receiving!

3. Are your riches hindering you from depending on Jesus? How?

Peter gets excited when he realizes that they have done what the rich man did not do. It looks like he is thinking they did something pretty good. Jesus seems to cut him off quickly from this line of thought. Truly, you cannot out give God. He showers His treasure on us in this world and the next. Remember – God’s role is the giver, ours is the receiver.

4. Have you ever experienced a “martyr complex”? You know, when you feel like you have given up SO much for God. Take some time to count all the blessings God has given whenever you have “given up” something for Him or the gospel.

STUDY #31 Application Journal: Mark 10:32-45, page 27-28

Jesus is heading to Jerusalem and tells his disciples (for the 3rd time) what awaits him there. James and John do not seem to be listening. They are still preoccupied with glory and position. They are demanding, self-promoting, competitive, and self-confident. Their attitude is not that of a “receiver” with childlike trust, but it is immature and childish... “We want you to give us what we ask.” Jesus is patient and tells them that they will eventually be able to lose their life for his sake and the gospel’s.

1. Examine your prayer life. When you ask for things is there any sense of demanding, deserving, ambition, desire for control? This can happen more easily than we expect, especially when things aren’t going the way we think they should and we want Jesus to make it right for us. Got any examples?

The other disciples are now indignant with James and John. They are also still feeling competitive and the group is not yet “at peace with one another”. They are still influenced by the cultures around them, Jew and Gentile, on what greatness and authority look like. Jesus again turns it upside down for them and says “it will not be like that among you”. Leadership is not having authority over someone in order to control them. It is a position of service to help others become the best they can be. Greatness is not found in promoting self, but in promoting others.

2. Where are you tempted to want to be “great”? (job, socially, family, etc.) How can you become a servant of the people in these contexts? Be specific.
3. Where do you have a leadership role or authority over others? (job, family, church). Is there anything you need to change to be a “kingdom servant leader”?

We have an amazing example! The Son of Man himself came to serve us and go so far as to give up his life, taking our place, so that we could live! The One who has all authority, humbled himself, headed toward Jerusalem to endure all that awaited Him there, in order to serve us!

4. Thank Jesus for how he has served you.

STUDY #32 Application Journal: Mark 10:46-11:11, page 28-29

Bartimaeus may be physically blind, but he has spiritual insight. He calls Jesus, "Son of David", which is a Messianic title and he knows his need for mercy. (The fact that his name is recorded here is probably a sign he was part of the early church and known to Peter.) He is persistent in calling to Jesus, humbly asking to receive from him. This narrative is tied to the last one by the question from Jesus, "What do you want me to do for you?" What a contrast in attitudes between James and John and Bartimaeus.

1. In the last study we looked at how we might be like James and John. Let's now look at how we can become more like Bartimaeus.

Think of something you have been praying for and evaluate your attitude. Are you aware of your need for mercy? When you come to Jesus with a request, is your attitude humility? Do you realize that you are not deserving of getting what you are asking for?

2. Do you pray in faith? This is about your trust in Jesus and who he is. Because you know him to be your Messiah, you will continue to bring your needs to him, over and over. You know there is no place better to go...no one better to ask. Faith is not about believing that you will get what you are asking for. It is about believing that you are asking the right person.

As Jesus is healing Bartimaeus he tells him to "Go his way" and as Bartimaeus is healed the way he goes is the way Jesus is going. His way has become to follow Jesus.

3. Can you relate to this? Do you want to relate to this more? Describe how Jesus is healing you? Is your way becoming His way?

Jesus sets the stage for a procession into Jerusalem as Israel's Humble King, riding in on a donkey. This passage is full of Messianic significance and fulfills prophesy from Zechariah 9:9. Jesus refers to himself as Lord and accepts the praise of Psalm 118 as the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Remember Jesus' words in our last study. He is the Servant King whose purpose is to ransom his people with his life.

4. Read through Psalm 118 and spend time in praise of our Servant King!

#33

STUDY #33 Application Journal: Mark 11:12-26, page 29-30

Jesus is intent on looking for fruit. The fig tree, which looks good from a distance, proves fruitless, as does the Temple up on the mount with all its ceremony. Both are cursed for their lack of fruit: the fig tree as an illustration of the Temple. The Temple has not fulfilled its purpose as a “house of prayer for all the nations” and Jesus says it will be destroyed, as the fig tree, because God has removed his protection from it.

Jesus was upset (to say the least) at the corruption he found at the temple. He was not impressed with its splendor, but angry that its roots were not in the heart of God’s priorities.

1. If Jesus came to inspect our church, small group, or family, would it be healthy at the roots and not just “look good from a distance.” Would he find fruit?

To his disciples (and to us) Jesus says, “Have faith in God”, not in the religious system. “Therefore” since there will be no more temple, you are the new “house of prayer”. Having faith in God, ask for fruit and you will receive it. Forgiveness will no longer be tied up in the Temple sacrifices. So, as you pray, forgive (even Gentiles) so the message of forgiveness may spread to the nations. Experience forgiveness and extend forgiveness, showing that God’s work in you is real.

We need to take Jesus statement to “believe that we have received whatever we ask for in prayer, and it will be ours” in context. We are taking the place of the temple. Our priorities are to be God’s. We are praying for His work in the people of the world. He will bring fruit from our prayers.

2. What are you praying for? (a nation, people group, missionaries, friends, family, a certain ministry?) Make a list of what you feel called to pray for. Spend time in prayer yourself or with others for these people or ministries.

Forgiveness is key to our prayers. It is the key to the message of the Kingdom and spreading the Gospel to all nations.

3. How does the lack of experiencing God’s forgiveness hinder you from praying for others? How does harboring unforgiveness affect your prayer life? “Do you need to experience the fullness of Jesus’ grace for you more completely? Do you need to forgive where you have been hurt or wronged?

#34

STUDY #34 Application Journal: 11:27-12:12, page 30-32

When questioned about his authority, Jesus takes the Jewish leaders back to the question of John's baptism. John's baptism prepared the way for Jesus through the repentance of the people. Jesus is calling for Jewish leaders to repent as he cleanses the temple and calls for it to be restored to its original purpose. If they cannot see John as from God, they are not able to see that Jesus's authority comes from God. Their hearts are hard. Their answer is "we do not know", but their attitude is "we do not want to know." Therefore Jesus does not answer them.

1. Repentance and a soft heart towards God are essential to our spiritual growth and insight. Pride is going to keep us from hearing from God at all. Take some time to evaluate your heart towards God. Is there a need for repentance or an attitude change?

In this parable, the tenants decide they want to own what isn't theirs. They didn't build the vineyard, but they claim its produce and become extremely hostile toward the owner and his representatives. The Jewish leaders are correct to assume the parable is against them. They are claiming the spiritual authority that isn't theirs and have become hostile toward Jesus, the Son of the True Owner.

2. Likewise, we might ask ourselves. How do we see ourselves in relationship to what God has entrusted to us. Do we operate as "good tenants" or "want to be owners."

On the back, make a list of the qualities that come from each mentality.

Evaluate yourself in regard to: your possessions, your children and spouse, your gifts and ministry. Do you have the qualities of a "good tenant" or a "want to be owner?"

3. If we feel like "owners of the vineyard," how will we respond to natural disaster and things going wrong, or to abundance and things going right?

If we feel privileged as "tenants" to care for the King's vineyard, how does that change our response to those things that are out of our control?

Qualities of a:

"Good Tenant"

"Want to Be Owner"

STUDY #35 Application Journal: 12:13-27, page 32-33

It seems that the Sanhedrin in their desire to arrest Jesus went away to plot. A plan with the Pharisees and Herodians, who are political enemies, is drawn up. They formulate a question that will enrage the people or the Romans, a question about taxes on which they themselves do not agree. They preface their question with false flattery to remind Jesus that he says what he means. They do not want him to be evasive and not answer, as with the question about authority. Jesus amazes them with his answer "to give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." The inscription on the coin attributes deity to Caesar. By distinguishing between Caesar and God, Jesus makes clear that divine glory belongs to God alone.

Things that belong to civil authority

Things that belong to God

1. How are you doing with giving God what belongs to Him?

The Sadducees, who do not believe in an afterlife, want to demonstrate the illogic of the resurrection. They use Scripture and an illustrative story to ridicule this belief. Jesus comes down hard on them saying they are "quite wrong". They do not KNOW the Scriptures, even the part they accept as authoritative (first 5 books of OT). Jesus quotes from Exodus to prove this point. They do not KNOW the power of God, the God of the living. They rely on themselves to figure out the things of God.

2. How well do you know Scripture? What are you doing to know it better?
(Mark study does count!)

3. Do you trust the Word of God over your own ability to figure things out? Think about a present issue in your life?

4. Do you know the power of God? When have you experienced it? Have you noticed a connection between trusting in God's power and experiencing it?

#36

STUDY #36 Application Journal, Mark 12:28-44, page 33-34

A scribe who likes what Jesus says to the Sadducees, asks him to prioritize the most important commandment (of the 613 individual statutes of the Law). Jesus answers from Scripture, going to the principle of the Law, the summary of the whole Law, not an individual statute. The One Lord God, who is in a covenant love relationship with His people, asks for love that comes from the whole of our being. Jesus adds the second part because you can't separate it from the first. Those who wholeheartedly love God will also love others. How can a love relationship with God be exclusive? The scribe agrees and surprisingly sees this law of love as more vital than the sacrificial rituals. Jesus's reply leaves us wondering what was missing in this man. Did he understand what he has not yet applied?

1. On back of sheet, brainstorm: a) what all is involved in heart, soul, mind and strength and b) what is involved in love of self.
2. Evaluate your own love for God? Is it wholehearted, half-hearted, hard hearted? Are there symptoms of lack in your devotion? PRAY for wholehearted love.
3. Evaluate your love of others. Is it on par with your love for yourself? Are there symptoms that it is lacking? PRAY for love with God to flow to others.

Jesus now asks a thought provoking question. The scribes see the Christ as a descendant of David, who will be a national deliverer, (as David was) and restore on earth the sovereignty of Israel. In Psalm 110, David believes that the Messiah will establish a whole different Kingdom which is at the right hand of God. David believes the Christ to be his Lord, even though he is a descendant. To understand this, the popular view held of the Messiah would have to change. In this passage the Spirit, Yahweh (the Lord) and Adonai (my Lord) are mentioned. This is a veiled revelation of the identity of Jesus, for those who would truly hear.

Jesus warns against the kind of righteousness the scribes live out. It is very external. Its motivation is to gain position and respect. It has no compassion and is showy and pretentious. It is "sham righteousness". Where is the love for God and others? As a stark contrast, the poor widow shows "true devotion" to God. She could have kept one of her coins. She loves God with all she has. Jesus finally found something in the temple to praise... the fruit of true devotion. The last shall be first.

4. It is easier to work on externals that others will see and praise, than the internal condition of our heart. Where is your focus? Repentance is a good heart conditioner.

HEART

SOUL

MIND

STRENGTH

LOVE of SELF

STUDY #37 Application Journal, Mark 13:1-37, page 34-35

It is important to keep in mind that Jesus is answering the disciples question about when and what signs will warn that the Temple and great buildings of Jerusalem will become rubble. Jesus starts his answer with a warning to not be led astray by false Christs, and he repeats it again later in the text. Hard things are going to happen: wars among nations, natural disasters, and great persecution of His followers. The end (of Jerusalem) is not yet. These are birth pains for something that is being born.

1. Jesus gives many warnings to “Be on your guard.” They are followed closely by the commands to “Not be anxious” and “Not be alarmed”. These seem a little at odds with each other. How can you reconcile the two in your walk with Jesus? Think of a situation where you need to be watchful/cautious and trusting.

Jesus says His people will be delivered over to authorities, put on trial, beaten, betrayed by family and killed. But they will be His witnesses and the Holy Spirit will be their voice, resulting in the gospel’s proclamation to the nations. Those who lose their life for His sake and the gospel, will save it.

2. We aren’t persecuted like the Roman Christians. But we should take the opportunities we have to let the Holy Spirit work. How can you allow Him to use something difficult in your life to be a witness for Jesus?

#38

STUDY #38 Application Journal, Mark 13:14-37, page 35-36

But a time will come when the Temple is desecrated again, like it was before in 167 BC. They know this history. Like the fig tree signals the approach of summer when it buds, so will the abomination signal the destruction Jesus foretold. His command is to urgently flee – get out of Jerusalem. In those days it will be so horrible, no one would survive it, if God hadn't shortened it. During and after tribulations like this, people look for saviors, messiahs. Jesus said not to fall for it. He is not coming then. Believe Him, because about this, he has told everything in advance.

But it will be as if the lights went out! Darkness, destruction, shock, grief and disbelief! How can the Temple and all its ceremony be gone. The Jewish leadership dismantled. Their heritage, roots, and foundation is no more. For us, a hint of what they felt, might be the devastation of Washington D.C. But this was religious as well as political power center. This was as if God vanished. Even the church saw themselves as a sect of Judaism, building upon it, not separate from it. There is a shake-up in authority. Heavenly power is changing from the Temple to the Church. And the power of Jesus is going out through His messengers (angels) to the ends of the earth growing this new church that has been born. The umbilical chord has been cut and the mother has died in childbirth.

And the generation hearing this will see these things come to pass. This is not far future, its imminent. But big things have changed. Everything can change. Only Jesus words are solid and stable and eternal.

1. Has anything in life shaken you to your core? What could shake you to your core? How have Jesus' words been security for you? Do you trust them as the only truly solid ground in an otherwise unpredictable, unstable existence?

The day heaven and earth will pass away is brought up. And Jesus says **no one** knows when "that day" is, except the Father. This is reason to be alert, and Jesus repeats the warning to "stay awake" three times! Do not fall asleep doing the work. As we wait, not knowing the day of the masters return, we are to be vigilant messengers, watching for those that would lead astray, persevering through persecution and trusting in our God during times of upheaval, while He seems to delay. And this call to stay prepared is for all generations- for us!

2. What does the warning to "stay awake" mean for you? Is there something you need to watch, or pay attention to, in order to be prepared for Jesus when He unexpectedly shows up?

STUDY #39 Application Journal: Mark 14:1-26, page 36-38

Between the sneaky plotting of the chief priests and scribes to arrest and kill Jesus, and Judas's deciding to betray Jesus to them, there is the woman who honors him. She doesn't care what it costs her financially, or what people think of her, she is focused on Jesus. Even Jesus disciples were probably among those questioning her behavior.

1. This woman is an example to us. Her eyes are on Jesus and not on things or people. Is there something you have hesitated to do for Jesus because of what others might think of it, or what it might cost you?

Jesus accepts and defends this woman's actions. He points out that there are good things to do and better things. The chief priests, scribes and even Judas probably gave to the poor. Honoring Jesus is the priority. In her extravagant act, Jesus says she has provided something that would not be allowed at the hour of his death. Those who die as criminals would not have their bodies anointed for burial. (Lane p.494) She has done a beautiful and foreshadowing thing.

2. Our priority is to do what brings honor to our Lord. There is never a lack of opportunity for doing good deeds. Is it possible for "good deeds" to usurp glorifying Jesus? In all you do that is good in your life, are you keeping the honor and praise of Jesus at the forefront? Is something good in the way?

Judas has been intimately involved and very close to Jesus and he chooses to betray Him. This is why Jesus says it would be better for him to never have existed. There is such a great contrast between Judas and the woman. Jesus honors her by saying that as the gospel spreads, through the earth and through the generations, what she did will be known. Likewise, what Judas did will also be known. Both stories are tied to the gospel and Jesus death as a ransom for many, but in such polar opposite ways.

3. What would you like your legacy to be?

Jesus takes his disciples through the Passover meal. Using the same elements, he brings new meaning to them for his followers. He is establishing a new covenant through his blood poured out for many, who will become His people. He will drink the last cup of wine for this Passover Meal after that new covenant has been established in the Kingdom of God. (Lane p508)

STUDY #40 Application Journal: Mark 14: 27-52, page 38-40

At the Passover meal Jesus revealed that he knew his betrayer. On the way to Gethsemane he reveals that he will be deserted by all his disciples. But he also gives them a promise of reunion with them in Galilee, saying he will be raised and meet them there. This desertion does not carry the weight of the betrayal of Judas, which ends in despair. It has hope of restoration. Peter cannot seem to listen past the part of "falling away". He is willing to accept that the others might do this, but he will not! He has made progress since chapter 8 when he would not listen to Jesus talk about dying. Now he claims he is ready to die with him and insists that he will not deny Jesus. His defensiveness and pride lead him toward a hard fall. Not being aware of our fallen nature can cause a blindness in us that leads to vulnerability in temptation.

1. Is there something you are positive that you will not do? More on this question next week...

The full meaning of submitting to God is weighing on Jesus as the time draws near. He prays to His Dad, with emotion and honesty. He acknowledges His Father's power and control. It is the judgment, the wrath, "the cup" that Jesus does not want to endure. But of utmost importance is his Dad's will. He submits Himself to the will of the One who will "strike the shepherd". He repeats this prayer, probably three times. By the time his betrayer arrives, He is ready to go and meet him.

The disciples, on the other hand, are sleepy. Jesus keeps checking on them, encouraging them to also prepare themselves for the crisis to come. When the opposition arrives, all their talk of strength is undone by fear and they all flee.

2. How diligent are you about praying for strength for those times of crisis and temptation that may be coming? Add this to your prayer list this week.

Judas has definitely planned out his part, trying to be in control. There is an over the top show of strength. Jesus comments on the inappropriateness of them coming at night to a remote place, in large numbers, armed and led by a traitor. What do they fear? Jesus again brings up the overall plan in Scripture. God is behind what is happening. Jesus trusts His Father. Let the "Scriptures be fulfilled."

3. Trusting in the plans and purposes of God is not easy when the present is difficult. What are you struggling to leave to the will of God? Pray for the ability to trust in God's control, not your own.

The two verses about the young man seem strangely inserted. It is possible that this young man is Mark and this is his only eyewitness account, which he inserts here. It is known that Mark lived in Jerusalem, Acts 12:12 and tradition holds that the last supper was at his home. It is probable that he heard the crowds headed toward Gethsemane and rose out of bed, dressing quickly with only his outer garment and followed to see what was going on, certainly an embarrassing moment to record.

#41

STUDY #41 Application Journal: Mark 14:53-72, page 40-41

Mark begins by setting the scene for both Jesus and Peter, then elaborating on each separately to show that both were happening simultaneously. Jesus is led to an unorthodox gathering of the Sanhedrin and put on trial. They are meeting near midnight (if you go by the cockcrow) on the night of Passover (which is prohibited for capital cases) at the residence of the High Priest (unusual). They have been soliciting witnesses to get the verdict they want. A lot of people are staying up all night to get this to happen quickly and illegally. Many witnesses can't get their stories to agree, so their testimony is not admissible. Some others bring up their version of Jesus's words from John 2:19. "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." They cannot get agreement either.

The frustrated High Priest takes over and interrogates Jesus personally. Jesus does not respond to the solicited accusers, but does answer the question about His identity. In all of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus avoided calling himself Christ (Messiah). Here he answers plainly and prophesies that the evidence they need to believe him they will see. Jesus himself gives this court the testimony they need to convict him of blasphemy. He is still in control. And as the members of this esteemed council begin to abuse Jesus and taunt him to prophesy, they do not realize how many prophesies are being fulfilled, including the one about Peter.

1. Even the evil plotting and maneuvering of men take a back seat here to the plan and control of God. How does this affect you? Comfort you? Give you perspective on your life and the “evil” you encounter?

Peter doesn't want to be noticed. He is following at a distance and probably hoping he blends in with the crowd of curious in the courtyard of the High Priest's residence. But he is recognized and it snowballs out of control from there. The servant girl tells others and they begin to catch on. As a Galilean, Peter has an accent, so opening his mouth was probably not a good idea. He starts with an "I don't get what you mean", to a "no, you're wrong", to cursing and swearing that he didn't know "this man". He did not even use Jesus' name. He didn't seem to notice the first rooster crow as he was trying to find a safer spot. The second crow, an hour later, jolted his memory and woke him up to his arrogance, fear, self-protection and unfaithfulness. He was overwhelmed with grief.

Both Jesus and Peter are interrogated in this passage. Jesus prepared with prayer in the garden. He urged Peter to do the same three times, but Peter slept. When Jesus has his identity challenged, he says "I am". Peter says "I am not," three times. In arrogance Peter said he would not deny Jesus. Now he is humbled.

2. Refer to question 1 from last week's journal page. Be always aware of your human frailty. We are vulnerable and broken beyond our comprehension. Pride can blind us; give us a false sense of strength. Arrogance may even deceive us into believing we are not proud. Guard yourself with prayer. Keep your heart humble before your God and Savior. Spend some time journaling and in prayer.

#42

STUDY #42 Application Journal: Mark 15:1-20, page 41-42

The chief priests need a formal charge that Rome will accept for a death penalty. Blasphemy against Yahweh is not going to work, so the charge was twisted into one of treason: "King of the Jews". It is ironic that these religious leaders were looking for a political Messiah to free them from Roman oppression. Jesus did not fit this expectation, so they use that charge against him, to be rid of him.

Pilate is not sympathetic to the Jews. He mistrusts their intentions, realizing that they are rebellious and would not want to kill someone who would lead them against the Roman occupation. Jesus does not appear to be a political agitator. It must be something else, like jealousy of Jesus's influence in another way. Pilate thinks he may have a way out with the tradition of giving amnesty to a prisoner during the Passover. He tries, but when confronted with a riotous crowd, keeping the peace is a priority over justice.

Jesus is again silent to all accusations. (Isaiah 53:7) He again only answers when directly asked about his identity. Since "King of the Jews" is misunderstood in the context, Jesus is vague in his answer. This brings on a slew of charges from the chief priests. It is striking that the pagan ruler is concerned about justice and seeks to free Jesus, while the religious leaders of the Jews are manipulating justice to condemn him.

1. To these leaders "the end justifies the means". We too can be so convinced we are right, that we are tempted to manipulate to get the results we want, in ways that are not right. Have you or are you struggling with this? How can you lean on faith to overcome this temptation?

Barabbas, whose name means "son of the father", is the one who has done evil. He actually is an insurrection leader, and as such is popular. His followers boldly ask for his release, even before they are incited further by the chief priests. Barabbas is juxtaposed next to the "True Son of the Father". One son is guilty and goes free. The other Son is innocent and condemned. The True Son dies on the cross meant for the guilty son. Barabbas's story is a real life parable of the substitutionary atonement described in Isaiah 53.

2. Place yourself in the Barabbas story. You are a "son/daughter of the Father" who is guilty, deserving the death penalty. Jesus takes your place, takes your sentence, and you walk away free. How aware are you of what you deserve and what you've been given? Ponder this, write about it, and pray.

As the Sanhedrin trial ended with ridicule and mistreatment, so does the Roman trial. Jesus is tortured and mocked by the Gentiles. Again, this is what he foretold would happen and as he prayed in the garden, he submits to what His Father wills.

#43

STUDY #43 Application Journal: Mark 15:21-41, page 42-44

Mark describes the events leading up to and during the crucifixion of Jesus, but does not describe crucifixion for his readers. They are unfortunately very familiar with Rome's favorite means of execution and details are not necessary. It is interesting that Mark doesn't say Jesus was crucified between the robbers, but with one on his right and one on his left. It is reminiscent of James and John asking to sit at his right and left hand. Jesus had answered them by asking if they were able to drink the cup he is now drinking. These two "robbers" are likely zealots and probably were involved with Barabbas in insurrection. Again we see that Jesus was on the cross meant for Barabbas.

There are many taunts for Jesus to come down from the cross. If he has power, can't he save himself? If he can save others, why not himself? If he is innocent, maybe Elijah will show up and help? It is not a matter of "If Jesus can." He chooses to submit to the will of His Father, to give His life. It was not taken from Him. Jesus said "for whoever would save his life will lose it." The irony is that if Jesus would have saved his life, we would lose ours.

1. The ways of God are not the ways of man. Man thinks that the strong will always win, that goodness will gain heaven, and on and on. In the big and little things, we cannot fathom the mind of God and His plans. Is there something you need to let go of, and let God do what He has planned, in His way?

There is such a contrast between the chief priests and the Roman centurion. The chief priests, in their mockery, tell Jesus they will believe He is the Messiah of Israel if they see him save himself from the cross and **live**. The pagan centurion, who has probably been involved since the trial with Pilate, knows all too well how crucified men die. Here is something so different, that as he sees Jesus **die**, he is moved to believe Jesus is God's Son.

2. We can also get demanding of God wanting Him to prove Himself to us. We want him to fix something to prove that he answers our prayers, or loves us, etc. Have you ever felt like that? The centurion just looked at Jesus, and saw His deity and had a whole different perspective. Spend some time looking at Jesus and what He is doing vs. what you expect Him to do.

There is darkness over the land as the Son experiences our judgment and therefore separation from His Father. (Amos 8: 9-10) Jesus is the last sacrifice needed! As he breathes his last the curtain in the temple is completely torn in half. This is the beginning of the end for the temple. Its purpose is no longer necessary. Jesus has given his life as a ransom for many.

3. Meditate on what Jesus did for you by staying on the cross and paying the ransom for your life. You are set free. Rejoice and praise your Savior!

#44

STUDY #44 Application Journal: Mark 15:42-16:8 through 20, page 44-45

The burial of Jesus was going to be a problem. He had been sentenced to death for high treason and as such denied burial. Besides that, the Sabbath was coming at sundown and time was short. Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin, went into action. It was daring for him to request the body due to the treason conviction and the fact he was not even a family member. It also showed his allegiance to Jesus, which at the moment did not seem to be a popular move. He made all other preparations, finding a tomb, buying the shroud and preparing the body.

1. Can you think of a situation where you might need to step out and act upon your commitment to Jesus and His Kingdom?

The fact that Pilate is willing for Jesus to be buried shows he did not believe Jesus guilty of the crime. It is historically significant that he investigates to make sure that Jesus was dead and interviews the centurion who watched Jesus die.

Two nights and a day later, the women who were witnesses to the crucifixion (two who saw where Jesus was buried), head out at “sunrise” to anoint him with spices. They are expecting to have trouble with the large stone. They are not expecting what they do see... no stone, a supernatural being, and no body! The “messenger” explains that the crucified Jesus has risen and gives them a message for the disciples. They are to meet him in Galilee as he told them on their way to the Mount of Olives. There they will be reunited with their shepherd, even though they “all fell away and were scattered”, especially Peter. Peter’s shameful disloyalty might seem like it would disqualify him from celebrating with Jesus in His glorious triumph over death. The women are to make sure Peter knows he is invited!

2. We have all been invited, like Peter, to be restored to our risen shepherd. What shame or failure might cause you to feel unworthy. Will you go to Jesus?

The reaction of the women goes from a state of alarm to what looks like panic. They run and are trembling with fear, unable to speak. This unexpected encounter with the divine action of God shook them to their core. How are they to react? How are they to understand what they just saw and heard? What does this mean? Wow, what does this mean about Jesus?

The way Mark ends his Gospel is shocking to us. It seems unfinished. And several scribes throughout history have tried to correct this and wrap it up more neatly. But Mark is true to the themes he brings up many times. (Fear and faith..."do not fear, only believe" ...the secret of the Kingdom, to respond.) Astonishment and fear accompany the events he records about Jesus. Jesus always left lots of room for faith and response.

3. The gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God has been revealed. Will you respond in faith or remain in fear? Will you follow the suffering servant, who gave His life as a ransom for you? The tomb is empty. What is your response?

#45

STUDY #45 Application Journal: Mark 8:31-16:8 OPTIONAL REVIEW, page 21-45

This section provides for a good review. However, we don't currently have observation or application questions for it.

#46

STUDY #46 Application Journal Guide: Mark Celebration.

Time to party, Mark Manuscript Style!