

Mark

INTRODUCTION

Mark Portrays Jesus Christ, the Servant of God

The writer is John Mark, who accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, and was the cause of some trouble between them. He then left them, but eventually became a great help to Paul. Peter was the means of his conversion, and affectionately speaks of him as “my son” (1 Peter 5:13). We see the influence of the teaching of Peter in this Gospel.

Mark’s object in writing this Gospel is found in Mark 10:45: *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.* Mark was different from Matthew, for Matthew endeavored to prove that Jesus was the true Messiah and King of Israel. Mark, on the other hand, desired only to tell clearly certain facts about Jesus—His deeds more especially than his words. Mark did not try to prove that Jesus was the Son of God by declaring His lineage and His way of coming to the earth. Rather, Mark showed what Jesus accomplished during His brief career and how His coming changed the world.

Many scholars believe that Mark’s Gospel was written mainly for Roman readers. The Romans were far from religious, they were practical; they did not care about genealogies, prophecy or even doctrine, but many were interested in the plain story of the life that Jesus lived, and they wanted to see Him as He was.

Matthew, by contrast, has 28 chapters, abounds in parables, and portrays Christ as the Son of David with kingly dignity and authority (Matt. 28:18).

Mark has 16 chapters, and gives four parables. Mark portrays Christ as the humble but perfect Servant of Jehovah. We find the angels ministering unto Him. His gospel abounds with Jesus’ miracles and His incomparable compassion to all mankind.

Mark 1:1-8

The Gospel of Mark commences without an introduction and plunges at once into the busy field of active service. It is full of action from start to finish. Its notes ring like the call of a commander leading his victorious troops, and its pages glow with the graphic and vivid touches of a living picture. It closes with a vision of the Master still at work. "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word through accompanying signs" (Mark 16:20) is the closing verse of the gospel. Let us turn our eyes upon this pattern Worker, the Lord Jesus Christ, and learn from Him the spirit of true service for God.

God's work is always well prepared. It is no afterthought. It is carefully planned, wisely laid out and long looked forward to. We have here the account of the preparation of this great work which Jesus came to inaugurate and finish, "the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). Before we look at this subject we need to find out what the Lord's work was.

What is the service on which Christ came? What is the ministry that Christ commits to us? What is Christian work? What was Christ's work? We have it all here—"the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God." That is the work for which He came. That is the work for which He leaves us here. That is the only work that is worth doing. Striking in this picture of work is the fact that the frontispiece is the gospel of salvation. That is our business, our trust, our occupation, to give the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to men.

The gospel means good tidings, a word of cheer from heaven and that word about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. How simple, how beautiful, how satisfactory! Good news! Good news from heaven to suffering, sinful men that God has sent Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to settle things, to remedy things, to make things right. That is the gospel.

Christian work is not trying to save the world, or reform society. You can not reform society, and you cannot save the world, but you can tell the world that Jesus Christ has saved it. You can proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christian work is not our busybody activities, but it is holding up Jesus and giving Him to men, and nothing else is worth a thought. Our philosophies and inquiries into nature and science are all apart from real Christian service. This is the business on which Jesus came, and from start to finish the gospel of Mark is crammed with this and nothing else, and our lives should be full of this and nothing which does not work for this.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

John the Baptist preached the good news about Christ, telling the people to repent and be baptized. **How does John's message and baptism differ from the message and baptism that is preached today?**

Luke 12:49, 50 Acts 17:30 Mark 2:17 Matt. 3:1-6 Luke 3:2-9 John 1:25-34 Acts 19:1-7 John 3:22-30

Mark 1:9-13

Jesus was recognized by the Baptist, who beheld the opened heavens and the descending Spirit. If the Lord was thus anointed before he commenced his life-work, how much more must we be. Hast thou become united with Him in His death, made one with Him in His resurrection, and anointed by that same Spirit? Then be sure that thou, too, *must* be tempted. Sons of men must go the way of the Son of man—now under the opened heavens, then tempted of the devil, on one side the wild beasts, on the other the angels, now driven to loneliness, and then to the crowded street of the cities, there to gather disciples by the energy and beauty of a victorious life.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F.B. Meyer)

"And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tested by Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him" (Mark 1:12-13). **What are the reasons why God does not fully shield us from Satan's attacks following our anointing of the Spirit?**

Phil. 3:10 2 Tim. 1:8, 12 1 Pet. 4:12-14 1 Pet. 5:10

Mark 1:14-15

“The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15). This kingdom was to be entered not by the portals of pride and ambition, but by the lowly gateway of penitence and moral transformation. The humbling message which John had introduced is taken up by Jesus also. It was as if he had said, “You must give up your cherished ideas of being children of the kingdom and come in as Gentiles and proselytes through the gateway of repentance and a new birth from above.” The gospel of Jesus Christ abates nothing of the righteousness and the heart-searching requirements of God’s ancient law. There is no easy vaulting over the barrier of righteousness and condoning the guilt of sin. The message of the gospel still is “turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus” (Acts 20:21).

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

Why is it necessary not only to believe the message about Christ being our Savior but also to repent; to take sides with God against ourselves?

Mark 1:16-20

One of the best ministries that any of us can render to God and our fellow men is to start other lives in useful service. And so one of the very first things the Lord did was to call His first apostles. Walking by the Sea of Galilee, He found two fishing parties. The first was Simon and Andrew who were casting a net into the sea. The Master called them with a strange authority of His heart-searching voice and glance, “ ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men’ ” (Mark 1:17). And we are told that “At once they left their nets and followed him” (1:18).

The second party was one of no greater consequence. It consisted of James and John with their fathers and some hired servants. They had some property and standing. But they, too, heard His urgent call, and they left their father, their property and the hired servants, and also went after Him. The word “straightway” (KJV) occurs twice in these two pictures. There was something urgent about His call and something instant about their response.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

How did God call Abraham, Moses, and Elisha and what was their response to the calling?

Mark 1:21-27

How terrific is the consciousness in evil spirits, when brought into the presence of Christ, of a total opposition of feelings and separation of interests between them and Him! But how grand is their sense of impotence and subjection, and the expression of this, which His presence wrings out from them! Knowing full well that He and they cannot dwell together, they expect, on His approach to them, a summons to quit, and haunted by their guilty fears, they wonder if the judgment of the great day be coming on them before its time. How analogous is this to the feelings of the wicked and ungodly among men—opening up glimpses of that dreadful oneness in fundamental character between the two parties, which explains the final sentence, “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, *prepared for the devil and his angels!*” (Matt. 25:41)

(The Four Gospels, David Brown)

Demons are evil spirits who are ruled by Satan; they work to tempt people to sin, but in every case where they confronted Jesus, they lost their power. **Is there any reason for Christians to fear them? Is it possible that we can have authority over them as Christ did?**

Matt. 8:29 Mark 3:11 John 6:69 Acts 16:16-18 Acts 19:13-16 Jas. 2:19

Mark 1:28-39

What a complete and perfect cure the Lord Jesus makes, when He heals. He takes the sick woman by the hand, and lifts her up, and “immediately the fever left her.” But this was not all. A greater miracle remained behind. At once we are told “she ministered unto them.” That weakness and prostration of strength which, as a general rule, a fever leaves behind it, in her case was entirely removed. The fevered woman was not only made well in a moment, but in the same moment made strong and able to work.

We may see in this case a lively emblem of Christ's dealing with sin-sick souls. That blessed Savior not only gives mercy and forgiveness;—He gives renewing grace besides. To as many as receive Him as their Physician, He gives power to become the sons of God. He cleanses them by His Spirit, when He washes them in His precious blood. Those whom He justifies, He also sanctifies. When He bestows an absolution, He also bestows a new heart. When He grants free forgiveness for the past, He also grants strength to "minister" to Him for the time to come. The sin-sick soul is not merely cured, and then left to itself. It is also supplied with a new heart and a right spirit, and enabled so to live as to please God.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Where in the Old Testament are we told that a Savior would come to heal our sin-sick soul?

Is there any indication from these verses that Peter had a wife.

Mark 3:16 1 Cor. 9:5

Mark 1:40-45

Leprosy is a complaint of which we know little or nothing in our northern climate. In Bible lands it is far more common. It is a disease which is utterly incurable. It is no mere skin affection, as some ignorantly suppose. It is a radical disease of the whole man. It attacks, not merely the skin, but the blood, the flesh, and the bones, until the unhappy patient begins to lose his extremities, and to rot by inches.—Let us remember beside this, that, amongst the Jews, the leper was reckoned unclean, and was cut off from the congregation of Israel and the ordinances of religion. He was obliged to dwell in a separate house. None might touch him or minister to him. Let us remember all this, and then we may have some idea of the remarkable wretchedness of a leprous person. To use the words of Aaron, when he interceded for Miriam, he was "as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed." (Numbers 12:12)

But is there nothing like leprosy among ourselves? Yes! indeed there is. There is a foul soul-disease which is engrained into our very nature, and cleaves to our bones and marrow with deadly force. That disease is the plague of sin. Like leprosy, it is a deep-seated disease, infecting every part of our nature, heart, will, conscience, understanding, memory, and affections. Like leprosy, it makes us loathsome and abominable, unfit for the company of God, and unmeet for the glory of heaven. Like leprosy, it is incurable by any earthly physician, and is slowly but surely dragging us down to the second death. And worst of all, far worse than leprosy, it is a disease from which no mortal man is exempt. "We are all," in God's sight, "as an unclean thing." (Isaiah 64:6)

Do we know these things? Have we found them out? Have we discovered our own sinfulness, guilt, and corruption? Happy indeed is that person who has been really taught to feel that he is a "miserable sinner," and that there is "no health in him!" Blessed indeed is he who has learned that he is a spiritual leper, and a bad, wicked, sinful creature! To know our disease is one step towards a cure. It is the misery and the ruin of many souls that they never yet saw their sins and their need.

Let us learn from these verses, *the wondrous and almighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

We are told that the unhappy leper came to our Lord, "beseeching Him, and kneeling down," and saying, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." We are told that "Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him, and said to him, I will, be thou clean." At once the cure was effected. That very instant the deadly plague departed from the poor sufferer, and he was healed. It is but a word, and a touch, and there stands before our Lord, not a leper, but a sound and healthy man.

Who can conceive the greatness of the change in the feelings of this leper, when he found himself healed? The morning sun rose upon him, a miserable being, more dead than alive, his whole frame a mass of sores and corruption, his very existence a burden. The evening sun saw him full of hope and joy, free from pain, and fit for the society of his fellow-men. Surely the change must have been like life from the dead.

Let us bless God that the Savior with whom we have to do is almighty. It is a cheering and comfortable thought that with Christ nothing is impossible. No heart-disease is so deep-seated but He is able to cure it. No plague of soul is so virulent but our Great Physician can heal it. Let us never despair of any one's salvation, so long as he lives. The worst of spiritual lepers may yet be cleansed. No cases of spiritual leprosy could be worse than those of Manasseh, Saul, and Zacchaeus, yet they were all cured;—Jesus Christ made them whole. The chief of sinners may yet be brought nigh to God by the blood and Spirit of Christ. Men are not lost, because they are too bad to be saved, but because they will not come to Christ that He may save them.

Let us learn from these verses, that *there is a time to be silent about the work of Christ, as well as a time to speak.*

This is a truth which is taught us in a remarkable way. "We find our Lord strictly charging this man to tell no one of his cure, to "say nothing to any man." We find this man in the warmth of his zeal disobeying this injunction, and publishing and "blazing abroad" his cure in every quarter. And we are told that the result was that Jesus "could no more enter into the city, but was without in desert places."

There is a lesson in all this of deep importance, however difficult it may be to use it rightly. It is clear that there are times when our Lord would have us work for Him quietly and silently, rather than attract public attention by a noisy zeal. There is a zeal which is "not according to knowledge," as well as a zeal which is righteous and praiseworthy. Everything is beautiful in its season. Our Master's cause may on some occasions be more advanced by quietness and patience, than in any other way. We are not to "give that which is holy to dogs," nor "cast pearls before swine." By forgetfulness of this we may even do more harm than good, and retard the very cause we want to assist.

The subject is a delicate and difficult one, without doubt. Unquestionably the majority of Christians are far more inclined to be silent about their glorious Master than to confess Him before men,—and do not need the bridle so much as the spur. But still it is undeniable that there is a time for all things; and to know the time should be one great aim of a Christian. There are good men who have more zeal than discretion, and even help the enemy of truth by unseasonable acts and words.

Let us all pray for the Spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind. Let us seek daily to know the path of duty, and ask daily for discretion and good sense. Let us be bold as a lion in confessing Christ, and not be afraid to "speak of Him before princes," if need be. But let us never forget that "Wisdom is profitable to direct," and let us beware of doing harm by an ill-directed zeal.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Is there ever a time that we should conceal something the Lord has given us?

Mark 2:1-12

Up to this time the Lord had not especially emphasized the question of sin. It appeared to be His purpose to impress upon the people His ability and willingness to help and bless, but the time had come when He must go deeper and reveal that subtle poison which was the source of all human ills and infirmities. He takes occasion in this next miracle to bring out the sin question in the most vivid colors. They had brought this sufferer to Christ for healing, and expected, no doubt, that He would immediately perform a miracle upon his body. But Christ for the present paid no attention whatever to his body, but passed right on and pressed right home to the question of sin. "Son," He said, "your sins are forgiven" (2:9). And not until this question was settled and the sufferer had accepted forgiveness and sonship did the Lord take up his physical condition and complete the work of healing. What an object lesson this is for the Christian worker! In dealing with the sick we must realize the deeper causes of their physical conditions.

Many people seem to think that the Lord healed this man because his four pallbearers brought him in the arms of faith. The Lord did nothing of the kind. He proceeded to instruct him to save him; and when he got him to the place where the man could himself believe, then the Lord challenged his own faith and said, "Get up, take your mat and walk" (2:9). A paralytic would not be likely to do that unless he had a very real and adequate faith. The Lord does not heal people over the head of their unbelief. He loves them too well for that. But He first teaches them to trust Him for themselves, and then He gives them all they trust Him for. As Christian workers it is a great mistake for us to tell people we are believing for them and they are surely going to be healed. We have no right to let anybody lean over us.

Wiser far was the word of Elisha when he refused to go to Naaman the Syrian and satisfy his superstition by a number of passes and outward manifestations, but rather sent him to go and wash in the Jordan himself seven times and he should be clean. It was thus that Paul dealt with sickness. As he preached the gospel at Lystra, he looked upon his little congregation, and we are told that another paralytic was sitting there. And Paul "looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, 'Stand up on your feet!' " (Acts 14:9b-10a). The best thing we can do for people is not to get them to trust in us, but to trust in the living God.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

What fact was Jesus bringing out about Himself besides being a miracle worker?

Does God want us to make a public confession of our faith and if so for what reason?

Mark 2:13-22

The evils that have arisen from trying to sew the new patch on the old garment, and put the new wine into old bottles, have neither been few nor small. How was it with the Galatian Church? It is recorded in St. Paul's epistle. Men wished in that Church to reconcile Judaism with Christianity, and to circumcise as well as baptize. They endeavored to keep alive the law of ceremonies and ordinances, and to place it side by side with the Gospel of Christ. In fact they would have put the "new wine into old bottles." And in so doing they greatly erred. How was it with the early Christian Church, after the apostles were dead? We have it recorded in the pages of Church history. Some tried to make the Gospel more

acceptable by mingling it with Platonic philosophy. Some labored to recommend it to the heathen by borrowing forms, processions, and vestments from ties of heathen gods. In short, they "sewed the new patch on the old garment." And in so doing they scattered broadcast the seeds of enormous evil. They paved the way for the whole Romish apostasy.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Have you any examples in your church of how the old has mingled with the new.

Mark 2:23-28

The greatest honor bestowed on the Sabbath of the old creation was that our Lord Jesus, after pouring out His soul as a ransom for us, made it the one complete day of His rest in death in proof that His work was accomplished, and the sore travail of His soul for our redemption ended; "but when He rose, the sanctity and hallowment of that primeval Sabbath passed on with Him into the new day—even that day of resurrection-rest into which He entered as 'the first-begotten from the dead,' 'the beginning of the (new) creation of God.'

With His resurrection the seventh-day Sabbath of the old creation expired, transmitting its sanctity and its privileges to the new Sabbath—the first day, which became our day of rest in the power of a new creation. 'If any man be in Christ (to him there is) a new creation. Old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new.' Such is our condition, as viewed in Christ our Representative and Forerunner. Surely, a new Sabbath day befits those of whom such things can be spoken.

How necessarily, therefore, must the seventh-day Sabbath, seeing that it was bound up with the old creation, resign its claims to that new day on which the Head and Representative and Forerunner of the redeemed rose to take the Headship of the new creation of God. In the types of Israel, the special honor attaching to the eighth day had long been indicated. It was the day appointed for circumcision, that great type of separation from the flesh unto God, according to the power of the resurrection of Christ. On the eighth day the firstborn were to be given unto God.

(Types, Psalms And Prophecies, David Baron)

What did Jesus mean when he said "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

Mark 3:1-12

Let us observe in these verses, how our Lord Jesus Christ was watched by His enemies. We read that "they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath Day, that they might accuse Him." What a melancholy proof we have here of the wickedness of human nature! It was the Sabbath Day, when these things happened. It was in the synagogue, where men were assembled to hear the word and worship God. Yet even on the day of God, and at the time of worshipping God, these wretched formalists were plotting mischief against our Lord. The very men who pretended to such strictness and sanctity in little things, were full of malicious and angry thoughts in the midst of the congregation. (Prov. 5:14.)

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Are you being watched by this same critical eye of people in an ill natured and spiteful world?

Mark 3:13-21

The Lord was founding a new society. It was already apparent, through the strife of tongues that had arisen concerning Him among the religious leaders, that His final rejection by His own people was a foregone conclusion, and that a new Israel must ultimately take the place of the old. And so, as there had been 12 tribes of Israel, there should be 12 apostles of the Lamb. We have here the account of their first calling. They were to be the princes of the kingdom of heaven, the first tier of stones in that eternal edifice built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself to be the chief Cornerstone.

The time had not yet come for the formal institution of the Church in so many explicit terms; but as the new harvest grows out of the shell of the old seed, so Christianity was emerging from the husks of Judaism, and the Lord had already anticipated it and was preparing for it. It was necessary that His first apostolic messenger should be thoroughly educated and trained under His personal supervision, and so early in His ministry He calls them to Him and invests them with their new apostleship.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

Why do you believe Jesus chose Judas as a disciple since He knew that Judas would betray Him?

Ps. 41:9 Zech. 11:12-13 Luke 24:44 John 5:30 John 6:63-64, 70-71 John 10:17-18
John 13:18

Mark 3:22-35

The Pharisees circulated the infamous charge that “He hath Beelzebub”, not because they believed it, but to satisfy the questions that were being asked on all sides. What they affirmed, they know to be untrue, but for selfish reasons they would not confess what they actually thought. Such denial of truth is a deadly and unpardonable sin, because it injures the sensitiveness of conscience and produces moral death.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F.B. Meyer)

What is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

Matt. 9:34 Matt. 10:25 Matt. 12:22-32 Luke 11:14-23 John 8:48-52 John 10:20-21 Acts
26:26-28

Mark 4:1-34

There are some hearers of the Gospel, whose hearts are like the stony ground in a field. These are they on whom preaching produces temporary impressions, but no deep, lasting, and abiding effect. They take pleasure in hearing sermons in which the truth is faithfully set forth. They can speak with apparent joy and enthusiasm about the sweetness of the Gospel, and the happiness which they experience in listening to it. They can be moved to tears by the appeals of the preachers, and talk with apparent earnestness of their own inward conflicts, hopes, struggles, desires, and fears. But unhappily there is no stability about their religion. “They have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time.” There is no real work of the Holy Ghost within their hearts. Their impressions are like Jonah’s gourd, which came up in a night and perished in a night. They fade as rapidly as they grow. No sooner does “affliction and persecution arise for the word’s sake,” than they fall away. Their goodness proves as “the morning cloud, and the early dew.” (Hosea 6:4.) Their religion has no more life in it than the cut flower. It has no root, and soon withers away.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

The seed, being the Word of God, comes into people’s lives and needs to take root in order to eventually produce fruit. If the Word doesn’t take root, it will wither, be devoured by the birds of the air, fall on stony ground, be scorched by the sun, or be choked by the thorns. The four seed sowing conditions represent four different ways that people respond to God’s Word. **If the seed does not take root in a person’s life, what will be his or her final destiny?**

Prov. 23:4-5 Luke 18:24-27 2 Cor. 4:3-4 1 Tim. 6:9-10, 17 Jas. 1:18 1 Pet. 1:23-25 1 Pet. 5:8
1 John 2:15-17

Mark 4:35-41

They that bear Christ’s name must prepare for squalls. Yet, why should we fear when the Master is on board; who can impress His commands on the wind and sea—to the wind, “Peace”; to the sea, “Be Still”. “The Lord on high is mightier than the waves of the sea.”

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F.B. Meyer)

Is the reason for our becoming fearful in a given situation due to the fact that we can’t fully believe that God has absolute control and is sovereign over everything?

Job 38:1-11 Ps. 65:7 Ps. 89:9-18 Ps. 93:4

Mark 5:1-20

Observe the complicated evil which the powers of darkness inflicted on their victim. They deprived him of the exercise of his rational powers; they so lashed his spirit that he could not suffer even a garment upon his body, but went naked, and could not endure the sight of living men and social comfort, but dwelt among the tombs, as if the sepulchral gloom had a mysterious congeniality with the wretchedness of his spirit; they allowed him not a moment’s repose even there, for “*always, night and day*, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying”—his ceaseless misery venting itself in

wild wailing cries; nay, so intolerable was his mental torture, that he “kept cutting himself with stones!”—The *natural* explanation of which seems to be, that one in this state is fain to draw off his feelings from the *mind*, when its anguish grows unendurable, by trying to make the *body*, thus lacerated and smarting, to bear its own share.

(The Four Gospels, David Brown)

On a much lower scale, is it possible that any of us could have a demon or minion within? Consider ones that bring about rejection, discouragement, or even despair. Some people also might be tortured by demons that cause them to be crazed with thoughts of dominion and power at any price. Also some people are obsessed with feelings of revenge and “getting even.” **What steps could be used to get rid of it (or them)?**

Matt. 5:17 Luke 8:27-29 Luke 9:1 Luke 10:17-20 Acts 16:17-18 1 Cor. 10:21

Mark 5:21-43

The graphic story of the woman who pressed through the crowd until she touched the hem of His garment and instantly drew from Him life for her immediate and perfect healing, has one preeminent message for us as Christian workers and subjects of the Lord’s healing power and blessing, namely, the necessity on our part of that living faith which will give to us personal contact with the living Christ.

The Lord had already hinted in His striking message to the leper that a distinct responsibility rested upon the sufferer in receiving the healing which He was willing to give. There it was expressed as an act of will through which the leper was commanded to meet the Lord’s will and take what was so freely given.

Here it is represented under the figure of a touch. There is no human sense more delicate and distinct in its manifold offices than the sense of touch. The grasp of a responsive hand means more than words could possibly express. The kiss of affection between still more intimate friends has always been the expression of the deepest love. The hand of the worshiper upon the head of his sacrifice identified him with his offering. The hand of the healer upon the sufferer was always the token of the Master’s imparted life and blessing. In persons deprived of their ordinary senses, as the blind and deaf, the sense of touch becomes intensely acute. In our spiritual nature there are senses that correspond to all our physical powers, and there is a touch of faith and even of feeling which opens the channels of communication between God and our responsive being. Faith is much more than an intellectual assent to certain truths. It is also a recognizing of the divine presence and a contact with the personal life of the Lord Jesus. The apostle, speaking to the Athenians, refers to humanity even in its native blindness as seeking the Lord if they “would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:27). And the Apostle John, speaking of fellowship with the Lord Jesus, the Living One, uses this realistic language, “which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life” (1 John 1:1). Even in the Old Testament experience of believers we find such saints as David distinctly recognizing the supernatural presence of Jehovah and using such language as this, “My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me” (Psalm 63:8). There is probably in every human heart to some extent an instinctive reaching out after God. But when the Holy Spirit quickens into spiritual life and vivifies all the senses of our higher nature, then Christ becomes to us indeed, “a living, bright reality.”

The woman had already that spiritual instinct that felt its way to Jesus. Something in the depths of her being told her that He had the help she needed, and that if she could but touch Him, her faith and need could draw it out and claim it for her healing. This was not a matter wholly dependent on the will of the Lord and the exercise of His voluntary help. The moment she touched Him, He was conscious instantly that virtue, or as the Greek express it, “dynamite,” had gone out from Him. The Lord was so full of redundant life that He was ready to communicate it through every open channel. Like the sun in yonder heavens that does not need to put forth a special effort to reach a dark alley and a lonely chamber, but necessarily enters wherever there is an open window, so the Lord Jesus was always giving, and the moment hungry and believing hearts came within His influence they drew from His fullness all they had capacity to take.

It should be added (and it is a point of no little importance), that this woman’s healing was but a prelude to a greater blessing. The Lord would not let her off with a mere outward touch, but insisted on bringing her into the inner chamber of His love and blessing. And when with trembling lips and prostrate form she fell at His feet and told her story, almost asking forgiveness for her boldness, He met her with the reassuring words and double blessing, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering” (Mark 5:34). A few chapters before it was, “Son,” now it is “Daughter.” Contact with Christ lifts us into the family of God. The touch of a king can make a loyal knight, but the touch of Jesus makes us the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. How often divine healing becomes, as in the case of this woman, the steppingstone to greater blessing. How many of us have found it in the introduction to a closer fellowship with God, and the key to all the chambers of faith, and prayer, and power, and heavenly blessing.

(The Christ in the Bible, A. B. Simpson)

We all have physical or spiritual problems from time to time. In both cases, what are your ways of receiving healing? Does genuine faith involve action?

Mark 6:1-6

This passage shows us our Lord Jesus Christ in "his own country," at Nazareth. It is a melancholy illustration of the wickedness of man's heart, and deserves special attention.

We see *how apt men are to undervalue things with which they are familiar*. The men of Nazareth "were offended" at our Lord. They could not think it possible that one who had lived so many years among themselves, and whose brethren and sisters they knew, could deserve to be followed as a public teacher.

Never had any place on earth such privileges as Nazareth. For thirty years the Son of God resided in this town, and went to and fro in its streets. For thirty years He walked with God before the eyes of its inhabitants, living a blameless, perfect life. But it was all lost upon them. They were not ready to believe the Gospel, when the Lord came among them, and taught in their synagogue. They would not believe that one whose face they knew so well, and who had lived so long, eating, and drinking, and dressing like one of themselves, had any right to claim their attention. They were "offended at Him."

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Why can we agree that a prophet is without honor "in his own country, and among his own kindred, and in his own house" as Jesus stated? Was this the first time He was rejected in Nazareth?

Luke 4:16-30 John 4:44

Can the phrase "familiarity breeds contempt" be true in this case? Can that statement also be true of people living in a Christian nation where the gospel is freely preached? Why do you think the Lord marveled at their unbelief?

Mark 6:7-13

Let us observe these verses, *how our Lord Jesus Christ sent forth His apostles "two and two."*—Mark is the only evangelist who mentions this fact. It is one that deserves special notice.

There can be no doubt that this fact is meant to teach us the advantages of Christian company to all who work for Christ. The wise man had good reason for saying, "Two are better than one." (Ecc. 4:9) Two men together will do more work than two men singly. They will help one another in judgment, and commit fewer mistakes. They will aid one another in difficulties, and less often fail of success. They will stir one another up when tempted to idleness, and less often relapse into indolence and indifference. They will comfort one another in times of trial, and be less often cast down. "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." (Ecc. 4:10)

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

What is the significance of "shake off the dust under your feet" for a testimony against them?

Acts 13:49-51 Acts 18:6

Mark 6:14-29

These verses describe the death of one of the most eminent saints of God. They relate the murder of John the Baptist. Of all the evangelists none tells this melancholy story so fully as Mark. Let us see what practical lessons the passage contains for our own souls.

We see, in the first place, *the amazing power of truth over the conscience*. Herod "fears" John the Baptist while he lives, and is troubled about him after he dies. A friendless, solitary preacher, with no other weapon than God's truth, disturbs and terrifies a king.

Every body has a conscience. Here lies the secret of a faithful minister's power. This is the reason why Felix "trembled," and Agrippa was "almost persuaded," when Paul the prisoner spoke before them. God has not left Himself without witness in the hearts of unconverted people. Fallen and corrupt as man is, there are thoughts within him accusing or excusing, according as he lives,—thoughts that will not be shut out,—thoughts that can make even kings, like Herod, restless and afraid. None ought to remember this so much as ministers and teachers. If they preach and teach Christ's truth, they may rest assured that their work is not in vain. Children may seem inattentive in schools. Hearers may seem careless in congregations. But in both cases there is often far more going on in the conscience than our eyes see. Seeds often spring up and bear fruit, when the sower, like John the Baptist, is dead or gone.

We see, in the second place, *how far people may go in religion, and yet miss salvation by yielding to one master-sin.*

King Herod went further than many. He "feared John." He "knew that he was a just man and a holy." He "observed" him. He "heard him, and did many things" in consequence. He even "heard him gladly." But there was one thing Herod would not do. He would not cease from adultery. He would not give up Herodias. And so he ruined his soul for evermore.

Let us take warning from Herod's case. Let us keep back nothing,—cleave to no favorite vice,—spare nothing that stands between us and salvation. Let us often look within, and make sure that there is no darling lust or pet transgression, which Herodias-like, is murdering our souls. Let us rather cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye, than go into hell-fire.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Herod had not intended to kill John, but living in sin one thing led to another and he became trapped in his pledge that he had made to Herodias' daughter. **When our conscience accuses us of a wrong in our life how should we react to it?**

How should we deal with lust and vices in our life?

Making pledges or oaths either to God or man should never be taken lightly. **What should we learn from this?**

1 Sam. 14:24-28 Eccl. 8:2 Matt. 14:9-10

Mark 6:30-34

We read that He "was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep without a shepherd." They were destitute of teachers. They had no guides but the blind Scribes and Pharisees. They had no spiritual food but man-made traditions. Thousands of immortal souls stood before our Lord, ignorant, helpless, and on the highroad to ruin. It touched the gracious heart of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was "moved with compassion toward them. He began to teach them many things."

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Give verses that show His compassion for us is still the same as what He had for those people.

Mark 6:35-44

Here was creative power, beyond all question. Something real, solid, substantial, must manifestly have been called into being, which did not before exist. There is no room left for the theory, that the people were under the influence of an optical delusion, or a heated imagination. Five thousand hungry people would never have been satisfied, if they had not received into their mouths material bread. Twelve baskets full of fragments would never have been taken up, if the five loaves had not been miraculously multiplied. In short, it is plain that the hand of Him who made the world out of nothing was present on this occasion. None but He who at the first created all things, and sent down manna in the desert, could thus have "spread a table in the wilderness."

It becomes all true Christians to store up facts like these in their minds, and to remember them in time of need. "We live in the midst of an evil world, and see few with us, and many against us. We carry within us a weak heart, too ready at any moment to turn aside from the right way." We have near us, at every moment, a busy devil, watching continually for our halting, and seeking to lead us into temptation. Where shall we turn for comfort? What shall keep faith alive, and preserve us from sinking in despair?—There is only one answer. We must look to Jesus. We must think on His almighty power, and His wonders of old time. We must call to mind how He can create food for His people out of nothing, and supply the wants of those who follow Him, even in the wilderness.—And as we think these thoughts, we must remember that this Jesus still lives, never changes, and is on our side.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Besides Jesus, can anyone today produce something from nothing?

Mark 6:45-56

There are thoughts of comfort here for all true believers. Wherever they may be, or whatsoever their circumstances, the Lord Jesus sees them. Alone, or in company,—in sickness or in health,—by sea or by land,—in perils in the city,—in

perils in the wilderness,—the same eye which saw the disciples tossed on the lake, is ever looking at us. We are never beyond the reach of His care. Our way is never hid from Him. He knows the path that we take, and is still able to help. He may not come to our aid at the time we like best, but He will never allow us utterly to fail. He that walked upon the water never changes. He will always come at the right time to uphold His people. Though He tarry, let us wait patiently. Jesus sees us, and will not forsake us.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

It says in Mark 6:51 the disciples were greatly amazed and marveled when the wind ceased. **Why did the disciples have trouble believing that Jesus was very Christ and God, and in control of all things?**

Num. 11:13, 22 Jonah 3:10-4:11 Matt. 15:33 Mark 6:52 Mark 8:4

Mark 7:1-23

The Pharisees laid great stress on ritual. They followed endless rules, both intricate and troublesome, as to ablutions and outward ceremonials. So long as their devotees were careful in the minor observances, they were permitted a wide license so far as the weightier matters of the Law were concerned. This is a natural tendency of the human heart. It is glad to be able to reduce its religious life to an outward and literal obedience, if only its thoughts may be unhampered. In the life of true holiness, everything depends on the control of the thoughts. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." With infinite wisdom the wise man said, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," and Jesus put "evil thoughts" first in the black category of the contents of the evil heart.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F.B. Meyer)

How do we keep our hearts with all diligence and not allow them to be contaminated by evil thoughts?

Gal. 5:13-26 Phil. 1:9-11 Phil. 2:1-5 Phil. 4:4-9 Col. 3:1-10 Col. 4:5-6 Eph. 1:18-19

Mark 7:24-30

Before faith can be fully exercised, we must take the right attitude toward Christ. His mission at that time was to the Jewish people; they were the "children." This woman had no claim as a child, and the question was whether she was prepared to take the lower place. It is the humble soul that has power with God, and when she showed herself prepared to put Jesus in His place as Lord, and to take her own place as willing to accept the children's crumbs, the Lord was able to put the key of His treasure house in her hand and bid her have her desire.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

This woman was not a Jew—merely a "despised" Gentile. **What, then, prepared her for that riveting moment when she was put to the test by Jesus?**

Matt. 17:20 Mark 11:24 2 Cor. 5:7 Heb. 11:1, 6

Mark 7:31-37

We are told that when the deaf and dumb person was brought to Jesus, "He took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed,"—and then, and not till then, came the words of commanding power, "Ephphatha, that is, be opened."

There is undoubtedly much that is mysterious in these actions. "We know not why they were used. It would have been as easy to our Lord to speak the word, and command health to return at once, as to do what He here did. His reasons for the course He adopted are not recorded. We only know that the result was the same as on other occasions;—the man was cured.

But there is one simple lesson to be learned from our Lord's conduct on this occasion. That lesson is, that Christ was not tied to the use of any one means in doing His works among men. Sometimes He thought fit to work in one way, sometimes in another. His enemies were never able to say, that unless He employed certain invariable agency He could not work at all.

We see the same thing going on still in the Church of Christ. We see continual proof that the Lord is not tied to the use of any one means exclusively in conveying grace to the soul. Sometimes He is pleased to work by the word preached publicly, sometimes by the word read privately. Sometimes He awakens people by sickness and affliction, sometimes by the rebukes or counsel of friends. Sometimes He employs means of grace to turn people out of the way of sin. Sometimes He arrests their attention by some providence, without any means of grace at all. He will not have any means

of grace made an idol and exalted, to the disparagement of other means. He will not have any means despised as useless, and neglected as of no value. All are good and valuable. All are in their turn employed for the same great end, the conversion of souls. All are in the hands of Him who "giveth not account of His matters," and knows best which to use, in each separate case that He heals.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J. C. Ryle)

Explain how Christ works today to bring salvation to lost souls.

Mark 8:1-13

Once more we see our Lord feeding a great multitude with a few loaves and fishes. He knew the heart of man. He foresaw the rise of cavillers and skeptics, who would question the reality of the wonderful works He performed. By repeating the mighty miracle here recorded, He stops the mouth of all who are not willfully blind to evidence. Publicly, and before four thousand witnesses, He shows His almighty power a second time.

Let us observe in this passage *how great is the kindness and compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ*. He saw around Him a "very great multitude," who had nothing to eat. He knew that the great majority were following Him from no other motive than idle curiosity, and had no claim whatever to be regarded as His disciples. Yet when He saw them hungry and destitute, He pitied them:—"I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat."

The feeling heart of our Lord Jesus Christ appears in these words. He has compassion even on those who are not His people,—the faithless, the graceless, the followers of this world. He feels tenderly for them, though they know it not. He died for them, though they care little for what He did on the cross. He would receive them graciously, and pardon them freely, if they would only repent and believe on Him. Let us ever beware of measuring the love of Christ by any human measure. He has a special love, beyond doubt, for His own believing people. But He has also a general love of compassion, even for the unthankful and the evil. His love "passeth knowledge." (Eph. 3:19)

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J. C. Ryle)

Give examples of how the Lord shows compassion on the unsaved. How should this be a pattern for us on how we treat the unsaved?

Matt. 5:44 Rom. 12:20

Mark 8:14-26

Let us notice *the solemn learning* which our Lord gives to His disciples at the beginning of this passage. He says, "take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod."

We are not left to conjecture the meaning of this warning. This is made clear by the parallel passage in Matthew's Gospel. "We there read that Jesus did not mean the leaven of "bread," but the leaven of "doctrine." The self-righteousness and formalism of the Pharisees,—the worldliness and skepticism of the courtiers of Herod, were the objects of our Lord's caution. Against both He bids His disciples be on their guard.

Such warnings are of deep importance. It would be well for the Church of Christ, if they had been more remembered. The assaults of persecution from without have never done half so much harm to the Church, as the rise of false doctrines within. False prophets and false teachers within the camp have done far more mischief in Christendom than all the bloody persecutions of the emperors of Rome.—The sword of the foe has never done such damage to the cause of truth as the tongue and the pen.

The doctrines which our Lord specifies are precisely those which have always been found to inflict most injury on the cause of Christianity. Formalism on the one hand, and skepticism on the other, have been chronic diseases in the professing Church of Christ. In every age multitudes of Christians have been infected by them. In every age men need to watch against them, and be on their guard.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

How can formalism and skepticism work as leaven in our churches today?

Luke 12:1-3 Gal. 5:9

Mark 8:27-33

We see that very Peter who had just witnessed so noble a confession, presuming to rebuke his Master because He spoke of suffering and dying. We see Him drawing down on Himself the sharpest rebuke which ever fell from our Lord's lips during His earthly ministry:—"Get thee behind me, Satan: thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of man."

We have here a humbling proof that the best of saints is a poor fallible creature.—Here was *ignorance* in Simon Peter. He did not understand the necessity of our Lord's death, and would have actually prevented His sacrifice on the cross.—Here was *self-conceit* in Simon Peter. He thought he knew what was right and fitting for his Master better than his Master himself, and actually undertook to show the Messiah a more excellent way.—And last, but not least, Simon Peter did it all with the *best intentions!* He meant well. His motives were pure. But zeal and earnestness are no excuse for error. A man may mean well and yet fall into tremendous mistakes.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J. C. Ryle)

Peter was not considering God's purposes, but only his natural human desires and feelings. He wanted Christ to be King, but not the Suffering Servant (Isa. 53). **How can we achieve spiritual perception today regarding all the true values of life, so that we can guide others into the ways of Christ?**

Matt. 10:38 Luke 17:33 John 12:25 Rom. 8:6-8 Rev. 12:11

Mark 8:34-38

The words of our Lord Jesus Christ in this passage are peculiarly weighty and solemn. They were spoken to correct the mistaken views of His disciples, as to the nature of His kingdom. But they contain truths of the deepest importance to Christians in every age of the Church. The whole passage is one which should often form the subject of private meditation.

We learn, for one thing, from these verses, *the absolute necessity of self-denial, if we would be Christ's disciples, and be saved.* What saith our Lord? "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Salvation is undoubtedly all of grace. It is offered freely in the Gospel to the chief of sinners, without money and without price. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph 2:8-9) But all who accept this great salvation, must prove the reality of their faith by carrying the cross after Christ. They must not think to enter heaven without trouble, pain, suffering, and conflict on earth. They must be content to take up the cross of doctrine, and the cross of practice,—the cross of holding a faith which the world despises, and the cross of living a life which the world ridicules as too strict and righteous overmuch. They must be willing to crucify the flesh, to mortify the deeds of the body, to fight daily with the devil, to come out from the world, and to lose their lives, if needful, for Christ's sake and the Gospel's.—These are hard sayings, but they admit of no evasion. The words of our Lord are plain and unmistakable. If we will not carry the cross, we shall never wear the crown.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Should we be deterred from Christ's service by knowing the consequences we could receive from the world for following Him? Does our Christianity cost us anything?

Prov. 29:25 Phil. 4:13

Mark 9:1-6

In one sense the transfiguration was confirmation of Peter's confession of Christ as the Son of the living God. It was a demonstration of the full deity of the Servant to three of the most discerning disciples, to prepare them against the shock of the Servant's approaching death. In another sense the transfiguration was a celestial testimony and climactic proof that this Jesus was the Christ—the Messiah, Servant and Savior to whom all O.T. prophecies pointed and in whom they were fulfilled.

(Unger's Bible Handbook, M.F. Unger)

What is the significance of Moses and Elijah appearing with Jesus in the transfiguration on the mount?

Mal. 4:5-6 Matt. 11:13-15 Matt. 23:1-4 Luke 1:17 Luke 16:31 John 1:17, 45 John 5:45-46 John 9:28-29

Mark 9:7-13

Finally, the last words of the voice from heaven, are words that should be ever before the minds of all true Christians. They should "hear *Christ.*" He is the great Teacher; they that would be wise must learn of Him. He is the light of the

world: they that would not err must follow Him. He is the Head of the Church: they that would be living members of His mystical body must ever look to Him. The grand question that concerns us all is not so much what man says, or ministers say, — what the Church says, or what councils say,—but What says Christ?—Him let us hear. In Him let us abide. On Him let us lean. To Him let us look. He and He only will never fail us, never disappoint us, and never lead us astray. Happy are they who know experimentally the meaning of the text, "my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John 10:27-28)

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Do we have any excuse for not hearing Christ?

Mark 9:14-29

The contrast between these verses and those which precede them in the chapter is very striking. We pass from the mount of transfiguration to a melancholy history of the work of the devil. We come down from the vision of glory, to a conflict with Satanic possession. We change the blessed company of Moses and Elias, for the rude interaction of unbelieving Scribes. We leave the foretaste of millennial glory, and the solemn voice of God the Father testifying to God the Son, and return once more to a scene of pain, weakness, and misery,—a boy in agony of body, a father in deep distress, and a little band of feeble disciples baffled by Satan's power, and unable to give relief.—The contrast, we must all feel, is very great. Yet it is but a faint emblem of the change of scene that Jesus voluntarily undertook to witness, when He first laid aside His glory and came into the world. And it is after all a vivid picture of the life of all true Christians. With them, as with their Master, work, conflict, and scenes of weakness and sorrow will always be the rule. With them too, visions of glory, foretastes of heaven, seasons on the mount, will always be the exception.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Why is fasting necessary at times in order to fully accomplish God's work?

Ps. 35:10-13 Matt17:21 1 Cor. 7:5

Mark 9:30-37

"By the way they disputed among themselves who should be greatest."

How strange this sounds! Who would have thought that a few fishermen and publicans could have been overcome by emulation, and the desire of supremacy? Who would have expected that poor men, who had given up all for Christ's sake, would have been troubled by strife and dissension, as to the place and precedence which each one deserved? Yet so it is. The fact is recorded for our learning. The Holy Ghost has caused it to be written down for the perpetual use of Christ's Church. Let us take care that it is not written in vain.

It is an awful fact, whether we like to allow it or not, that pride is one of the commonest sins which beset human nature. We are all born Pharisees. We all naturally think far better of ourselves than we ought. We all naturally fancy that we deserve something better than we have.—It is an old sin. It began in the garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve thought they had not got everything that their merits deserved.—It is a subtle sin. It rules and reigns in many a heart without being detected, and can even wear the garb of humility.—It is a most soul-ruining sin. It prevents repentance,—keeps men back from Christ,—checks brotherly love, and nips in the bud spiritual anxiety.—Let us watch against it, and be on our guard. Of all garments, none is so graceful, none wears so well, and none is so rare, as true humility

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

How do we meet the true standard of greatness?

Mark 9:38-50

We see, in these verses, *the reality, awfulness, and eternity of future punishment*. Three times the Lord Jesus speaks of "hell." Three times He mentions the "worm that never dies." Three times He says that "the fire is not quenched."

These awful expressions. They call for reflection rather than exposition. They should be pondered considered, and remembered by all professing Christians. It matters little whether we regard them as figurative and emblematic. If they are so, one thing at least is very clear. The worm and the fire are emblems of real things. There is a real hell, and that hell is eternal.

There is no mercy in keeping back from men the subject of hell. Fearful and tremendous as it is, it ought to be pressed on all, as one of the great truths of Christianity. Our loving Savior speaks frequently of it. The apostle John, in the book of Revelation, often describes it. The servants of God in these days must not be ashamed of confessing their belief in it. Were there no boundless mercy in Christ for all that believe in Him we might well shrink from the awful topic. Were there no precious blood of Christ able to cleanse away all sin, we might well keep silence about the wrath to come. But there is mercy for all who ask in Christ's name. There is a fountain open for all sin. Let us then boldly and unhesitatingly maintain that there is a hell, and beseech men to flee from it, before it be too late. "Knowing the terrors of the Lord," the worm, and the fire, let us "persuade men." (1 Cor. 5:11) It is not quite possible to say too much about Christ. But it is quite possible to say too little about hell.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Gehenna is in contrast to Hades (Luke 16:23), the intermediate state of the wicked dead before judgment. In his teachings Jesus spoke far more about hell than He did about heaven. **As we strive to win souls for Christ, should we likewise warn them as He did?**

Deut. 13:6-11 Matt. 5:29-30 Matt. 5:21-22 Rom. 2:11-12 Rom. 8:12-13 Col. 3:1-4

Mark 10:1-12

The greater portion of this passage is meant to show us *the dignity and importance of the relation of marriage*. It is plain that the prevailing opinions of the Jews upon this subject, when our Lord was upon earth, were lax and low in the extreme. The binding character of the marriage tie was not recognized. Divorce for slight and trivial causes was allowable and common. The duties of husbands towards wives, and of wives towards husbands, as a natural consequence, were little understood. To correct this state of things, our Lord sets up a high and holy standard of principles. He refers to the original institution of marriage at the creation, as the union of one man and one woman. He quotes and endorses the solemn words used at the marriage of Adam and Eve, as words of perpetual significance, "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." He adds a solemn comment to these words,—"What God hath joined together". At the inquiry of His disciples, he declares that divorce followed by re-marriage, except for the cause of unfaithfulness, is a breach of the seventh commandment.

The importance of the whole subject, on which our Lord here pronounces judgment, can hardly be overrated. We ought to be very thankful that we have so clear and full an exposition of His mind upon it. The marriage relation lies at the very root of the social system of nations. The public morality of a people, and the private happiness of the families which compose a people, are deeply involved in the whole question of the law of marriage. The experience of all nations confirms the wisdom of our Lord's decision in this passage in the most striking manner. It is a fact clearly ascertained, that polygamy, and permission to obtain divorce on slight grounds, have a direct tendency to promote immorality. In short, the nearer a nation's laws about marriage approach to the law of Christ, the higher has the moral tone of that nation always proved to be.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Give the meaning of Jesus' statement when He said, "... and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh."

Gen. 2:24 1 Cor. 6:15-18 Eph. 5:25-33

Mark 10:13-27

We all know that faith is possible only for the pure heart. The faculty of spiritual vision and receptivity depends upon the simplicity and integrity of one's moral life. When, therefore, the heart is filled with thoughts of its earthly riches, it becomes gross and insensible to the spiritual and eternal realm. Things of God fade from the vision, the love of God declines from the heart, the soul is no longer single in its purpose, the eye becomes dim, the spiritual force abated, moral paralysis sets in, and the whole body becomes full of darkness, under the cover of which evil things creep.

(Through the Bible Day by Day, F. B. Meyer)

What do you think the remainder of the young ruler's life was like?

Ps. 32:7 Ps. 49:6-7 Ps. 62:10 Prov. 27:24 Prov. 30:8 Eccl. 5:13-14 Jer. 5:27-29 Luke 12:16-21 1
Tim. 6:17-19 Jas. 5:2

Mark 10:28-34

The first thing which demands our attention in these verses, is *the glorious promise which they contain*. The Lord Jesus says to His apostles, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's; but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

There are few wider promises than this in the word of God. There is none certainly in the New Testament which holds out such encouragement for the life that now is. Let every one that is fearful and faint-hearted in Christ's service look at this promise. Let all who are enduring hardness and tribulation for Christ's sake, study this promise well, and drink out of it comfort.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Would it be easier for a Christian going through hardships and trials to have counted the cost beforehand and resolve to walk the narrow path by God's grace never to turn aside? Do you think our Lord counted the cost before he went to Calvary?

Mark 10:35-45

Let us mark in this passage, *the ignorance of our Lord's disciples*. We find James and John petitioning for the first places in the kingdom of glory. We find them confidently declaring their ability to drink of their Master's cup, and be baptized with their Master's baptism. In spite of all the plain warnings of our Lord, they clung obstinately to the belief that Christ's kingdom on earth was immediately going to appear. Notwithstanding their many shortcomings in Christ's service, they had no misgivings as to their power to endure anything which might come upon them. With all their faith, and grace, and love to Jesus, they neither knew their own hearts, nor the nature of the path before them. They still dreamed of temporal crowns, and earthly rewards. They still knew not what manner of men they were.

There are few true Christians who do not resemble James and John, when they first begin the service of Christ. We are apt to expect far more present enjoyment from our religion, than the Gospel warrants us to expect. We are apt to forget the cross, and the tribulation, and to think only of the crown. We form an incorrect estimate of our own patience and power of endurance. We misjudge our own ability to stand temptation and trial. And the result of all is, that we often buy wisdom dearly, by bitter experience, after many disappointments, and not a few falls.

Let the case before us teach us the importance of a solid and calm judgment in our religion. Like James and John, we are right in coveting the best gifts, and in telling all our desires to Christ. Like them we are right in believing that Jesus is King of kings, and will one day reign upon the earth. But let us not, like them, forget that there is a cross to be borne by every Christian, and that "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22) Let us not, like them, be over-confident in our own strength, and forward in professing that we can do anything that Christ requires. Let us, in short, beware of a boastful spirit, when we first begin to run the Christian course. If we remember this, it may save us many a humbling fall.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

It was said of the disciples that they turned the world upside down. This was done only because their teaching and their ministering, learned from the Lord, was radically different from that of the world's posture. **What blessings do we receive from the role of servant; can it be far greater than the "higher" place?**

Matt. 10:25 Matt. 11:28-30 Matt. 25:21 Luke 12:42-48

Mark 10:46-52

Bartimaeus was blind in body, but not in soul. The eyes of his understanding were open. He saw things which Annas and Caiaphas, and hosts of letter-learned Scribes and Pharisees, never saw at all. He saw that Jesus of Nazareth, as our Lord was contemptuously called,—Jesus, who had lived for thirty years in an obscure Galilean village,—this very Jesus was the Son of David,—the Messiah of whom prophets had prophesied long ago. He had witnessed none of our Lord's mighty miracles. He had not had the opportunity of beholding dead people raised with a word, and lepers healed by a touch. Of all these privileges, his blindness totally deprived him. But he had heard the report of our Lord's mighty works, and hearing had believed. He was satisfied from mere hear-say, that He of whom such wonderful things were reported, must be the promised Savior, and must be able to heal him. And so when our Lord drew near, he cried, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

Let us strive and pray that we may have like precious faith. We too are not allowed to see Jesus with our bodily eyes. But we have the report of His power, and grace, and willingness to save, in the Gospel. We have exceeding great promises from His own lips, written down for our encouragement. Let us trust those promises implicitly, and commit our souls to Christ unhesitatingly. Let us not be afraid to repose all our confidence on His own gracious words, and to believe

that what He has engaged to do for sinners, He will surely perform. What is the beginning of all saving faith, but a soul's venture on Christ? What is the life of saving faith, when once begun, but a continual leaning on an unseen Savior's word? What is the first step of a Christian, but keeping up the same spirit of faith? "Though now we see Him not, yet believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." (1 Peter 1:8)

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

As Bartimaeus cried out "Jesus, thou Son of David have mercy on me," "many charged him that he should hold his peace." **How do we handle the ridicule of others when they say, "we are too anxious or exuberant of the things of God?"**

Mark 11:1-11

The event described in these verses, is a singular exception in the history of our Lord's earthly ministry. Generally speaking, we see Jesus withdrawing Himself from public notice,—often passing His time in the remote parts of Galilee,—not infrequently abiding in the wilderness,—and so fulfilling the prophecy, that He should "not cry, nor strive, nor let His voice be heard in the streets." Here, and here only, our Lord appears to drop His private character, and of his own choice to call public attention to Himself. He deliberately makes a public entry into Jerusalem, at the head of His disciples. He voluntarily rides into the holy city, surrounded by a vast multitude, crying, Hosanna, like king David returning to his palace in triumph. (2 Sam 19:40) All this too was done at a time when myriads of Jews were gathered out of every land to Jerusalem, to keep the Passover. We may well believe that the holy city rang with the tidings of our Lord's arrival. It is probable there was not a house in Jerusalem in which the entry of the prophet of Nazareth was not known and talked of that night.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

This crowd, so adoring of Jesus as He rode on the donkey in triumph, truly recognized Him as Messiah. **Could these be the same ones that later cried out "Crucify Him"?**

Ps. 69:20 Matt. 21:9-11 Luke 19:38-48 Luke 23:21-23 John 15:25

Mark 11:12-21

Just as the fig tree which Christ cursed was dried up from the roots long before it was *pulled* up by the roots, so was it with Israel, of whom Jesus said, while He was yet alive "but *now* the things that belong to thy peace are hid from thine eyes;" and yet it was long after that before "the wrath came upon them to the uttermost." And so it is to be feared that many are blighted before they are cut down and cast into the fire, and that there may be a definite time when the curse is pronounced, when the transition takes place, and when the withering process begins, never to be arrested. (See Ezek. 17:24) O that men were wise, that they understood these things, that they would consider their latter end! Although this is the shaking of unbelievers, the fruit concept can also be extended to a believer's life. In John 15:8 we are told to "bear much fruit."

(The Four Gospels, David Brown)

The cursing of the fig tree and the cleansing of the temple took place early in Jesus' last week before His death, and these two incidents are related to each other. The temple was meant to be a place of worship, but true worship had disappeared. The fig tree showed promise of fruit, but it had none. Jesus was showing His anger at religious life without substance. **Please make a statement regarding Christianity today—are people going through the motions of faith without them bearing fruit; are many like the fig tree that withered and died? How can the church bear fruit for the Kingdom?**

Mark 11:22-26

Let us learn from these words of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the immense importance of faith.*

This is a lesson which our Lord teaches first by a proverbial saying. Faith shall enable a man to accomplish works, and overcome difficulties, as great and formidable as the "removing of a mountain, and casting it into the sea." Afterwards the lesson is impressed upon us still further, by a general exhortation to exercise faith when we pray. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." This promise must of course be taken with a reasonable qualification. It assumes that a believer will ask things which are not sinful, and which are in accordance with the will of God. When He asks such things, he may confidently believe that his prayer will be answered. To use the words of James, "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." (James 1:6)

The faith here commended must be distinguished from that faith which is essential to justification. In principle undoubtedly all true faith is one and the same. It is always trust or belief. But in the object and operations of faith there are diversities, which it is useful to understand. Justifying faith is that act of the soul by which a man lays hold on Christ, and has peace with God. Its special object is the atonement for sin which Jesus made on the cross.—The faith spoken of in the passage now before us is a grace of more general signification, the fruit and companion of justifying faith, but still not to be confounded with it. It is rather a general confidence in God's power, wisdom, and goodwill towards believers. And its special objects are the promises, the word, and the character of God in Christ.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Should the promise of “removing mountains” be taken figuratively or literally? Why? What are figurative mountains in your prayer requests?

Mark 11:27-33

These chief priests and elders could not deny the reality of our Lord's miracles of mercy. They could not say that His teaching was contrary to Holy Scripture, or that His life was sinful. What then did they do? They attacked His claim to attention, and demanded His authority;—“By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?”

The chief priests and elders dared not answer our Lord's question about John's Baptism. They dared not say, it was “of men,” because they feared the people. They dared not confess that it was “of heaven,” because they saw our Lord would say, “Why did ye not believe him? He testified plainly of me.” What then did they do? They told a direct lie. They said, “we cannot tell.”

It is a melancholy fact, that dishonesty like this is far from being uncommon among unconverted people. There are thousands who evade appeals to their conscience by answers which are not true. When pressed to attend to their souls, they say things which they know are not correct. They love the world and their own way, and like our Lord's enemies, are determined not to give them up, but like them also are ashamed to say the truth. And so they answer exhortations to repentance and decision by false excuses. One man pretends that he “cannot understand” the doctrines of the Gospel. Another assures us that he really “tries” to serve God, but makes no progress. A third declares that he has every wish to serve Christ, but “has no time.” All these are often nothing better than miserable equivocations. As a general rule, they are as worthless as the chief priests' answer, “we cannot tell.”

The plain truth is that we ought to be very slow to give credit to the unconverted man's professed reasons for not serving Christ. We may be tolerably sure, that when he says “I cannot,” the real meaning of his heart is “I will not.” A really honest spirit in religious matters is a mighty blessing. Once let a man be willing to live up to his light, and act up to his knowledge, and he will soon know of the doctrine of Christ, and come out from the world. (John 7:17) The ruin of thousands is simply this, that they deal dishonestly with their own souls. They allege pretended difficulties as the cause of their not serving Christ, while in reality they “love darkness rather than light,” and have no honest desire to change. (John 3:19)

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Why didn't the chief priests, scribes and elders accept Christ's authority?

Mark 12:1-12

The verses before us contain a historical parable. The history of the Jewish nation, from the day that Israel left Egypt down to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, is here set before us as in a glass. Under the figure of the vineyard and the husbandmen, the Lord Jesus tells the story of God's dealings with his people for fifteen hundred years. Let us study it attentively, and apply it to ourselves.

Let us observe, in the first place, *God's special kindness to the Jewish Church and nation*. He gave to them peculiar privileges. He dealt with them as a man deals with a piece of land which he separates and hedges in for “a vineyard.” He gave them good laws and ordinances. He planted them in a goodly land, and cast out seven nations before them. He passed by greater and mightier nations to show them favor. He let alone Egypt, and Assyria, and Greece, and Rome, and showered down mercies on a few million of people in Palestine. The vineyard of the Lord was the house of Israel. No family under heaven ever received so many signal and distinguishing privileges as the family of Abraham.

Let us observe, in the second place, *God's patience and longsuffering towards the Jewish nation*. What is their whole history as recorded in the Old Testament, but a long record of repeated provocations and repeated pardons? Over and over again we read of prophets being sent to them, and warnings being delivered, but too often entirely in vain. One servant after another came to the vineyard of Israel, and asked for fruit.—One servant after another was “sent away empty” by the Jewish husbandmen, and no fruit borne by the nation to the glory of God. “They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets.” (2 Chr. 36:16) Yet hundreds of years passed away before

"the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." Never was there a people so patiently dealt with as Israel.

Let us observe, in the third place, *the hardness and wickedness of human nature, as exemplified in the history of the Jewish people.*

It is difficult to imagine a more striking proof of this truth, than the summary of Israel's dealings with God's messengers, which our Lord sketches in this parable. Prophet after prophet was sent to them in vain. Miracle after miracle was wrought among them, without any lasting effect. The Son of God Himself, the well-beloved, at last came down to them, and was not believed. God Himself was manifest in the flesh, dwelling among them, and "they took Him and killed Him."

There is no truth so little realized and believed as the "desperate wickedness" of the human heart. Let the parable before us this day be always reckoned among the standing proofs of it. Let us see in it what men and women can do, in the full blaze of religious privileges,—in the midst of prophecies and miracles,—in the presence of the Son of God Himself. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." (Rom. 8:7) Men never saw God face to face but once, when Jesus became a man, and lived upon earth. They saw Him holy, harmless, undefiled, going about doing good. Yet they would not have Him, rebelled against Him, and at last killed Him. Let us dismiss from our minds the idea that there is any innate goodness, or natural rectitude, in our hearts. Let us put away the common notion that seeing and knowing what is good is enough to make a man a Christian. The great experiment has been made in the instance of the Jewish nation. We too, like Israel, might have among us miracles, prophets, and the company of Christ Himself in the flesh, and yet, like Israel, have them in vain. Nothing but the Spirit of God can change the heart. "We must be born again." (John 3:7)

Let us observe, in the last place, *that men's consciences may be pricked, and yet they may continue impenitent.* The Jews, to whom our Lord addressed the solemn historical parable which we have been reading, saw clearly that it applied to themselves. They felt that they and their forefathers were the husbandmen to whom the vineyard was let, and who ought to have rendered fruit to God. They felt that they and their forefathers were the wicked laborers, who had refused to give the Master of the vineyard His dues, and had "shamefully handled" His servants, "beating some, and killing some." Above all, they felt that they themselves were planning the last crowning act of wickedness, which the parable described. They were about to kill the well-beloved Son, and "cast Him out of the vineyard." All this they knew perfectly well. "They knew that He had spoken the parable against them." Yet though they knew it, they would not repent. Though convicted by their own consciences, they were hardened in sin.

Let us learn from this awful fact, that knowledge and conviction alone save no man's soul. It is quite possible to know that we are wrong, and be unable to deny it, and yet to cleave to our sins obstinately, and perish miserably in hell. The thing that we all need, is a change of heart and will. For this let us pray earnestly. Till we have this, let us never rest. Without this, we shall never be real Christians, and reach heaven. Without it we may live all our lives, like the Jews, knowing inwardly that we are wrong, and yet, like the Jews, persevere in our own way, and die in our sins.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

A parable uses something familiar to help us understand something new, and it helps the hearer to discover truth for himself, but the message gets through only to those who are willing to listen and learn. **Define the following in this parable:**

certain man

vineyard

vinedressers (or tenants, or farmers)

servants

one son

Why did Jesus close this parable with the quotation from Psalm 118:22-23?

Mark 12:13-17

He made the daily practice of His own enemies supply Him with an answer to their cunning question. He tells them to "bring Him a penny," a common coin which they themselves were in the habit of using. He asks them "whose image and superscription" are stamped upon that penny? They are obliged to reply, "Caesar's." They were themselves using a Roman coin, issued and circulated by the Roman government. By their own confession they were in some way under the power of the Romans, or this Roman money would not have been current among them. At once our Lord silences them by the memorable words, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." He bids them pay tribute to the Roman government in temporal things, for by using its money they allowed themselves bound to do so.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

The coin in our Scripture reading belonged to the emperor because it had his image on it. **Describe whose image is on our life when we belong to God.**

Mark 12:18-27

We learn from this passage, *how much unfairness may often be detected in the arguments of infidels.*

The question propounded by the Sadducees is a striking illustration of this. They tell him of a woman who married seven brothers in succession, had no children, and outlived her seven husbands. They ask "whose wife" of all the seven the woman would be "in the resurrection?" It may well be surmised that the case was a supposed and not a real one. On the face of it, there is the strongest appearance of improbability. The chances against such a case occurring in reality, any actuary would tell us, are almost infinite. But that was nothing to the Sadducees. All they cared for was to raise a difficulty, and if possible to put our Lord to silence. The doctrine of the resurrection they had not the face manfully to deny. The possible consequences of the doctrine were the ground which they chose to take up.

There are three things which we shall do well to remember, if unhappily we have at any time to argue with infidels.—For one thing, let us remember that an infidel will always try to press us with the difficulties and abstruse things of religion, and especially with those which are connected with the world to come. We must avoid this mode of argument as far as possible. It is leaving the open field to fight in a jungle. We must endeavor, as far as we can, to make our discussion turn on the great plain facts and evidences of Christianity.—For another thing, let us remember, we must be on our guard against unfairness and dishonesty in argument—it may seem hard and uncharitable to say this. But experience proves that it is needful. Thousands of professed infidels have confessed in their latter days, that they had never studied the Bible which they pretended to deny, and though well read in the works of unbelievers and sceptics, had never calmly examined the foundations of Christianity.—Above all, let us remember that every infidel has a conscience. To this we may always appeal confidently. The very men who talk most loudly and disdainfully against religion, are often feeling conscious, even while they talk, that they are wrong. The very arguments which they have sneered at and ridiculed, will often prove at last not to have been thrown away.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Why did Jesus say the Sadducees were in error?

Mark 12:28-34

Mark alone mentions that the *scribe* was softened down; and it is worthy of notice that, though he had attacked Christ maliciously, and with the intention of taking him by surprise, not only does he silently yield to the latter, but openly and candidly assents to what Christ had said. Thus we see that he did not belong to the class of those enemies whose obstinacy is incurable; for, though they have been a hundred times convinced, yet they do not cease to oppose the truth in some manner. From this reply it may also be concluded, that Christ did not precisely include under these two words the rule of life, but embraced the opportunity which presented itself for reproving the false and hypocritical holiness of the scribes, who, giving their whole attention to outward ceremonies, almost entirely disregarded the spiritual worship of God, and cared little about brotherly kindness. Now though the scribe was infected by such corruptions, yet as sometimes happens, he had obtained from the Law the seed of the right knowledge, which lay choked in his heart, and on that account he easily allows himself to be withdrawn from the wicked custom.

(Calvin's Commentaries, John Calvin)

In Mark 12:34, Jesus said to the scribe "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." **How much farther did this scribe have to go in order to enter the kingdom of God?**

Mark 12:35-44

What think you of Christ? Mark and Luke express more clearly the reason why Christ put this question. It was because there prevailed among the *scribes* an erroneous opinion, that the promised Redeemer would be one of *David's* sons and successors, who would bring along with him nothing more elevated than human nature. For from the very commencement Satan endeavored, by all the arts which he could devise, to put forward some pretended Christ, who was not the true Mediator between God and men. God having so frequently promised that Christ would proceed from the *seed*, or from the *loins*, of *David*, this conviction was so deeply rooted in their minds, that they could not endure to have him stripped of human nature. Satan therefore permitted Christ to be acknowledged as a true man and *a son of David*, for he would in vain have attempted to overturn this article of faith; but—what was worse—he stripped him of his divinity, as if he had been only one of the ordinary descendants of Adam. But in this manner the hope of future and eternal life, as well

as spiritual righteousness, was abolished. And ever since Christ was manifested to the world, heretics have attempted by various contrivances—and as it were under ground to overturn sometimes his human, and sometimes his divine nature, that either he might not have full power to save us, or we might not have ready access to him. Now as the hour of his death was already approaching, the Lord himself intended to attest his divinity, that all the godly might boldly rely on him, for if he had been only man, we would have had no right either to glory in Him, or to expect salvation from Him.

(Calvin's Commentaries, John Calvin)

Jesus quoted Psalm 110:1 to show that the Messiah would be different from an ordinary man. **Did the religious leaders have any conception that the Messiah would be far more than a human descendant of David—that He would be God Himself in human form? Does this very thought bring you in awe to the wonder and the compassion of an all-God, all-Man Redeemer?**

Rom. 11:34-36

Mark 13:1-8

The chapter we have now begun is full of prophecy,—prophecy of which part has been fulfilled, and part remains to be accomplished. Two great events form the subject of this prophecy. One is the destruction of Jerusalem, and the consequent end of the Jewish dispensation. The other is the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the winding up of the state of things under which we now live. The destruction of Jerusalem was an event which happened only forty years after our Lord was crucified. The second coming of Christ is an event which is yet to come, and we may yet live to see it with our own eyes.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

The temple was indeed desecrated by those who insulted God's holiness. Titus, who destroyed it in AD 70, had an idol of himself placed on the site of the burned-out temple. **What, today, is the temple of God, and how can it be made to glorify Him?**

1 Cor. 6:19-20

Mark 13:9-13

What rich encouragement the Lord Jesus holds out to His persecuted people. He sets before them three rich cordials to cheer their souls. For one thing, He tells us that "the Gospel must first be preached among all nations." It must be, and it shall be. In spite of men and devils, the story of the cross of Christ shall be told in every part of the world. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Notwithstanding persecution, imprisonment, and death, there never shall be wanting a succession of faithful men, who shall proclaim the glad tidings of salvation by grace. Few may believe them. Many of their hearers may continue hardened in sin. But nothing shall prevent the Gospel being preached. The word shall never be bound, though those who preach it may be imprisoned and slain. (2 Tim. 2:9)

For another thing, our Lord tells us, that those who are placed in special trial for the Gospel's sake, shall have special help in their time of need. The Holy Ghost shall assist them in making their defense. They shall have a mouth and wisdom which their adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist. As it was with Peter and John and Paul, when brought before Jewish and Roman councils, so shall it be with all true-hearted disciples. How thoroughly this promise has been fulfilled, the histories of Huss, and Luther, and Latimer, and Bidley, and Baxter, abundantly prove. Christ has been faithful to His word.

For another thing, our Lord tells us that patient perseverance shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. Not one of those who endure tribulation shall miss his reward. All shall at length reap a rich harvest. Their light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall lead to an eternal weight of glory.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

What period of time is being spoken of here?

Mark 13:14-23

What our Lord there said was designed specially for the godly Jewish remnant who will be in Palestine during the Tribulation period. When the "abomination of desolation" is set up in the holy place, whoso *readeth* should "understand". How wondrously this agrees with other scriptures, and what a value it places upon the written Word! No supernatural revelation will be granted—these all *ceased* when the Canon of Scripture closed. Then, as now, "understanding" is made dependent upon the *reading* of what God *has* revealed.

What, then, is it that those godly Jews should “understand”? Why, that a crisis has been reached. That the Antichrist now stands fully revealed for the impious impostor that he is. And now that his character is clearly manifested, let them beware. Let them turn to Rev. 13:14, 15, and they will discover that *death* awaits them should they tarry any longer in Jerusalem. Therefore, says Christ, “Let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains; let him that is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house... for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. 24:16-21; Mark 13:15-18). How marvelously one scripture throws light on another! How clearly does Rev. 13:14, 15 explain the need for this hurried flight of the faithful remnant!

(The Antichrist, A. W. Pink)

Does Mark 13:14 correspond to the same person and the same event spoken of in 2 Thess. 2:4?

How will the final earthly temple be desolated or desecrated?

Dan. 9:27 Dan. 12:11 2 Thess. 2:3-4 Rev. 13:14-15

Mark 13:24-31

What solemn majesty will attend our Lord Jesus Christ's second coming to this world. The language that is used about the sun, moon, and stars, conveys the idea of some universal convulsion of the universe at the close of the present dispensation. It reminds us of the apostle Peter's words, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." (2 Pet. 3:10) At such a time as this, amidst terror and confusion, exceeding all that even earthquakes or hurricanes are known to produce, men "shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."

The second coming of Christ shall be utterly unlike the first. He came the first time in weakness, a tender infant, born of a poor woman in the manger at Bethlehem, unnoticed, unhonored, and scarcely known. He shall come the second time in royal dignity, with the armies of heaven around Him, to be known, recognized, and feared, by all the tribes of the earth. He came the first time to suffer,—to bear our sins,—to be reckoned a curse,—to be despised, rejected, unjustly condemned, and slain. He shall come the second time to reign,—to put down every enemy beneath his feet,—to take the kingdoms of this world for His inheritance,—to rule them with righteousness,—to judge all men, and to live for evermore.

How vast the difference! How mighty the contrast! How startling the comparison between the second advent and the first! How solemn the thoughts that the subject ought to stir up in our minds! Here are *comfortable* thoughts for Christ's friends. Their own King will soon be here. They shall reap according as they have sown. They shall receive a rich reward for all that they have endured for Christ's sake. They shall exchange their cross for a crown.—Here are *confounding* thoughts for Christ's foes. That same Jesus of Nazareth, whom they have so long despised and rejected, shall at length have the preeminence. That very Christ, whose Gospel they have refused to believe, shall appear as their Judge, and helpless, hopeless, and speechless, they will have to stand before His bar. May we all lay these things to heart, and learn wisdom!

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

What will be the first event after Christ's Second Coming?

2 Thess. 2:1

Mark 13:32-37

We learn from these verses, that *the exact time of our Lord Jesus Christ's second advent is purposely withheld from His church.* The event is certain. The precise day and hour are not revealed. “Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven.”

There is deep wisdom and mercy in this intentional silence. We have reason to thank God that the thing has been hidden from us. Uncertainty about the date of the Lord's return is calculated to keep believers in an attitude of constant expectation, and to preserve them from despondency. What a dreary prospect the early church would have had before it, if it had known for certain that Christ would not return to earth for at least fifteen hundred years! The hearts of men like Athanasius, Chrysostom, and Augustine, might well have sunk within them, if they had been aware of the centuries of darkness through which the world would pass, before their Master came back to take the kingdom.—What a quickening motive, on the other hand, true Christians have perpetually had, for a close walk with God! They have never known, in any age, that their Master might not come suddenly to take account of His servants. This very uncertainty has supplied them with a reason for living always ready to meet Him.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Comment on our practical duties such as watching, praying, and working when we know that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ could be near.

Luke 21:34 1 Thess. 5:6 2 Pet. 3:14

Mark 14:1-2

It is plain from Mark's words, and the parallel passage in Matthew, that our Lord's enemies did not intend to make His death a public transaction. "They sought to take Him by craft." "They said, not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people." In short, it would appear that their original plan was to do nothing till the feast of the Passover was over, and the Passover-worshippers had returned to their own homes.

The overruling providence of God completely defeated this politic design. The betrayal of our Lord took place at an earlier time than the chief priests had expected. The death of our Lord took place on the very day when Jerusalem was most full of people, and the Passover feast was at its height. In every way the counsel of these wicked men was turned to foolishness. They thought they were going to put an end for ever to Christ's spiritual kingdom; and in reality they were helping to establish it. They thought to have made Him vile and contemptible by the crucifixion; and in reality they made Him glorious. They thought to have put Him to death privately, and without observation; and instead, they were compelled to crucify Him publicly, and before the whole nation of the Jews. They thought to have silenced His disciples, and stopped their teaching; and instead, they supplied them with a text and a subject for evermore. So easy is it for God to cause the wrath of man to praise Him. (Ps. 76:10)

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

What is God's answer to Psalms 2:1-2, "Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set them-selves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed?" (KJV)

Ps. 2:4

Mark 14:3-9

How *highly our Lord Jesus Christ esteems any service done to Himself*. Nowhere, perhaps, in the Gospels, do we find such strong praises bestowed on any person, as this woman here receives. Three points, in particular, stand out prominently in our Lord's words, to which many who now ridicule and blame others for their religion's sake, would do well to take heed.

For one thing, our Lord says, "Why trouble ye her?" —A heart-searching question that, and one which all who persecute others because of their religion would find it hard to answer!—What cause can they show? What reason can they assign for their conduct? None! none at all. They trouble others out of envy, malice, ignorance, and dislike of the true Gospel.

For another thing, our Lord says, "She hath done a good work."—How great and marvellous is that praise, from the lips of the King of kings! Money is often given to the Church, or bestowed on charitable institutions, from ostentation, or other false motives. But it is the person who loves and honors Jesus Himself, who really "does good works."

For another thing, our Lord says, "She hath done what she could."—No stronger word of commendation than that could possibly have been used. Thousands live and die without grace, and are lost eternally, who are always saying, "I try all I can. I do all I can." And yet in saying so, they tell as great a lie as Ananias and Sapphira. Few, it may be feared, are to be found like this woman, and really deserve to have it said of them, that they "do what they can."

Let us leave the passage with practical self-application. Let us, like this holy woman, whose conduct we have just heard described, devote ourselves, and all we have, to Christ's glory. Our position in the world may be lowly, and our means of usefulness few. But let us, like her, "do what we can."

Finally, let us see in this passage a sweet foretaste of things yet to come in the day of judgment. Let us believe that the same Jesus who here pleaded the cause of His loving servant, when she was blamed, will one day plead for all who have been His servants in this world. Let us work on, remembering that His eye is upon us, and that all we do is noted in His book.—Let us not heed what men say or think of us, because of our religion. The praise of Christ, at the last day, will more than compensate for all we suffer in this world from unkind tongues.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

What activities are there that Christians do today that seem only a waste to the world?

Mark 14:10-11

In these verses, Mark tells us how our Lord was delivered into the hands of His enemies. It came to pass through the treachery of one of His own twelve disciples. The false apostle, Judas Iscariot, betrayed Him.

We ought to mark, firstly, in this passage, *to what lengths a man may go in a fake profession of religion.*

It is impossible to conceive a more striking proof of this painful truth, than the history of Judas Iscariot. If ever there was a man who at one time looked like a true disciple of Christ, and bade fair to reach heaven, that man was Judas. He was chosen by the Lord Jesus Himself to be an apostle. He was privileged to be a companion of the Messiah, and an eye-witness of His mighty works, throughout His earthly ministry. He was an associate of Peter, James, and John. He was sent forth to preach the kingdom of God, and to work miracles in Christ's name. He was regarded by all the eleven apostles as one of themselves. He was so like his fellow disciples, that they did not suspect him of being a traitor. And yet this very man turns out at last a false-hearted child of the devil,—departs entirely from the faith,—assists our Lord's deadliest enemies, and leaves the world with a worse reputation than any one since the days of Cain. Never was there such a fall, such an apostasy, such a miserable end to a fair beginning,—such a total eclipse of a soul!

And how can this amazing conduct of Judas be accounted for? There is only one answer to that question. "The love of money" was the cause of this unhappy man's ruin. That same grovelling covetousness, which enslaved the heart of Balaam, and brought on Gehazi a leprosy, was the destruction of Iscariot's soul. No other explanation of his behavior will satisfy the plain statements of Scripture. His act was an act of mean covetousness, without a redeeming feature about it. The Holy Ghost declares plainly "he was a thief." (John 12: 6.) And his case stands before the world as an eternal comment on the solemn words, "the love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim. 6:10)

Let us learn from this melancholy history of Judas, to be "clothed with humility," and to be content with nothing short of the grace of the Holy Ghost in our hearts. Knowledge, gifts, profession, privileges, church-membership, power of preaching, praying, and talking about religion, are all useless things, if our hearts are not converted. They are all no better than sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal, if we have not put off the old man, and put on the new. They will not deliver us from hell.—Above all, let us remember our Lord's caution, to "beware of covetousness." (Luke 12:15) It is a sin that eats like a canker, and once admitted into our hearts, may lead us finally into every wickedness. Let us pray to be "content with such things as we have." (Heb. 13:6) The possession of money is not the one thing needful. Riches entail great peril on the souls of those who have them. The true Christian ought to be far more afraid of being rich than of being poor.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Satan drives us every day to crimes, and reigns in us, when he hurries us into a course of extraordinary wickedness; yet he is said to *enter* into the reprobate, when he takes possession of all their senses, overthrows the fear of God, extinguishes the light of reason, and destroys every feeling of shame. This extremity of vengeance God does not execute on any but those who are already devoted to destruction. Let us therefore learn to repent early, lest our long-continued harshness should confirm the reign of Satan within us; for as soon as we have been abandoned to this tyranny, his rage will have no bounds.

(Calvin's Commentaries, John Calvin)

J. C. Ryle says it was covetousness and the love of money that drove Judas to betray our Lord, but John Calvin looks at it from a different point of view. **What do you think drove Judas to betray our Lord?**

Did Judas make the choice of his own free will? Would you say that Judas lost his relationship with Jesus, or would you say he had never truly found Jesus? In John 17:12 he is called the "son of perdition" (or, son of hell). Is that stating clearly that he never was saved?

Mark 14:12-16

We cannot doubt for a moment that it was not by chance, but by God's providential appointment, that our Lord was crucified in the passover week, and on the very day that the passover lamb was slain. It was meant to draw the attention of the Jewish nation to Him as the true Lamb of God. It was meant to bring to their minds the true object and purpose of His death. Every sacrifice, no doubt, was intended to point the Jew onward to the one great sacrifice for sin which Christ offered. But none, certainly, was so striking a figure and type of our Lord's sacrifice, as the slaying of the passover lamb. It was preeminently an ordinance which was a "schoolmaster unto Christ." (Gal. 3:24) Never was there a type so full of meaning in the whole circle of Jewish ceremonies, as the passover was at its original institution.

Did the passover remind the Jew of the marvellous deliverance of his forefathers out of the land of Egypt, when God slew the first-born? No doubt it did. But it was also meant to be a sign to him of the far greater redemption and deliverance from the bondage of sin, which was to be brought in by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Did the passover remind the Jew, that by the death of an innocent lamb, the families of his forefathers were once exempted from the death of their first-born? No doubt it did. But it was also meant to teach him the far higher truth, that the death of Christ on the cross was to be the life of the world.

Did the passover remind the Jew that the sprinkling of blood on the door-posts of his forefathers' houses, preserved them from the sword of the destroying angel? No doubt it did. But it was also meant to show him the far more important doctrine that Christ's blood sprinkled on man's conscience, cleanses it from all stain of guilt, and makes him safe from the wrath to come. Did the passover remind the Jew that none of his fore-fathers were safe from the destroying angel, in the night when he slew the first-born, unless he actually ate of the slain lamb? No doubt it did. But it was meant to guide his mind to the far higher lesson, that all who would receive benefit from Christ's atonement, must actually feed upon Him by faith, and receive Him into their hearts.

Let us call these things to mind, and weigh them well. We shall then see a peculiar fitness and beauty in the time appointed by God for our Lord Jesus Christ's death on the cross. It happened at the very season when the mind of all Israel was being directed to the deliverance from Egypt, and to the events of that wondrous night, when it took place. The lamb slain and eaten by every member of the family,—the destroying angel,—the safety within the blood-sprinkled door, would have been talked over and considered in every Jewish household, the very week that our blessed Lord was slain. It would be strange indeed if such a remarkable death as His, at such a time, did not set many minds thinking, and open many eyes. To what extent we shall never know till the last day.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Why is it important for us to know the Old Testament meanings of things like: the altar, scapegoat, Passover, burn offering, Day of Atonement, etc.?

Mark 14:17-25

The principal object of the Lord's Supper, is to remind us of Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross. The bread is intended to bring to our recollection the "body" of Christ, which was wounded for our transgressions. The wine is intended to bring to our recollection the "blood" of Christ, which was shed to cleanse us from all sin. The atonement and propitiation which our Lord effected by His death as our Surety Substitute, stand out prominently in the whole ordinance. The false doctrine which some teach, that His death was nothing more than the death of a very holy man, who left us an example how to die, turns the Lord's supper into an unmeaning ordinance, and cannot possibly be reconciled with our Lord's words at its institution.

A clear understanding of this point is of great importance. It will place us in the right position of mind, and teach us how we ought to feel in drawing near to the Lord's table.—It will produce in us true *humility* of spirit. The bread and wine will remind us how sinful sin must be, when nothing but Christ's death could atone for it.—It will produce in us *hopefulness* about our souls. The bread and wine will remind us that though our sins are great, a great price has been paid for our redemption.—Not least, it will produce in us *gratitude*. The bread and wine will remind us how great is our debt to Christ, and how deeply bound we are to glorify Him in our lives. May these be the feelings that we experience, whenever we receive the Lord's supper!

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

When you eat the bread and drink the wine you are not really and literally eating Christ's body and blood. **What are you doing when you partake of the Lord's supper?**

Jer. 31:31-34 1 Cor. 10:16 1 Cor. 11:23-26 Heb. 8:7-13 Heb. 9:13-15

Mark 14:26-31

We see in these verses, *how well our Lord foreknew the weakness and infirmity of His disciples*. He tells them plainly what they were going to do. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night." He tells Peter in particular of the astounding sin which he was about to commit: "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."

Yet our Lord's fore-knowledge did not prevent His choosing these twelve disciples to be His apostles. He allowed them to be His intimate friends and companions, knowing perfectly well what they would one day do. He granted them the mighty privilege of being continually with Him, and hearing His voice, with a clear foresight of the melancholy weakness and want of faith which they would exhibit at the end of His ministry. This is a remarkable fact, and deserves to be had in continual remembrance. Let us take comfort in the thought that the Lord Jesus does not cast off His believing people because of failures and imperfections. He knows what they are. He takes them, as the husband takes the wife, with all their blemishes and defects, and, once joined to Him by faith, will never put them away. He is a merciful and compassionate High-priest. It is His glory to pass over the transgressions of His people, and to cover their many sins. He knew what they were before conversion,—wicked, guilty, and denied; yet He loved them. He knows what they will be after conversion,—weak, erring, and frail; yet He loves them. He has undertaken to save them, notwithstanding all their shortcomings, and what He has undertaken He will perform.

Let us learn to pass a charitable judgment on the conduct of professing believers. Let us not set them down in a low place, and say they have no grace, because we see in them much weakness and corruption. Let us remember that our Master in heaven bears with their infirmities, and let us try to bear with them too. The Church of Christ is little better than a great hospital. We ourselves are all, more or less, weak, and all daily need the skilful treatment of the heavenly Physician. There will be no complete cures till the resurrection day. We see in these verses, *how much comfort professing Christians may miss by carelessness and inattention*. Our Lord spoke plainly of His resurrection: "After that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee." Yet His words appear to have been thrown away, and spoken in vain. Not one of His disciples seems to have noticed them, or treasured them up in his heart. When He was betrayed, they forsook Him. When He was crucified, they were almost in despair. And when he rose again on the third day, they would not believe that it was true. They had heard of it frequently with the hearing of the ear, but it had never made any impression on their hearts.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Explain how Prov 28:26, "He that trusteth his own heart is a fool," was true of the disciples and is true of us also.

Mark 14:32-42

He had no horror at death, therefore, simply as a passage out of the world, but because he had before his eyes the dreadful tribunal of God, and the Judge himself armed with inconceivable vengeance; and because our sins, the load of which was laid upon him, pressed him down with their enormous weight. There is no reason to wonder, therefore, if the dreadful abyss of destruction tormented him grievously with fear and anguish.

(Calvin's Commentaries, John Calvin)

What was the "cup" that Jesus asked His Father to take away if it were possible?

Matt. 20-22 John 5:30 John 6:38 John 12:27 John 18:11 Rom. 8:15 Heb. 5:7-9

What was Jesus' remedy during His time of distress?

Jas. 5:13

Mark 14:43-52

There was no accident or chance in any part of the close of our Lord's earthly ministry. The steps in which He walked from Gethsemane to Calvary, were all marked out hundreds of years before. The twenty-second Psalm, and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, were literally fulfilled. The wrath of His enemies,—His rejection by His own people,—His being dealt with as a malefactor,—His being condemned by the assembly of the wicked,—all had been foreknown, and all foretold. All that took place was only the working out of God's great design to provide an atonement for a world's sin. The armed men whom Judas brought to lay hand on Jesus, were, like Nebuchadnezzar and Sennacherib, unconscious instruments in carrying God's purposes into effect.

Let us rest our souls on the thought, that all around us is ordered and overruled by God's almighty wisdom. The course of this world may often be contrary to our wishes. The position of the Church may often be very unlike what we desire. The wickedness of worldly men, and the inconsistencies of believers, may often afflict our souls. But there is a hand above us, moving the vast machine of this universe, and making all things work together for His glory. The Scriptures are being yearly fulfilled. Not one jot or tittle in them shall ever fail to be accomplished. The kings of the earth may take counsel together, and the rulers of the nations may set themselves against Christ. (Ps. 2:2) But the resurrection morning shall prove that, even at the darkest time, all things were being done according to the will of God.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

What can we learn from the actions of the eleven disciples in this incident?

Mark 14:53-54

Solomon tells us in the book of Ecclesiastes that one evil he has seen under the sun, is when “folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place.” (Ecc. 10:6) We can imagine no more complete illustration of his words than the state of things we have recorded in the passage before us. We see the Son of God, “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” arraigned as a malefactor before “the chief priests, and elders, and scribes.” We see the heads of the Jewish nation combining together to kill their own Messiah, and judging Him who will one day come in glory to judge them and all mankind.

Let us observe in these verses, *how foolishly Christians sometimes thrust themselves into temptation*. We are told that when our Lord was led away prisoner, “Peter followed Him afar off, even into the place of the high priest: and he sat with servants, and warmed himself at the fire.” There was no wisdom in this act. Having once forsaken his Master and fled, he ought to have remembered his own weakness, and not to have ventured into danger again. It was an act of rashness and presumption. It brought on him fresh trials of faith, for which he was utterly unprepared. It threw him into bad company, where he was not likely to get good but harm. It paved the way for his last and greatest transgression,—his thrice-repeated denial of his Master.

But it is an experimental truth that ought never to be overlooked, that when a believer has once begun to backslide and leave his first faith, he seldom stops short at his first mistake. He seldom makes only one stumble. He seldom commits only one fault. A blindness seems to come over the eyes of his understanding. He appears to cast over-board his common sense and discretion. Like a stone rolling down-hill, the further he goes on in sinning, the faster and more decided is his course. Like David, he may begin with idleness, and end with committing every possible crime. Like Peter, he may begin with cowardice,—go on to foolish trifling with temptation, and then end with denying Christ.

If we know anything of true saving religion, let us ever beware of the beginnings of backsliding. It is like the letting out of water, first a drop then a torrent. Once out of the way of holiness, there is no saying to what we may come. Once giving way to petty inconsistencies, we may find ourselves one day committing every sort of wickedness. Let us keep far from the brink of evil. Let us not play with fire. Let us never fear being too particular, too strict, and too precise. No petition in the Lord’s prayer is more important than the one, “Lead us not into temptation.”

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Could the servants that warmed themselves around the fire recognize who Peter was? Can unbelievers recognize us?

Mark 14:55-65

We ought to consider what we have deserved, and next, the satisfaction offered by Christ ought to awaken us to confident hope. Our filthiness deserves that God should hold it in abhorrence and that all the angels should *spit* upon us; but Christ, in order to present us pure and unspotted in presence of the Father, resolved to be *spat upon*, and to be dishonored by every kind of reproach. For this reason, that disgrace which he once endured on earth obtains for us favor in heaven, and at the same time restores in us the image of God, which had been not only stained, but almost obliterated, by the pollutions of sin. Here, too, is brightly displayed the inconceivable mercy of God towards us, in bringing his only begotten Son so low on our account.

(Calvin’s Commentaries, John Calvin)

Have we some part in the way the Lord was mistreated?

John 3:16-18 Titus 3:4 1 John 4:8, 7-12, 16

Mark 14:66-72

We know that Simon Peter was an eminent apostle of Jesus Christ. He was one who had received special commendation from our Lord’s lips, after a noble confession of His Messiahship: “Blessed art thou Simon Barjona:”—“I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” He was one who had enjoyed special privileges, and had special mercies shown to him. Yet here we see this same Simon Peter so entirely overcome by *fear* that he actually denies his Lord. He declares that he knows not Him whom he had accompanied and lived with for three years! He declares that he knows not Him who had healed his own wife’s mother, taken him up into the mount of transfiguration, and saved him from drowning in the sea of Galilee! And he not only denies his Master once, but does it three times! And he not only denies Him simply, but does it “cursing and swearing!” And above all, he does all this in the face of the plainest warnings, and in spite of his own loud protestation that he would do nothing of the kind, but rather die!

These things are written to show the Church of Christ what human nature is, even in the best of men. They are intended to teach us that, even after conversion and renewal of the Holy Ghost, believers are compassed with infirmity and liable to fall. They are meant to impress upon us the immense importance of daily watchfulness, prayerfulness, and humility, so long as we are in the body. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Let us carefully remember that Simon Peter's case does not stand alone. The word of God contains many other examples of the infirmity of true believers, which we shall do well to observe. The histories of Noah, Abraham, David, Hezekiah, will supply us with mournful proof, that "the infection of sin remains even in the regenerate," and that no man is so strong as to be beyond the danger of falling. Let us not forget this. Let us walk humbly with our God. "Happy is the man that feareth alway." (Prov. 28:14)

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Can we also deny our Lord by the way we respond to daily questions in our life?

Mark 15:1-15

When He stood before Pilate's bar, and was "accused of many things," He answered nothing. Though the charges against Him were false, and He knew no sin, He was content to endure the contradiction of sinners against Himself, not answering again. (Heb. 12:3) Though He was innocent of any transgression, He submitted to hear groundless accusations made against Him without a murmur. Great is the contrast between the second Adam and the first! Our first father Adam was guilty, and yet tried to excuse himself. The second Adam was guiltless, and yet made no defence at all. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so openeth he not his mouth." (Isa. 53:7)

Let us learn a practical lesson from our Savior's example. Let us learn to suffer patiently, and not to complain, whatever God may think fit to lay upon us. Let us take heed to our ways, that we offend not in our tongues, in the hour of temptation. (Ps. 39:1) Let us beware of giving way to irritation and ill-temper, however provoking and undeserved our trials may seem to be. Nothing in the Christian character glorifies God so much as patient suffering. "If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps." (1 Peter 2:20-21)

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

What are the dangers of getting together with a large crowd or a small one for that matter which is charged up emotionally?

Mark 15:16-32

Let us leave the passage with a deep sense of the enormous debt which all believers owe to Christ. All that they have, and are, and hope for, may be traced up to the doing and dying of the Son of God. Through His condemnation, they have acquittal,—through His sufferings, peace,—through His shame, glory,—through His death, life. Their sins were imputed to Him. His righteousness is imputed to them. No wonder that Paul says, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." (2 Cor. 9:15)

Finally, let us leave the passage with the deepest sense of Christ's unutterable love to our souls. Let us remember what we are, corrupt, evil, and miserable sinners. Let us remember who the Lord Jesus is, the eternal Son of God, the maker of all things. And then let us remember, that for our sakes Jesus voluntarily endured the most painful, horrible, and disgraceful death. Surely the thought of this love should constrain us daily to live not unto ourselves but unto Christ. It should make us ready and willing to present our bodies a living sacrifice to Him who lived and died for us. (2 Cor. 5:4 Rom. 12:1) Let the cross of Christ be often before our minds. Rightly understood, no object in all Christianity is so likely to have a sanctifying as well as a comforting effect on our souls.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

The disciples deserted Him in fear. Peter denied that he even knew Jesus. Judas betrayed Him. The crowds who had followed Him stood by and joined in with the religious leaders in crying out to crucify Him. Pilate tried to blame the crowds. The Roman soldiers tortured Him. **Just who was guilty of Jesus' death? If you had been there watching these trials, what would your response have been? And, finally, what does this all together tell us about God's great love?**

Mark 15:33-38

We have in these verses the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. All deaths are solemn events. Nothing in the whole history of a man is so important as his end. But never was there a death of such solemn moment as that which is now before us. In the instant that our Lord drew His last breath, the work of atonement for a world's sin was accomplished. The ransom for sinners was at length paid. The kingdom of heaven was thrown fully open to all believers.—All the solid hope that mortal men enjoy about their souls, may be traced to the giving up the ghost on the cross.

Let us observe, in these verses, *the visible signs and wonders which accompanied our Lord's death*. Mark mentions two in particular, which demand our attention. One is the darkening of the sun for the space of three hours. The other is the rending of the veil which divided the holy of holies from the holy place in the temple. Both were miraculous events. Both had, no doubt, a deep meaning about them. Both were calculated to arrest the attention of the whole multitude assembled at Jerusalem. The darkness would strike even thoughtless Gentiles, like Pilate and the Roman soldiers. The rent veil would strike even Annas and Caiaphas and their unbelieving companions. There were probably few houses in Jerusalem that evening in which men would not say, "we have heard and seen strange things today."

What did the miraculous darkness teach? It taught the exceeding wickedness of the Jewish nation. They were actually crucifying their own Messiah, and slaying their own King. The sun himself hid his face at the sight.—It taught the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the eyes of God. The Son of God himself must needs be left without the cheering light of day, when He became sin for us and carried our transgressions.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

Why did God the Father's countenance turn away from God the Son?

When God appears to have abandoned us, can we rely on what He has already told us in His Word for our assurance that he will never leave us or forsake us?

Ps. 22:4-5 Ps. 25:2-3 Ps. 37:3-5, 23-24, 39-40 Ps. 52:8 Ps. 56:4, 11 Ps. 119:42 Prov. 3:5-6
Isa. 57:13 Matt. 12:17-21

Mark 15:39-47

We read that he was "laid in a sepulchre hewn out of a rock," and a "stone rolled unto the door."

This is a fact that in a dying world we should always remember. It is appointed unto men once to die. We are all going to one place, and we naturally shrink from it. The coffin and the funeral, the worm and corruption, are all painful subjects. They chill us, sadden us, and fill our minds with heaviness. It is not in flesh and blood to regard them without solemn feelings. One thing, however, ought to comfort believers, and that is the thought, that the grave is "the place where the Lord once lay." As surely as He rose again victorious from the tomb, so surely shall all who believe in Him rise gloriously in the day of His appearing. Remembering this, they may look down with calmness into the "house appointed for all living." They may recollect that Jesus Himself was once there on their behalf, and has robbed death of his sting. They may say to themselves, "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:56, 57)

The great matter that concerns us all, is to make sure that we are spiritually buried with Christ, while we are yet alive. We must be joined to Him by faith, and conformed to His image. With Him we must die to sin, and be buried by baptism into His death. (Rom. 6:4) With Him we must rise again, and be quickened by His Spirit. Except we know these things, Christ's death and burial will profit us nothing at all.

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

How can we be identified with Christ's death, burial and resurrection?

Rom. 6:1-13

Mark 16:1-14

Let us observe, in this passage, *the power of strong love to Christ*. We have a forcible illustration of this in the conduct of Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, which Mark here records. He tells us that they had "bought sweet spices" to anoint our Lord, and that "very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre, at the rising of the sun."

We may well believe that it required no small courage to do this. To visit a grave in the dim twilight of an eastern day-break, would *try* most women, under any circumstances. But to visit the grave of one who had been put to death as a common malefactor, and to rise early to show honor to one whom their nation had despised, this was a mighty boldness indeed. Yet these are the kind of acts which show the difference between weak faith and strong faith,—between weak

feeling and strong feeling towards Christ. These holy women had tasted of our Lord's pardoning mercies. Their hearts were full of gratitude to Him for light, and hope, and comfort, and peace. They were willing to risk all consequences in testifying their affection to their Savior. So true are the words of Canticles: "Love is strong as death,—many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." (Cant. 8:6-7)

Why is it that we see so little of this strong love to Jesus among Christians of the present day? How is it that we so seldom meet with saints who will face any danger, and go through fire and water for Christ's sake? There is only one answer. It is the weak faith, and the low sense of obligation to Christ, which so widely prevail. A low and feeble sense of sin will always produce a low and feeble sense of the value of salvation. A slight sense of our debt to God will always be attended by a slight sense of what we owe for our redemption. It is the man who feels much forgiven who loves much. "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." (Luke 7:47)

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

On the way to the sepulcher the women said among themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?" **Why do you think they even went in the first place knowing that the large stone prohibited them from entering the tomb?**

Mark 16:15-20

We are told that "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." He returned to that glory which He had with the Father before He came into the world. He received, as our victorious Mediator and Redeemer, the highest position of dignity and power in heaven which our minds can conceive. There He sits, not idle, but carrying on the same blessed work for which He died on the cross. There He lives, ever making intercession for all who come unto God by Him, and so able to save them to the uttermost. (Heb. 7:25)

There is strong consolation here for all true Christians. They live in an evil world. They are often careful and troubled about many things, and are sorely cast down by their own weakness and infirmities.—They live in a dying world. They feel their bodies gradually failing and giving way. They have before them the awful prospect of soon launching forth into a world unknown.—What then shall comfort them? They must lean back on the thought of their Savior in heaven, never slumbering, and never sleeping, and always ready to help. They must remember that though they sleep, Jesus wakes,—though they faint, Jesus is never weary,—though they are weak, Jesus is Almighty,—and though they die, Jesus lives for evermore. Blessed indeed is this thought! Our Savior, though unseen, is an actual living person. We travel on towards a dwelling where our best Friend is gone before, to prepare a place for us. (John 14:2) The Forerunner has entered in and made all things ready. No wonder that Paul exclaims, "Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again,—who is even at the right hand of God,— who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. 8:34)

(Expository Thoughts on Mark, J.C. Ryle)

The ministry of Galilee and Jerusalem is at an end, but the Master goes forth to new victories in the Acts of the Apostles. Note the mighty power of faith, the signs that follow its manifestation in simplicity and purity; demons cannot resist it, serpents are rendered harmless, and healing streams flow from contact with it. (F. B. Meyer) Jesus gave a worldwide commission to the eleven apostles. **What was the challenge and do we have the same one now?**

1 Sam. 3:9-10 Matt. 28:19-20 Rom. 15:15-32 1 Cor. 15:58 2 Tim. 4:1-8