

The Gospel of Mark – Reflection Questions (Week 3)

Sunday, April 5, 2020

Mark 11:1-33 (or Mark 11:1-11)

- 1) Does Mark spend more time setting the scene for the Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday or does he spend more time on the events themselves?
 - a. What part did Jesus play in arranging for his mode of transportation? Why does it matter?
 - b. What biblical background is Jesus possibly drawing upon for his big “entry” as the king of the Jews? See Zechariah 9:9; 1 Kings 1:38-40, Psalm 118:25-26.
- 2) Why do Jesus and his disciples continue to travel in and out of Jerusalem within chapter 11 (v. 11, 12, 19, 27)? What major event is taking place within the city of Jerusalem? How does that affect the city?
 - a. Where is he staying?
 - b. From wider biblical context, with whom is he likely staying (John 11:1, 12:1-2)?
- 3) What significance does Mark 11:11 have within the wider context?
 - a. How does it provide greater depth in our understanding of the cleansing of the Temple in 11:15-19?
 - b. Was it a spur of the moment decision to cleanse the Temple or was it a pre-planned event? Why does it matter?
- 4) Everything in Mark 11 shouts that Jesus knew exactly what the outcome of his actions would be. What does it mean to you to have a Savior who loved you so much that he orchestrated everything, so that he could take your place and your punishment on the cross?

The Gospel of Mark – Reflection Questions (Week 3)

Monday, April 6, 2020

Mark 12:1-44 (or Mark 12:35-44)

- 1) Jesus has not yet been arrested, but how is this section of Mark like a pre-trial hearing (11:27-40)?

- 2) What are some of the key topics that the prosecuting authorities press him for answers?

- 3) How does our society receive those who come with authority and leadership?
 - a. When we think about the culture and society of our day, what topics would Jesus be judged by and called upon to provide an answer?

 - b. How do you think Jesus would respond to each of the issues you listed?

 - c. How well do you do at being a fair judge of the character and intentions of others? How can you grow both in understanding and explaining the actions of others in the best light?

- 4) We see at the end of Mark 12 a contrast of responses to Jesus. The piety and practices of the teachers of the law are contrasted with that of a poor widow. What practical applications can we draw for...
 - a. ...our faith life in receiving the promises of God?

 - b. ...our daily living as stewards of God's gifts?

The Gospel of Mark – Reflection Questions (Week 3)

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

Mark 13:1-37 (or Mark 13:1-8)

- 1) What emotions or thoughts come to mind when you read sections like these in the Scriptures or hear of things like the End Times, Judgment Day, etc.?
 - a. Would you characterize most of those feelings and thoughts as positive or negative?
 - b. Many experience feelings of worry, fear, or uncertainty as they think about the future or as they look around and see the problems of our world, but is that the intent of these words of Christ? Are these words meant to scare or meant to comfort?
- 2) For whom are these words of Jesus intended? The Apostles? The first believers? People of our day? Those at the end times? All of the above?
- 3) What will be the ultimate outcome of these events (see 13:26-27)?
 - a. What hope do these events offer to us who believe in Jesus?
 - b. What hope does 13:31 give us when it comes to Jesus' promises to us his beloved children?

The Gospel of Mark – Reflection Questions (Week 3)

Wednesday, April 8, 2020 **Mark 14:1-31** (or Mark 14:1-11)

- 1) When you think back to the rapid pace in which Mark began his Gospel with Jesus jumping from place to place, event to event, what is so different about the unfolding of the story in these final chapters?

- 2) We again see a contrast develop within the 'characters' in the Gospel story, as we compare the woman who anointed Jesus and the disciple who betrayed him.
 - a. What comparisons/contrasts does Mark bring out between the two in his retelling of the event?

 - b. What applications are there for our lives today?

- 3) When we look at the introductory verses of 14:1-2 and the way in which Jesus went about preparing to celebrate the Passover with his disciples (14:12-16) and arriving under the cover of evening (14:17), what does it show us about Jesus' understanding of his current situation? Is there anything to show that Jesus was unaware of his precarious situation?

- 4) What significance is there that Jesus indicates in the middle of the Passover meal that he offers to them "my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many"? What is he saying about his connection to the Old Testament promises (Reference Exodus 12:1-13)?

- 5) What hope is still offered even in the midst of Jesus' dark prediction that all the disciples will fall away in this hour (14:28)?

The Gospel of Mark – Reflection Questions (Week 3)

Thursday, April 9, 2020

Mark 14:32-72 (or Mark 14:43-52)

- 1) Even here as Jesus demonstrates how far he is willing to go to save us from evil, we see Jesus the teacher, teaching us how to pray.
 - a. What can we learn from Jesus' approach to the Father in his deepest hour of need?
 - b. Should we pray for a change in circumstances or just for strength to endure them? Does Jesus choose one or the other?
- 2) How is the Apostle (Simon) Peter characterized in the Gospel of Mark (see 8:29-33; 9:5-6; 14:31-32)? How do the events of 14:37-41, especially v. 40 stand in stark contrast to his normal character?
- 3) What are we supposed to do with the interesting side comment of Mark 14:50-53?
 - a. How do those aiming for promotions or political office present themselves and their past? What do they want others to see and know about them? Why?
 - b. How did the early leaders within the church go about presenting themselves to early hearers of the good news of Jesus? What do they want others to know about them? Why?
 - c. If you are honest with yourself, how do you normally present yourself as a follower of / witness to Jesus? What do you let others see and know about your life and your faith?
 - d. What role do our mistakes, our failings, and our character flaws play within our witness to Jesus?
 - e. What role did they play for the Apostle Paul (see 1 Timothy 1:14-18)?
- 4) Who according to Mark gives the ultimate 'damning' evidence against Jesus in his trial before the temple authorities? Note v. 56, 59, 61, and finally 62-64. Who is ultimately in control of Jesus' fate?

The Gospel of Mark – Reflection Questions (Week 3)

Friday, April 10, 2020

Mark 15:1-41 (or Mark 15:25-39)

- 1) What ironies can be found within the exchange between Pilate, the crowd, and the chief priests over the custom of releasing a prisoner as a sign of 'grace' at the time of the Passover (15:6-15)?
 - a. Who was the worse threat to the Romans—Jesus or Barabbas? Why?
 - b. Who were the biggest proponents of releasing this murderer, Barabbas? Does this fit their vocation?
 - c. What is significant in this divine drama about the name Barabbas (Greek for "son of the father")?
- 2) What is ironic about another man being forced to carry Jesus' cross in 15:21?
 - a. How is this heightened by Jesus' instruction elsewhere in the Gospel of Mark? See 8:34ff; 10:43-45.
 - b. Why might Mark become so specific not only about the name of the man who carried his cross, but also the names of his children? How might Romans 16:13 possibly shed light on this question?
- 3) Many Good Friday services focus at length upon the sayings of Jesus upon the cross.
 - a. How many sayings of Jesus from the cross does Mark record within his Gospel?
 - b. What is significant about what saying(s) Mark records?
 - c. What is ironic about the people's response to his words from the cross? Have they understood Jesus and his purposes either in life or death? Why or why not?

The Gospel of Mark – Reflection Questions (Week 3)

Saturday, April 11, 2020 **Mark 15:42-16:8** (or Mark 16:1-8)

- 1) What was Joseph of Arimathea proclaiming for all to hear when he asked for the body of Jesus to give a proper burial?
 - a. What did Joseph have to lose? How does Mark introduce/describe him?
 - b. What did Joseph have to gain with what he knew at this point in the life story of Jesus?

- 2) When the women came to the tomb following the Sabbath, what did they expect to find and what did they expect to do?
 - a. How would we describe their “expected” mission that morning?
 - b. How did Jesus change their “mission” that morning?

- 3) If the original version of the Gospel ended here at 16:8, what could Mark have been trying to accomplish within the life of his readers?
 - a. Where does he leave the feelings of the women?
 - b. Despite the command of the angel to go and tell, what is the reaction of the women?
 - c. What is our response to this news of an empty tomb?
 - d. What is our response to the news that the women kept it to themselves?
 - e. If Jesus Christ has suffered for me, died for me, and risen to new life for me, that I may have hope, peace, and joy, then how should I respond?

The Gospel of Mark – Reflection Questions (Week 3)

Sunday, April 12, 2020

Mark 16:9-20 (or Mark 16:9-20)

Perhaps the most startling aspect of the Gospel of Mark to most Christian readers is the discussion surrounding its ending. Is Mark 16:9-20 part of the original manuscript or not? Many theories and explanations have been advanced, but the debate cannot be ultimately answered. Some argue that Mark may have died before completing his work. Some argue that the original ending was accidentally lost. Some argue that the original readers were confused by the abrupt ending of 16:8 and so Mark or a scribe provided a more satisfactory ending.

- 1) Was there anything truly “missing” or “untold” from the story of the life, death, and miraculous resurrection of Jesus even if the Gospel of Mark did end at 16:8? In other words, was Jesus Christ clearly proclaimed as the one who came as the son of God, who died for our sake on the cross, and who rose again leaving the tomb empty?

- 2) When we reflect upon the list of resurrection appearances in Mark 16:9-20, what do we come to notice about the nature of these accounts? Have we heard any of these accounts elsewhere in greater length and specificity?

- 3) Mark 16:9-11 – How does Luke 8:2 and 24:1-11 fill out the story?

- 4) Mark 16:12-13 – How does Luke 24:13-35 fill out the story?

- 5) Mark 16:14-5 – How does Luke 24:33-48 fill out the story?

- 6) Mark 16:19-20 – How does Luke 24:50-53 fill out the story?

*It is likely that the Gospel of Mark was written in such a way to encourage its readers to hear the wonderful news of Easter and be urged to go and tell it! Why? Because it would be utterly wrong to hear this great of news and then flee from the empty tomb, saying nothing to anyone because we are afraid (see Mark 16:8). **No, this kind of news needs to be shouted that all can hear! This kind of news doesn’t fill us with fear. It fills us with joy. The Gospel of Mark is meant to leave us saying, “If they won’t tell it, then I will!”***