

ACTION: A Study of the Book of Mark

INTRODUCTION



Some of the best times growing up was when me and my buddies would all try to get money from our parents and go to the movies on Friday night. The movie theatre was about a 30 minute walk from my house (we walked everywhere) and so many Friday nights we spent at the movie theatres either watching movies or playing in the arcade. The best movies we enjoyed were the action movies! There's something about an action movie that keeps you on the edge of your seat that is captivating.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE ACTION MOVIES?

The Gospel of Mark (the second book in the New Testament) is one of the easiest books of the New Testament to read because it is so action packed. If you think about it, in the New Testament times they did not have copies of the Bible like you and I carry with us (or have on our iPods) and so they read aloud the copies that did exist. One New Testament scholar (fancy word meaning smart folks) said that the Gospel of Mark is essentially a drama.¹ If there was ever a book you could act out Mark would be that book.

But it is in that theme where the Gospel of Mark directs his readers into action. The gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) were written not only to bear witness (to show something to be true) that Jesus was God's Son (see Mark 1:1) but that also those who read the gospels should seek and follow Jesus as his children.

That is a call to action.

That is a call to change our lives.

"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me."

– Mark 8:34

¹ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002): 10-17.

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The study that you are about to embark on is designed with specific goals in mind for you and your faith formation. These lessons mean nothing if you do not take them home and change your life from them. Here are the goals that each lesson will seek to accomplish.

- ✓ To have a basic understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in the Book of Mark.
- ✓ To have a grasp at what the book of Mark is about.
- ✓ To show that Christ is the Son of God and the answer for the problems of our world.
- ✓ To highlight specific characteristics that are critical for our Christian journey.

THE MEAT BEHIND MARK



WHO WROTE THE BOOK?

There is a lot of discussion when it comes to New Testament books about what scholars (smart folks) call authorship. That is a fancy-shmancy term that simply means the author of the book.

J. K. Rowling wrote what series? _____ (Harry Potter)²

Stephanie Meyer wrote what popular series? _____ (Twilight)

Most people (there is always an exception) agree that the author of the Gospel of Mark is a guy by the name of John Mark. "John Mark" is mentioned three times in the New Testament (Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37) and the name Mark is mentioned a few times (Acts 15:39; Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24; 1 Pet. 5:13). From these references we can see that he was active in the early stages of the church and he and Peter seemed to be really close. Mark had a following out with Paul (Acts 15:37) so as to split the missionary

² Anything you see in blue will not be in the student packet. This will help you when discussion is dry or in case you just do not know the answer to the question.

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tandem of Barnabas and Paul but later in the New Testament we see that apparently by the time Colossians was written Paul and Mark had reconciled (Col. 4:10).

WHEN WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?

Most scholars agree that the Gospel of Mark was written sometime between AD 53-55. That means that the church had been around for roughly about twenty plus years before Mark wrote this gospel. By the time he wrote Mark James had written his epistle and Paul had already written Galatians, 1-2 Thessalonians and maybe even 1 Corinthians.

SO WHY DID HE WRITE THE GOSPEL TO BEGIN WITH?

When we ask questions like that one we are seeking to discover the purpose of the Gospel of Mark (sometimes it is also called the occasion). What prompted Mark to write what he wrote about in his gospel? Why did the founding fathers of the United States of America write the Declaration of Independence? The *purpose* of that document was to “declare” to King George III (ruler of Britain at the time) that Britain no longer had control over the colonies and that they now declare their freedom (i.e, independence).

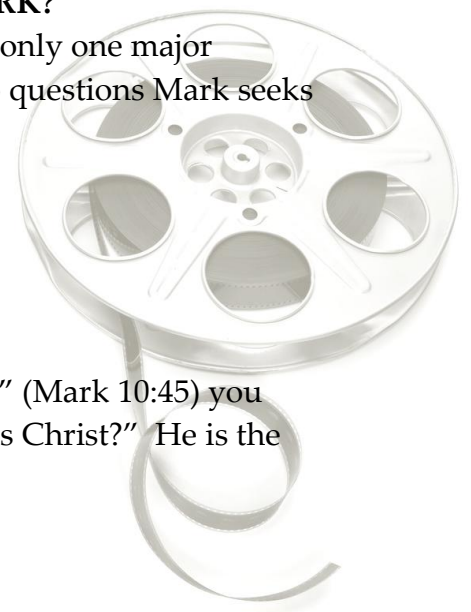
The purpose of the book of Mark is summarized in the opening verse of the book: **“The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God”** (Mark 1:1; NIV). The word “gospel” means glad tidings or good news and the specific content of that good news was a man by the name of Jesus Christ. Mark wrote this document to tell true events about Jesus Christ. True there are other gospels (Matthew, Luke and John) but this one was written from Mark’s perspective.

WHAT ARE SOME THEMES/TOPICS IN THE BOOK OF MARK?

Mark is concerned with a lot of themes but most notably there is only one major character Mark is concerned with in this book: Jesus Christ. Two questions Mark seeks to answer from this book are:

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
2. What does Jesus do?

So when you see a phrase like, “For even the Son of Man came...” (Mark 10:45) you know that this statement is addressing the question “Who is Jesus Christ?” He is the



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Son of Man! Other themes in Mark are: discipleship (what it means to be a follower of Jesus); forgiveness; redemption; submission; etc.

A BIT OF ADVICE...

A lot more could be said about this amazing gospel but I want to leave you with a plea that you read not only for information but for transformation. Scripture is not just about knowing things but it is about doing things. Mark shows us that we need to not only read and listen to what Jesus says, but follow him along that way.

PRAYER



GOD PLEASE BLESS US AS WE TRAVEL THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF MARK. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOUR WORD IS THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY IN OUR LIVES AND SO GRACE US WITH WISDOM TO HANDLE WHAT IS IN MARK WITH ACCURACY AND HUMILITY. THANK YOU FOR THE PRICE YOUR SON PAID ON THE CROSS AND WE PRAISE AND MAGNIFY HIS NAME. ALLOW THIS STUDY TO PRICK THE INNER RECESSES OF OUR SOUL SO THAT WE MAY LIVE A CHANGED LIFE AND IN TURN, CHANGE THE LIVES OF OTHERS. IN THE NAME OF JESUS WE PRAY, AMEN!

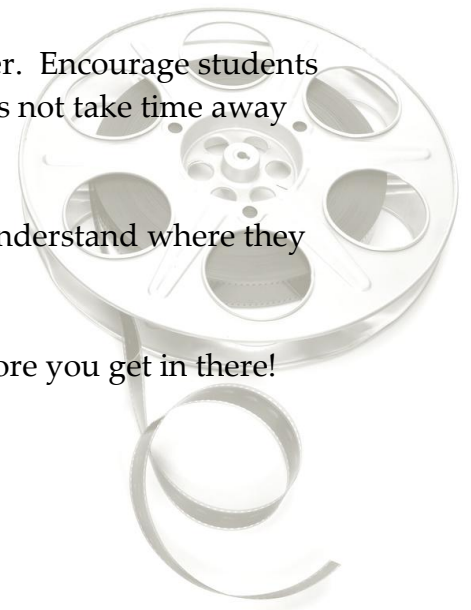


Lesson 1: Jesus—the Source of Action

Mark 1: 4-7; 5:1-13

TEACHER NOTES

- Try to lead discussion around the text but also around what the text is trying to say.
- Keep in mind that every lesson is about Jesus and we are trying to show what Jesus did/said and then how does that action or statement change the course of our lives.
- Students are big on illustrations so come up with illustrations on your own to highlight what Mark is trying to say.
- Remind them each week of the objectives of the overall lessons (see Introduction p. 2) by having a poster with the objectives written on them or have them on a corner of the board somewhere.
- Each lesson will have these components:
 - The Creed: The objective for each lesson.
 - The Connection: The introduction to the lesson (5-10 Minutes)
 - The Core: The main part of the lesson (20-25 Minutes)
 - The Challenge: A weekly challenge for them to make their faith real (5-10 minutes)
- Prayer is important so please begin and close with a prayer. Encourage students to get here early and write prayer requests down so it does not take time away from class.
- Get to know your students and try to listen to them and understand where they are coming from.
- Work on the lesson in advance rather than 15 minutes before you get in there!



THE CREED AND CONNECTION



CREED

“Without Jesus we are powerless to find forgiveness and hope for there is no good news without the news of Jesus. In this lesson we will look at what it means to trust in the power of Jesus.”

CONNECTION

Grab a volunteer to write on the board and ask...

“WHO IS THE STRONGEST PERSON YOU KNOW OF?”

Have your volunteer write the various answers on the board. Odds are they will say people with strong physical capabilities. Maybe it was an NFL football player or maybe it was an actor they saw on TV or someone who is a MMA fighter. A person’s definition of strength is defined by physical characteristics.

Next ask...

WHAT QUALITIES OR CHARACTERISTICS WOULD YOU SAY STRONG PEOPLE HAVE?

Have your volunteer list them on the board. This is where they might be a little confused because a strong person to them may be one who can lift something very heavy or someone who can break a board with his head.

Say...

The Bible is filled with different characters who were strong physically: Esau, Samson and Saul. The world’s definition of strength is how to be physically able to do something but God’s definition of strength is different. The biblical definition of strength is simple: **“The ability to trust in God through the saving grace and power of Jesus Christ.”**

Let’s look at a few verses in Mark that talk about Jesus and his power!



THE CORE



TEACHER NOTES

IDEA: Something that might help illustrate the story of the Gerasenes is a chain and lock and when you get to the story actually chain someone up.

If You are short on time I would recommend you jump to Mark 5 as the main point.

BIBLE LESSON

Have a student turn to Mark 1:4-7 and read it.

Say...

John the Baptist appeared to be one weird guy. His diet wore camel's hair with a leather belt and then ate locusts and wild honey! GROSS!!! Mark tells us that he was to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. If you ask me, he's got to be one humble guy to do something like that.

Ask...

HOW DOES JOHN THE BAPTIST DESCRIBE JESUS?

He is mightier than John. John was not worthy to untie the straps on Jesus' sandals. Amazing! The Common English Translation said Jesus was "stronger" than John. The New Century Version said Jesus was "greater than" John. All of that seems to point to the authority of Jesus. When you think of the people in our government who have all the power they are usually the ones on the top of the company ladder. When it comes to this world Jesus is the top rung of this world's ladder.

In essence, this section of Mark shows us that Jesus is in over all things. In a few verses later Jesus is baptized which marks the beginning of his ministry on earth and God says, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). God's pleasure in his son means that his son has his Father's approval and blessing. In

essence, God has empowered Jesus to accomplish his will and the world's will is to submit to God through his son.

We are going to read such a story that shows Jesus' control over the things that are in this world and things that we cannot see or maybe even understand.

Have a student turn and read Mark 5:1-5

Ask...

WHAT KIND OF MENTAL PICTURE DO YOU GET WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THIS DEMON-POSSESSED MAN?

Say...

It must have looked very frightening. Obviously people had panicked for some time because nothing could be done. Jesus had already healed people who were demon-possessed (see Mark 1:21-33) but something was different about this one. If you look at verse 3 it says, "And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain."

Grab a volunteer and if you have a chain and a lock offer to chain some one to the chair. Do a good job and make sure they can't just clip out. You can use rope if you need.

Say...

As hard as it is for this student to try to get out of the chains the demon-possessed man could not be contained with any chains. Mark tells us that he "wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him" (5:4).

Ask....

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE YOU FELT LIKE NOBODY COULD HELP YOU? WHAT WAS IT LIKE? HOW DID YOU FEEL?

Say...

Situations like those often do one or two things: they either paralyze us or empower us. Sometimes when we are backed in our corner where we feel nobody can help us then we start to take a turn for the worse. We resort to blaming God, blaming others and



instead of looking for solutions we look for the wrong things. However, sometimes when we are knocked down and have no other solutions it is those times where we look to God who is the only one who can solve our greatest problems.

Have a student read Mark 5:6-13

Ask...

WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE OF THE DEMON TOWARDS JESUS?

Say...

He called Jesus something the disciples had yet to do, "Son of the Most high God" (Mark 1:7). Did you catch that? A demon, a supernatural being in the service of Satan, recognized Jesus without Jesus saying a word. The demon knows the power of Jesus and asked Jesus not to torment him. A demon is begging our Savior asking for mercy. Why? Because he knows the power and that Jesus is sent from the ultimate power, God the Father, and nobody can mess with God.

The continued to beg Jesus to be cast in a herd of pigs because they did not want to leave the country. Look at what happens next: "So he gave them permission..."

WHY DO WE ASK PERMISSION FROM PEOPLE?

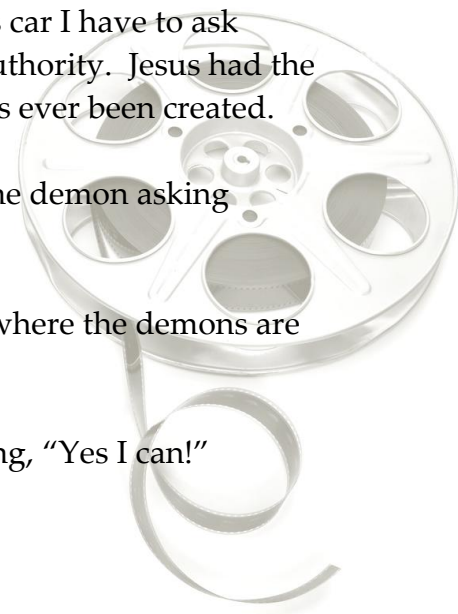
Say...

Because they have ownership over the thing we are asking permission about. If I want to borrow a lawn-mower from my friend I have to ask him permission. Why? Because he is the owner of that lawn-mower. If I want to use my parent's car I have to ask permission. Why? Because they own the car. It is under their authority. Jesus had the authority over every demon (even Satan in Mark 1:12-13) that has ever been created.

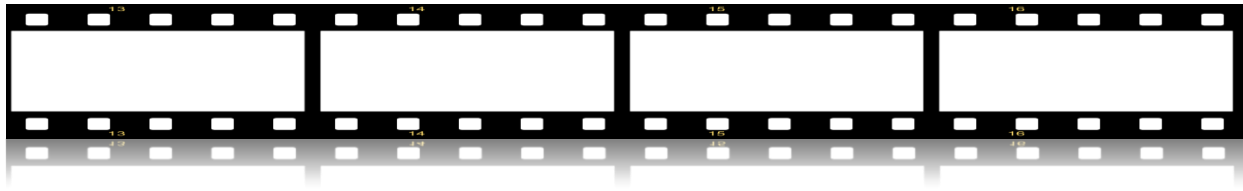
We go from nobody having the power to contain the demon to the demon asking permission from Jesus.

We go from a position where people are afraid of the demons to where the demons are afraid of Jesus.

We go from everybody saying, "No we can't" to Jesus proclaiming, "Yes I can!"



THE CHALLENGE



Have someone read Ephesians 1:20-21...

Ask...

ACCORDING TO THIS VERSE WHAT DOES JESUS HAVE POWER OVER?

The answer is everything! Rulers, authorities, powers, dominions, every name forever and ever. Jesus is in control of everything.

The challenge...

Say...

Every week we are going to have a challenge for you to think about during the week. They are in the form of questions and it is your task to seek out the answers. Here are the questions...

- ✓ Do I believe that Jesus has control over everything?
- ✓ Do I let Jesus have control over everything?
- ✓ In what areas of my life do I need to let Jesus rule over?

Those are your challenges this week. Next week we will talk about a popular parable that presents four different types of people...but only one of them is acceptable.





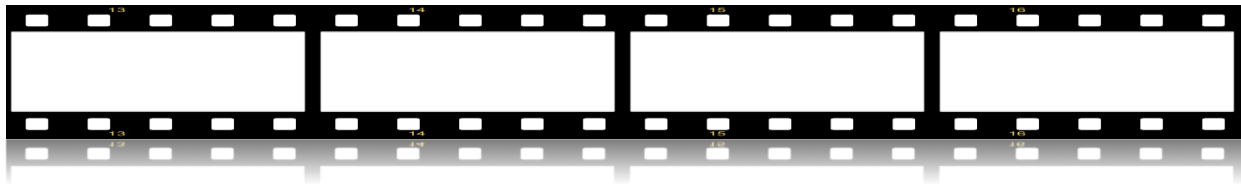
Lesson 2: Christians—the Soil of Action

Mark 4:1-20

TEACHER NOTES

- It would be beneficial to remind the students what was learned a week ago. Talk about the applications and see if they participated in some of the challenges for the week. Try not to take up too much of class time though.
- This lesson is about taking the Parable of the Sower and applying it to their lives. Each different soil represents different types of places where the word is sown and the goal of this lesson is to see what type of soil they are.
- A good illustration for this would be to get a cheap bag of soil, some Styrofoam cups, some rocks, some really poor soil, some grass seed, and a pitcher of water. Label the cups according to the type of soil discussed in the parable and then plant the seed. You could do this at the end of class or make it a gradual, ongoing thing as you discuss

The Creed and Connection



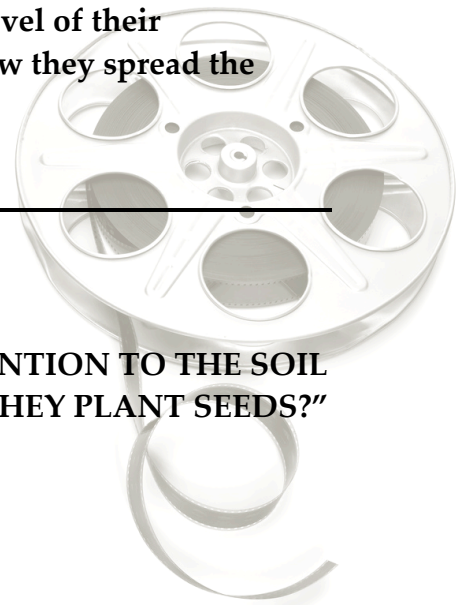
CREED

“Jesus commands his followers that they pay attention to the level of their commitment not only in how they receive the word but also how they spread the word to everybody else.”

CONNECTION

ASK...

“WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR FARMERS TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE SOIL WHEN THEY PLANT SEEDS?”



SAY....

I hope they understand the importance of this but soil means everything to a farmer. People spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to make sure that they are planting in good fertile soil that will render the best conditions for a seed to yield the most amount of crop. If a farmer does not pay attention to the soil then he could lose crops and even worse the soil could be damaged beyond repair.

There is a lot of talk when it comes to growing your faith and there are some similarities between growing a crop and growing your faith. Both take time and effort and both can be damaged from neglect.

HAVE A STUDENT GO TO THE BOARD AND ASK...

“WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR SPIRITUALITY WHAT ARE SOME REASONS WE DO NOT GROW?”

Write down answers...

This is a difficult one because most of us do not have a mature faith at this point. I would say the number one reason we do not grow in our faith is simply a neglect of what is most important in our lives. This is a struggle students go through and it is a struggle adults go through. The Scripture we are going to look at today is a Scripture that addresses a specific need in those who follow Jesus to pay attention to who they are and what they are doing. We introduced the Gospel of Mark and said that Mark was interested in two questions:

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
2. What did Jesus do?

We also asked an important question with the initials (write this on the board) WWJHMTD. What would Jesus have me to do?

Let's look at a few verses in Mark that talk about Christians and soil.

At this point you can take out the soil and started planting seeds while you talk about the verses. Completely up to you.



The Core



TEACHER NOTES

IDEA: An illustration you may want to use is from the movie *The Blind Side* which was a documentary about Baltimore Ravens offensive tackle Michael Oher who beat the odds of gang life and homelessness in Memphis to go on to a successful college and NFL career. The connecting point would be about growing under the right soil and the right type of conditions.

BIBLE LESSON

Have a student turn to Mark 4:1-9 and read it.

ASK...

WHAT IS THE NAME OF THIS PARABLE?

SAY...

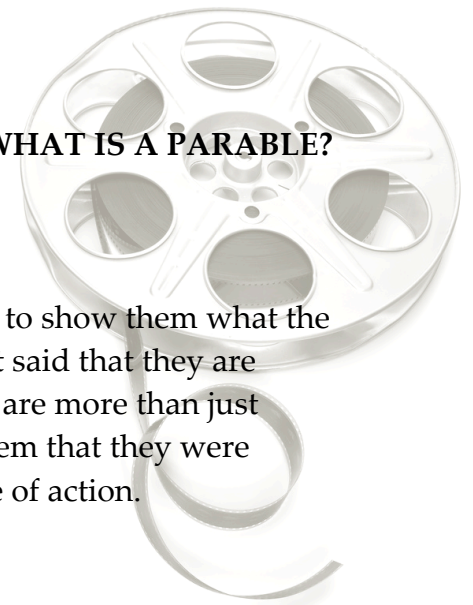
The purpose of the parable seems to be pointed at the person who is sowing the seed. If a person sows in bad soil it is not the soil's fault that the seed won't grow it is the sower's fault.

ASK...

WHAT IS A PARABLE?

SAY...

They were stories Jesus would tell his disciples and other people to show them what the Kingdom of Heaven should look like. Perhaps you have heard it said that they are "earthly stories with a heavenly meaning." That is true but they are more than just stories as all parables were told to the disciples to either show them that they were thinking or doing something wrong and then to offer a challenge of action.



HAVE SOMEONE GO UP TO THE BOARD AND WRITE...

*It is filled out for you but they do not have it filled out so have them answer the questions themselves!

TYPE OF SEED	RESULT
Along the path (v. 3)	Eaten by birds!
Rocky Ground (v. 4)	Sprang up but was eventually scorched.
Thorns (v. 7)	Grew up but was choked!
Good soil (v. 8)	Produced and kept increasing.

It should be obvious that the best option for soil is the good soil. I know that sounds like a no-brainer but sometimes we forget the simple things.

HAVE SOMEONE READ MARK 4:10-13

SAY...

Sometimes the Bible can be difficult to understand and there are many days we feel like Jesus' disciples in that we don't understand what the Scriptures are asking us to do. Perhaps they did not understand this parable because for so long they had followed the old Jewish Law where they had specific commandments (613!!!) for them to do on a consistent basis. What Jesus is saying with parables is that you have to think a little bit to understand the meaning.

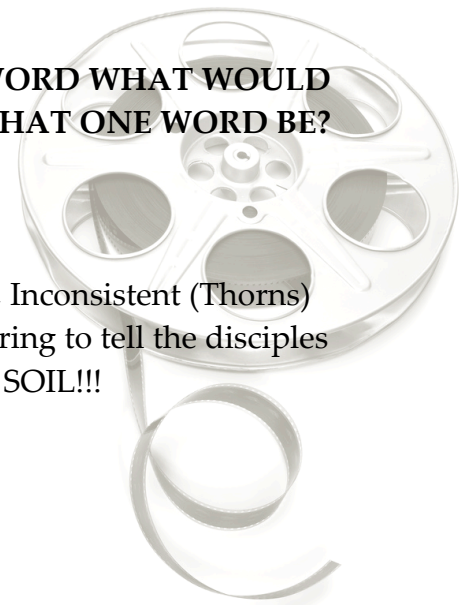
HAVE SOMEONE READ MARK 4:14-20

ASK...

IF YOU WERE TO DESCRIBE EACH SEED WITH ONE WORD WHAT WOULD THAT ONE WORD BE?

SAY...

In order I would say the words are: Weak (Path), Scared (Rocky), Inconsistent (Thorns) and Fruitful (Good Soil). Jesus is describing situations. Jesus is trying to tell the disciples that they need to focus on one thing and one thing alone: GOOD SOIL!!!



Go up to the board and add a column to the chart...

ASK....

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF EACH SEED?

Encourage them to draw their own conclusions about what they learned.

Seed	Result	Meaning
Along the path (v. 3)	Eaten by birds!	We hear the word but quickly let Satan take over.
Rocky Ground (v. 4)	Sprang up but was eventually scorched.	We are steady for a while but hen tough times come we leave the word.
Thorns (v. 7)	Grew up but was choked!	We follow riches, greed and wordly things instead of following God.
Good soil (v. 8)	Produced and kept increasing.	Good soil Christians not only grow but they help others grow by yielding fruit!!!

ASK...

WHY DO YOU THINK JESUS WAS LOOKING FOR "GOOD SOIL" FOLLOWERS?

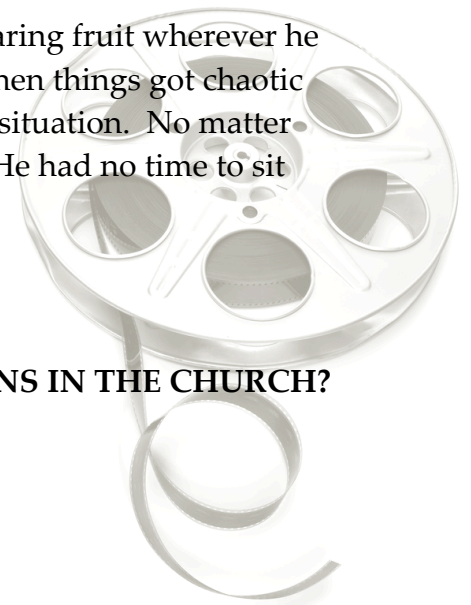
SAY...

If you think about the entire ministry of Jesus it was all about bearing fruit wherever he went. It was about consistency in the midst of inconsistency. When things got chaotic Jesus would calm the situation and provide insight to clarify the situation. No matter where Jesus went he sought to ulfill the purposes of his Father. He had no time to sit down and ponder what was happening, he simply had to act.

ASK...

DO YOU THINK THERE ARE BAD SOIL CHRISTIANS IN THE CHURCH?

SAY...



Of course. Churches all over have people who turn away quickly after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. Some people chase after drugs, money, wealth, power and fame while neglecting to chase after Jesus Christ. Here's something that is going to hopefully challenge you and make you think.

According to Jesus there were no half-hearted Christians, one-day Christians, Christmas and Easter Christians or any other seasonal Christian. For Jesus, when you followed him and were buried and baptism...that was it. He became your Lord for the rest of your life.

SO....

The Challenge



Have someone read 2 Peter 3:18...

ASK...

ACCORDING TO THIS VERSE WHAT DO WE GROW IN?

SAY...

Grace and knowledge. We must know what to do and change our lives according to the word and then rest in the grace of God to help us when we do not know what to do.

The challenge...

Say...

Every week we are going to have a challenge for you to think about during the week. This week we have a chart for you to fill out. It is the same chart we have filled out the entire time except one column remains. That is for you to fill out and home. Look at your life and ask the question: Does this apply to me?



Seed	Result	Meaning	Is this me?
Along the path (v. 3)	Eaten by birds!	We hear the word but quickly let Satan take over.	
Rocky Ground (v. 4)	Sprang up but was eventually scorched.	We are steady for a while but hen tough times come we leave the word.	
Thorns (v. 7)	Grew up but was choked!	We follow riches, greed and wordly things instead of following God.	
Good soil (v. 8)	Produced and kept increasing.	Good soil Christians not only grow but they help others grow by yielding fruit!!!	



Lesson 3: Hypocrisy—the Saboteur of Action

Mark 7:1-20

TEACHER NOTES

- It would be beneficial to remind the students what was learned a week ago. Talk about the applications and see if they participated in some of the challenges for the week. Try not to take up too much of class time though.
- This lesson is centered around the theme of hypocrisy and how it infects all of the Christian life negatively. The end-goal of this lesson is to allow them to understand that the heart is the place where both sin and the Savior dwell. In order to extinguish sin in their lives they must replace the sin with the Savior.
- A neat illustration is to bring in a “mask” of some sort. At some point you can talk about different movies where people wore masks (*Phantom of the Opera*; *Beauty and the Beast*; *The Mask*; *The Incredibles*) and hid behind something else in order to hide their true identity.

The Creed and Connection



CREED

“In order to committ to being a Christian we must live a life that is genuine and free from hypocrisy which means we have to look deep in our hearts to unleash the bad in order to replace it with the good.”

CONNECTION

GO TO THE BOARD AND DRAW A LINE DOWN THE MIDDLE OF THE BOARD. ON ONE SIDE WRITE “FAKE” AND ON THE OTHER SIDE WRITE “AUTHENTIC.” ASK A VOLUNTEER TO COME TO THE BOARD AND WRITE SOME OF THE THINGS DOWN WHEN YOU ASK THE NEXT QUESTION.



ASK...

“WHEN IT COMES TO SHOES HOW DO YOU KNOW IF THEY ARE REAL BRANDS OF SHOES (LIKE NIKE) OR FAKE?”

SAY....

Often you will notice that Nike brands have a swoosh symbol on the side of it. Also Nike shoes will have certain qualities about them like the manufacturer and the place where they were made. Also you can always tell a fake Nike shoe from a real one by the place you purchase it. If you buy a “Nike” shoe from China somewhere odds are it will be fake but if you purchased the shoe at Foot Locker, Hibbet’s or a local store then odds are it will be genuine.

ASK...

“WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR FRIENDS AT CHURCH OR AT SCHOOL, HOW DO YOU KNOW THEY ARE REAL OR FAKE?”

SAY....

This one is tough because so often we have had fake friends. Fake friends are those friends who laugh when others are making fun of you. Fake friends are those who only call you when they need something. Fake friends are those who gossip about you. Fake friends are those who ignore you even when you are having a horrible day. Real friends are those who stick by you in good times and in bad times. Real friends are those who tell you what you need to hear not what you want to hear. Real friends would never force you to do something you should never do.

Now we get a little deeper...

ASK...

“WHEN IT COMES TO CHRISTIANS, HOW DO YOU KNOW THEY ARE REAL OR FAKE?”

DON’T ANSWER...ALLOW THEM TO THINK ABOUT THE QUESTION AND MOVE TO THE CORE PART OF THE LESSON.



The Core



TEACHER NOTES

IDEA: This lesson needs some study, prayer and plenty of preparation. It's tempting just to ask questions and ramble for 45 minutes but do some homework and allow the Spirit to work with you on this lesson. Again you may want to purchase a mask to use in this portion of the study and it will be a good visual illustration when you close.

BIBLE LESSON

Have a student turn to Mark 7:1-4 and read it.

ASK...

WHO ARE THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES?

SAY...

Pharisees were that group of Jews who were always against Jesus and his teachings. They were highly devoted men who took the Torah (God's Law) very seriously. It has been said that they followed 613 different commands in the Torah while even adding a few of their own. The Pharisees had a lot of power politically which they eventually used to their advantage when they had Jesus tried and killed. The Scribes were that group of people who meticulously copied the scroll making sure every letter and symbol was correct. They were "experts" in the Law and the Pharisees used them when clarification of God's law was needed.

ASK...

WHY DO YOU THINK THEY HAD SO MANY DIFFERENT TRADITIONS?

SAY...



They probably wanted to follow God in the best way that they could. So they developed these “traditions” which they thought had the same weight as God’s Law. Then they set the standard for other people to follow and judged people harshly who didn’t act like they did.

Have a student read Mark 7:5-13

ASK...

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE JESUS’ ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PHARISEES AT THIS POINT?

SAY...

He clearly is not too happy and probably for good reason. The Pharisees were upset with the disciples because they did not do the things that they did when it came to traditions. Traditions were those additions to the Law which were not from God himself. Jesus does not tolerate the Pharisees and their neglect of what the real Law is.

ASK...

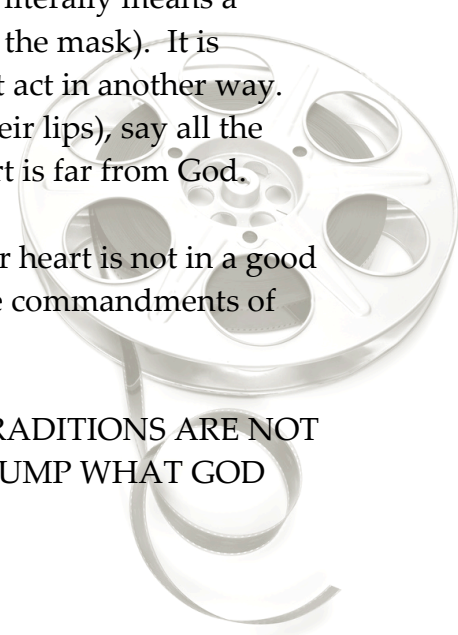
JESUS CALLS THE PHARISEES “HYPOCRITES”. IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS A HYPOCRITE?

SAY...

A hypocrite is someone who says something and does another. The Greek (the original language the New Testament was written in) word for hypocrite literally means a “mask” that someone puts on (Now would be a good time to get the mask). It is someone whose real life is hidden because they say one thing but act in another way. Jesus said that they do all the right things (honoring God with their lips), say all the right things yet they have a heart issue. Jesus says that their heart is far from God.

Jesus is concerned about the status of their heart. Right now their heart is not in a good place because they focus too much on “tradition” and neglect the commandments of God.

(AT THIS POINT YOU MIGHT WANT TO MENTION THAT TRADITIONS ARE NOT WRONG IN AND OF THEMSELVES BUT SHOULD NEVER TRUMP WHAT GOD COMMANDS US TO DO.)



Have a student read Mark 7:14-23

ASK...

**WHAT DOES JESUS MEAN WHEN HE TALKS ABOUT THOSE THINGS ON THE
“OUTSIDE” THAT DEFILE A MAN?**

SAY...

Remember in verses 1-5 the Pharisees talked about the washing of hands, the washing of cups and vessels and making sure there were dining couches. Those are outside things or material things. In Jewish tradition the Israelite people had to make sure they were “clean” by separating themselves from what was unclean. For example, according to Leviticus 13 a person was not even allowed to touch a person who had leprosy and if they did they were considered “unclean.” In order to get clean again one had to go through a purification process which meant they had to be outside of the group for a period of time. It was a humiliating process but was necessary for the health of the whole group.

The word “defile” can also mean “make dirty” or “profane” or to “violate.” In our case it means to make something dirty.

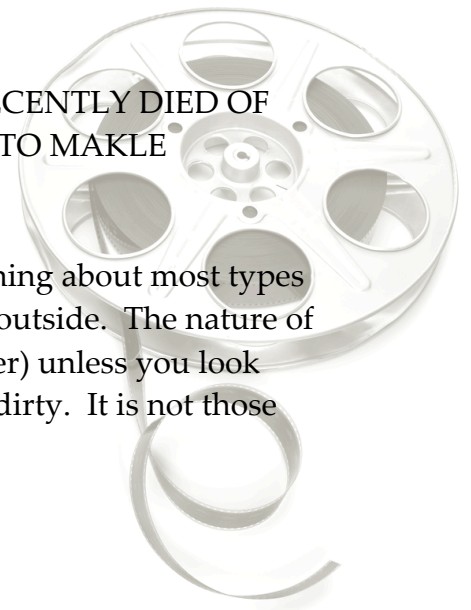
ASK...

**WHY DO YOU THINK JESUS SAID IT WAS HEART-ISSUES (THINGS ON THE
INSIDE) THAT MAKES A PERSON DIRTY?**

SAY...

(BE CAREFUL WITH THIS ANALOGY. IF SOMEONE HAD RECENTLY DIED OF CANCER CLOSE TO A KID THEN IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE TO MAKE ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION)

One of the most deadly diseases man can obtain is cancer. The thing about most types of cancer is that you really do not find anything wrong from the outside. The nature of cancer is that it starts in places you cannot detect (save skin cancer) unless you look deep inside the human body. So it is with what makes a person dirty. It is not those things on the outside but those things on the inside.



What does lust look like? (It's hidden in your heart)

What does anger look like?

What does jealousy look like?

What does evil look like?

What does greed look like?

The problem with those things is that they are hidden behind walls of "Christian" service and we don't see what is behind those walls.

Jeremiah said this, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick."* In other words, the heart can be an amazing tool but can also be the reservoir of evil. That is why we have to do heart surgery in order to solve the deep embedded issues of our hearts.

The Challenge



GO TO THE BOARD AND WRITE DOWN THESE QUESTIONS...

- Can a person who goes to church services be evil?

Yes No

- Can a person who attends every youth group function still be evil?

Yes No

- Can a person who is a minister still be evil?

Yes No



THEN ASK...

THEN HOW CAN WE TELL IF SOMEONE IS GENUINE OR FAKE?

SAY...

Sometimes we can't. The only person we can tell who is genuine or fake is OURSELVES!!! The proverb writer said it best in two places:

"My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent" (Prov. 1:10).

"Keep your heart with all vigilance for from it flow the springs of life" (4:23).

Your heart is where the place that evil dwells. All you have to do is replace it with Jesus. It is a painful and long process but you only have one life to live. It takes pain and it takes effort and it takes diligence.

This week write down three things...

In what ways have I lived like the people of the world or like a hypocrite?

In what ways have I lived like Jesus?

Comparing the two what steps do you need to take to change?



Lesson 4: Discipleship—the Sustenance of Action

Mark 8:31-38

TEACHER NOTES

- It would be beneficial to remind the students what was learned a week ago. Talk about the applications and see if they participated in some of the challenges for the week. Try not to take up too much of class time though.
- This lesson is centered around the theme of discipleship. Discipleship is loosely defined as someone who follows Christ and takes his commands seriously. Discipleship is all through the book of Mark but specifically is located in Mark 8:27-10:52.
- Movies that have the theme of discipleship mostly surround the concept of giving your life for a cause you feel concerned about. A movie that comes to my mind is *Braveheart* where Mel Gibson plays the role of Sir William Wallace who led Scotland against the oppressive regime of King Edward I of England.

The Creed and Connection



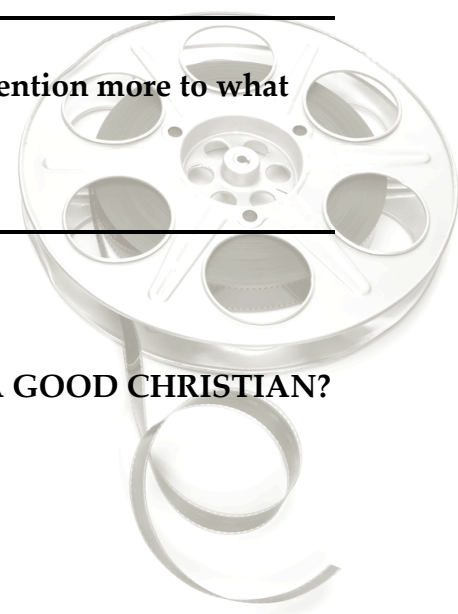
CREED

“Christians must rid themselves of what they want and pay attention more to what God wants them to do.”

CONNECTION

GO TO THE BOARD AND WRITE THIS QUESTION

WHAT MAKES A PERSON A GOOD CHRISTIAN?



Allow them to think about this and come up with as many answers as they are willing to give. Keep in mind that you are not looking for specific answers other than what they “think” makes a good Christian.

SAY...

Today we are going to study a difficult portion of Scripture that asks us to do something we may not want to do. There are two options in how we will take what the Lord says and apply it to our lives:

1. Dismiss it and say that Jesus does not really mean that or that what he says does not apply to me.

Or.....

2. Believe it and change our lives accordingly.

ASK...

HAVE YOU EVER HAD TO DO A GROUP PROJECT OR BEEN ON A SPORTS TEAM AND ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP WAS LAZY AND DIDN'T PULL HIS OR HER WEIGHT?

Odds are that they have all experienced this...

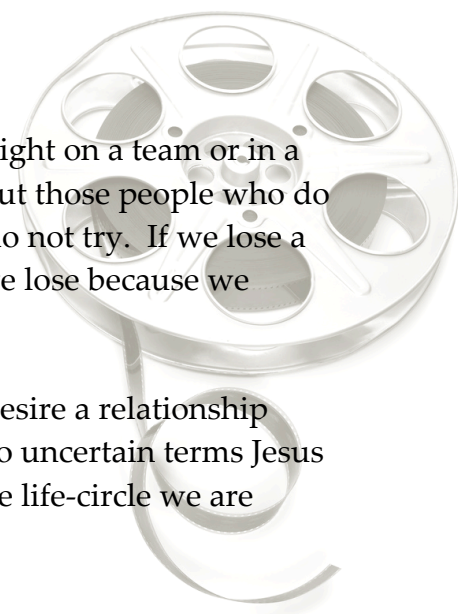
ASK...

WHAT WAS THAT EXPERIENCE LIKE?

SAY...

We have all experienced people who did not pull their weight on a team or in a group and it just brings the group down. We are not talking about those people who do not perform like stars but we are talking about people who just do not try. If we lose a game but we gave it our best then we shouldn't be upset but if we lose because we didn't try then that is different.

Churches are filled with dedicated people who love and desire a relationship with God but there are also people who simply do not care. In no uncertain terms Jesus asks—commands—us to live a life dedicated to him. He calls the life-circle we are



supposed to live the “kingdom of God,” or, “the kingdom of heaven.” We are invited to participate in this “kingdom” that rights all wrongs, redeems the broken-hearted and seeks out others to join us in the cause of Jesus-living. Today we learn the basis of this in Mark 8:31-9:1.

The Core



TEACHER NOTES

IDEA: This lesson needs some study, prayer and plenty of preparation. It’s tempting just to ask questions and ramble for 45 minutes but do some homework and allow the Spirit to work with you on this lesson. Something that you may want to do is to research the different sections of Mark where Jesus teaches the disciples on how to “walk the narrow way.”

BIBLE LESSON

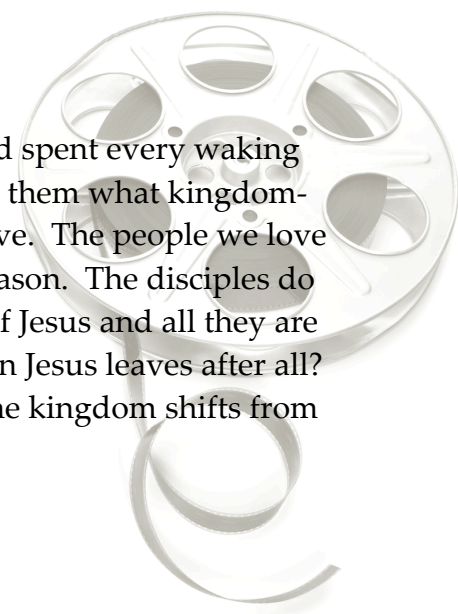
Have a student turn to Mark 8:31-33 and read it.

ASK...

HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND IF SOMEONE YOU ADMIRER TOLD YOU HE WAS GOING TO SUFFER AND BE KILLED?

SAY...

I know I would not respond too well to the idea. Jesus had spent every waking hour working with the disciples and teaching them and showing them what kingdom-living looked like and now he told them that he was going to leave. The people we love the most are often taken away from us without explanation or reason. The disciples do not understand the “big picture” when it comes to the ministry of Jesus and all they are concerned about is their personal safety. What will they do when Jesus leaves after all? I would be scared a little bit myself as now the responsibility of the kingdom shifts from Jesus to his disciples.



ASK...

WHY WAS JESUS SO HARSH TO PETER?

SAY...

It might seem a little harsh to us but Jesus' "rebuking" of Peter was necessary because Peter was acting in response to something he did not fully understand. We will talk about this more in a couple lessons but in order for Christians to be called Christians Jesus had to die for the sins of mankind. Peter did not understand the big picture so Jesus rebuked him in order that he could understand what must happen. After all, if you noticed in a few verses earlier Peter declared that Jesus was "the Christ" and now he simply does not understand what the Christ must do.

Jesus said that his mind was not set on things above. That means Peter's focus was set on things below. Paul said in Colossians 3:2, "*Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*" Jesus wanted them to see the big picture.

Have a student turn to Mark 8:34 and read it.

ASK...

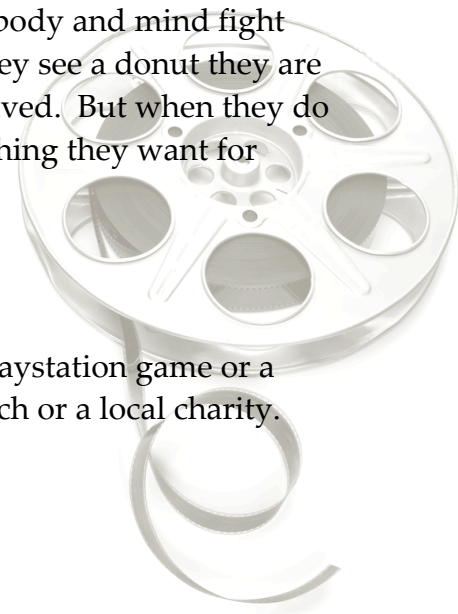
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DENY OURSELVES?

SAY...

One of the hardest things to do is to go on a diet and lose weight. The problem is that you have conditioned your mind and body to act a certain way for so long that it is used to eating and drinking a certain way. When it changes the body and mind fight hard against the change. So when a person goes on a diet and they see a donut they are tempted to eat that donut because of the way they have always lived. But when they do not eat the donut that means they are denying themselves something they want for something they need.

Other examples of denying ourselves:

- Instead of spending all of our money on a Playstation game or a new outfit we donate our money to the church or a local charity.



- Instead of doing drugs, drinking alcohol and doing stuff with the opposite sex we shouldn't we keep ourselves pure to allow us to join God in his purposes.
- Instead of looking for that job that makes us more money (for adults) we stay put to allow us to do something we love or to spend time with our families.

ASK...

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "TAKE UP THE CROSS" AND FOLLOW JESUS?

SAY...

This is the first time the word "cross" is mentioned in the book of Mark. The next time it will be mentioned is Mark 15:21 where Jesus is crucified. The symbol of the cross was something the Jews (the group of people Jesus and his disciples belonged to) despised as Deuteronomy 21:23 said that anyone left on a tree was cursed. Yet, Jesus is asking his disciples to take up "his" cross. He wasn't literally saying go grab a piece of the tree and carry it with you. When a person chooses to follow Jesus it is, in a metaphorical sense (though sometimes literal), a death wish. They have to die to the world (remember deny yourself) and walk with Christ along the way. For the original disciples and for Jesus following him was not a "good idea" or a "fun activity" but a lifestyle. You can't show up on Sunday and leave Jesus there and do what you want on Monday. When you say, "I do" to Jesus it is a choice to follow him all the way until we meet him in heaven.

Have a student read Mark 8:35-38

ASK...

WHAT DOES JESUS MEAN BY SAVING LIVES AND LOSING LIVES?

SAY...

Jesus is concerned that the disciples are going to try to live according to their own way and not to the way of Jesus. Jesus is speaking in paradox meaning he is saying something that seems to be contradicting but really it isn't. If we try to save our own souls then we lose them because we do not involve Jesus. But, if we lose control of our lives and place it in the realm of the gospel then we will gain it.



ASK...

WHAT APPLICATION DOES VERSES 36-37 HAVE ON OUR LIVES?

SAY...

If you won the lottery and received 36 million dollars would that make you happy? (Most of them will say, "Of course!") But then what will make you happy after that? What would you want? If you had all the power and money in the world it would still make you miserable. People spend so much time and energy trying to make money only to realize that when they get it all they aren't happy. Paul, in 1 Timothy 6:7, said, *"For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out."* Job said it well: *"Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked shall I return"* (Job 1:21).

ASK...

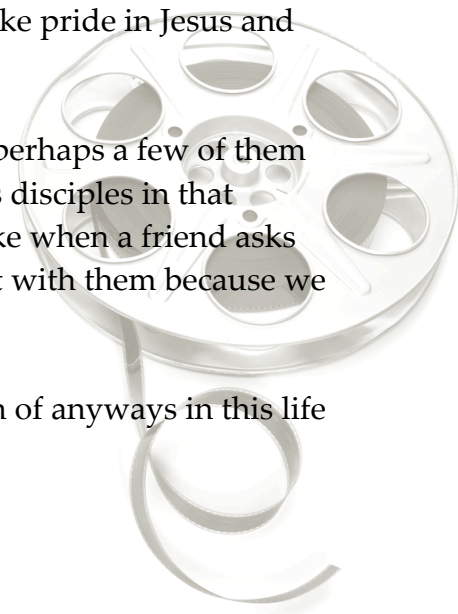
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ASHAMED OF JESUS AND WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR US?

SAY...

Sometimes when people start talking about Jesus I get nervous because I am afraid they are going to ask me something and I am not going to know the answer to. That is not a problem with the message of Jesus but it is a problem in how I have received it. 2 Tim. 1:7 says that *"God has not given us a spirit of timidity (weakness), but of power."* We need not be ashamed of Jesus because it is not us that is being rejected but Jesus. The opposite of shame is pride. We should take pride in Jesus and what his word says.

The disciples must have been afraid hearing this because perhaps a few of them had been timid at sharing the works of Jesus. We are just like his disciples in that sometimes we are scared to do what we know we should do. Like when a friend asks us where we go to church sometimes we don't want to share that with them because we are afraid of getting made fun of or ridiculed.

Let me tell you something...you are going to get made fun of anyways in this life so it might as well be for the sake of Jesus.



The Challenge



SAY...

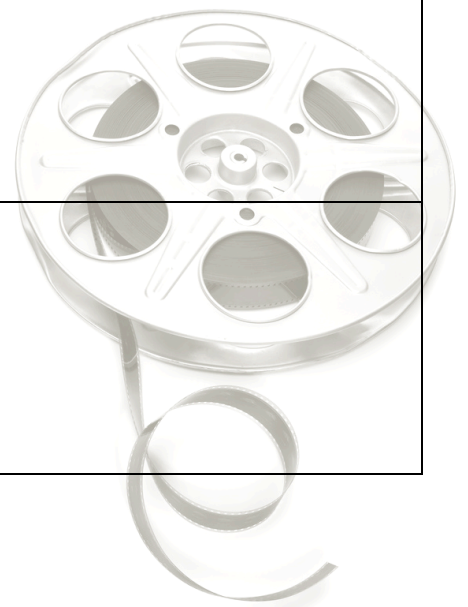
I want you to go home this weekend and write down on the paper a daily journal. Talk about each day how you served Jesus. Describe things you did and then describe difficulties you had. See the Example Below

Day	I served Jesus by....	I struggled with...
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Praying before I went to school and read a couple of verses from John.• helping someone with their homework.• helping mom clean the kitchen.• giving \$0.50 to a guy at school who didn't have lunch money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• understanding what I read in the bible.• treating my brother or sister nicely.• talking back to dad when he asked me to clean my room.

Bring your work next week and we will share some of our answers.



Day	I served Jesus by...	I struggled with...
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		



Lesson 5: Love—the Strategy of Action

Mark 12:28-34

TEACHER NOTES

- It would be beneficial to remind the students what was learned a week ago. Talk about the applications and see if they participated in some of the challenges for the week. Try not to take up too much of class time though.
- This lesson is centered around the theme of love. Love, as you know, is not about passive inaction but aggressive action.
- There is an object lesson in here that requires you donating \$5 to a teenager. Make sure, though, you have a \$5 dollar bill, five \$1 dollar bills, 4 quarters, 5 nickels and 5 pennies. I know, it sounds like a lot but it will make sense once you do the illustration. Before class pick a number between 1-100 and write it on a piece of paper and put it in your pocket.

The Creed and Connection



CREED

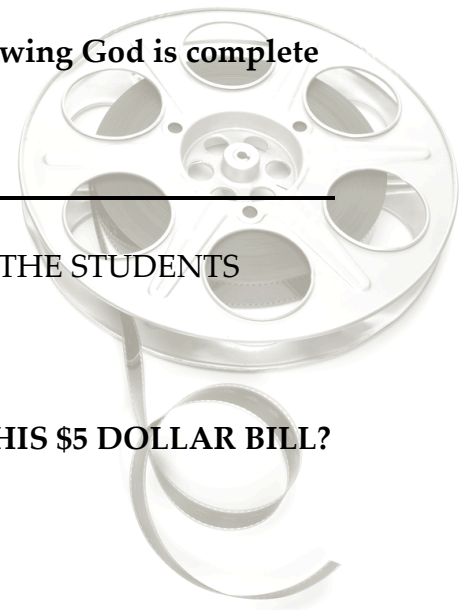
“The basic, fundamental gesture Christians are to have in following God is complete devotion to him and complete devotion to others.”

CONNECTION

TAKE OUT THE \$5 DOLLAR BILL AND SHOW IT TO ALL OF THE STUDENTS

ASK....

WHO WANTS THIS \$5 DOLLAR BILL?



Most of the students will raise their hands but instruct them that in order to receive the money they have to pick a number between 1 and 100. Then pull out the paper in your pocket and announce the winner. Have the person come up to receive his or her prize.

RIGHT BEFORE THEY GRAB IT PULL IT AWAY AND SAY...

Wait! I have decided that I want to keep the \$5 bill for myself. I do have 5 \$1 dollar bills and I will keep \$4 but you can have \$1. Ok?

RIGHT BEFORE THEY GRAB IT PULL IT AWAY AND SAY...

Wait! I have decided that I want to keep the \$1 bills to myself. I do have four quarters and you are welcome to have one quarter but I will keep the other three. Ok?

RIGHT BEFORE THEY GRAB IT PULL IT AWAY AND SAY...

Wait! I have decided that I want to keep the quarters for myself but I do have five nickels and you are welcome to keep one while I keep the other four. Ok?

RIGHT BEFORE THEY GRAB IT PULL IT AWAY AND SAY...

Wait! I have decided that I want to keep the nickels to myself but I have five pennies and you are welcome to keep one while I keep the other four. Ok?

GIVE THEM THE PENNY AND ASK THEM TO SIT DOWN.

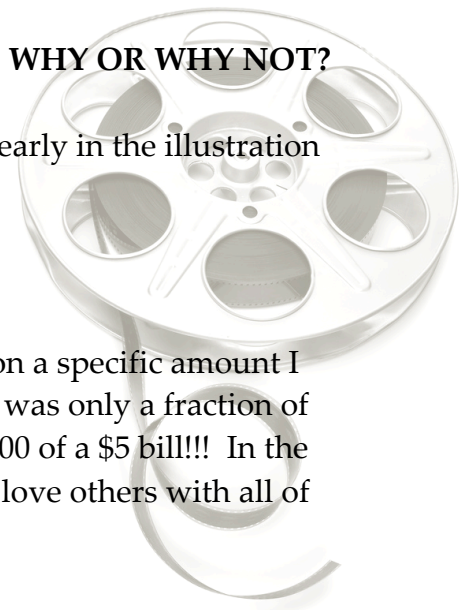
ASK...

WAS THAT FAIR FOR ME TO DO? WHY OR WHY NOT?

Teenagers are not dumb as they probably caught-on very early in the illustration at what you were doing.

SAY...

It wasn't fair at what I was doing. Each time we agreed on a specific amount I offered them less than previous. By the time we got to the end it was only a fraction of what I was supposed to offer them. Matter of fact a penny is 1/500 of a \$5 bill!!! In the same way we are commanded, as we will learn, to love God and love others with all of



heart yet, we only give God a fraction of what he asks from us. We only give others a fraction of what we are commanded to give them.

In this lesson we are going to learn the basic component of Christianity namely to love God and love others.

The Core



TEACHER NOTES

IDEA: This lesson needs some study, prayer and plenty of preparation. It's tempting just to ask questions and ramble for 45 minutes but do some homework and allow the Spirit to work with you on this lesson. Also leave some time at the end of this lesson as we are going to pray.

BIBLE LESSON

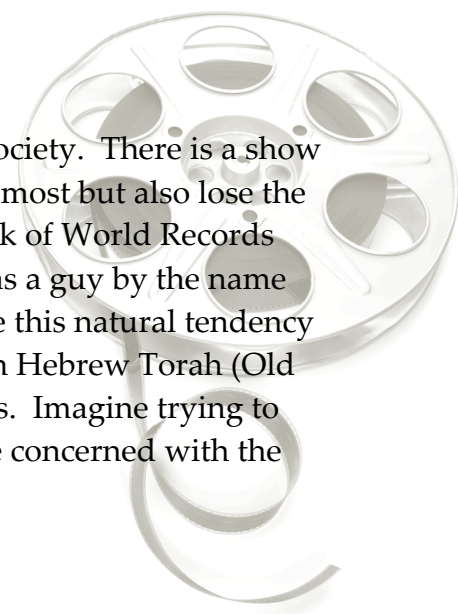
Have a student turn to Mark 12:28 and read it.

ASK...

WHY DO YOU THINK THE SCRIBE WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT?

SAY...

As people we are often concerned about the extremes of society. There is a show called the "Biggest Loser" that showcases people who weigh the most but also lose the most amount of weight. There is a book called the Guinness Book of World Records that discusses the extremes of society like the tallest man ever was a guy by the name Robert Wadlow who was 8'11 tall!!! So of course the scribes have this natural tendency to be concerned with the greatest of all of the commandments. In Hebrew Torah (Old Testament Law) it is said that there were 613 different commands. Imagine trying to memorize and live by 613 different commands! The scribes were concerned with the greatest.



Perhaps another reason they wanted to know also is to reduce the gospel to a core message. This is not a bad thing as the gospel is complex and so much more intricate than people realize yet it can be reduced to a simple and driving message.

Have a student turn to Mark 12:29-30 and read it.

ASK...

WHAT IS LOVE?

SAY...

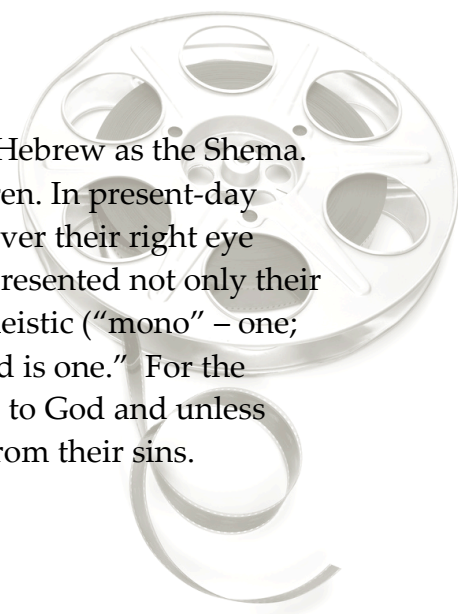
This is perhaps the most fundamental understanding of the nature of who God is. John told us, *"We love because he first loved us"* (1 John 4:19). The word love has so many different meanings to it that it may be hard to understand what Jesus meant by loving God. For example, sometimes we say, "I love cheeseburgers." We also say, "I love classical music." Sometimes we even think we understand love at 13 and we tell our boyfriends or girlfriends, "I love you." Now certainly we do not love God like we love cheeseburgers, classical music or even our significant others. So what does love mean? The fancy Greek word used here for love is *agapaō* and it means a selfless, sacrificial love. *"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son"* (John 3:16). That is sacrificial love. It is the love that you are willing to do anything and everything for that person even if it means giving your life.

ASK...

HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE HEBREW TERM SHEMA?

SAY...

Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5 which was known in Hebrew as the Shema. The Shema was the grounding commandment for Hebrew children. In present-day Orthodox Judaism, they recite the Shema twice daily and men cover their right eye while pronouncing each Hebrew word carefully. The Shema represented not only their instruction as what to do (i.e. "Love") but it signified the monotheistic ("mono" – one; "theistic" – pertaining to God) nature of God. "The Lord our God is one." For the Hebrew, this meant any idolatry was considered an abomination to God and unless repentance occurred then there was no way to find forgiveness from their sins.



ASK...

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL OF OUR HEART, SOUL,
MIND AND STRENGTH?**

SAY...

Let me illustrate this to you. If I am driving down the road in a car and decide that I want to start texting my buddy about a fishing trip. Am I devoting all of my mind and energy to driving or texting? Neither one! I am pulled in two opposite directions and the only logical outcome for my distractions is either I get in a wreck or run a red-light. To love with all of our hearts means the totality of who we are is a child of God in love with his father. We may be students, teachers, construction workers, lawyers, doctors or whoever but first and foremost we are children of God. Our day to day actions and decisions is a reflection of our love for God. There is no separation between life in the world and life in God. There is just life with God.

ASK....

WHY IS IT SO HARD TO LOVE GOD WITH OUR ENTIRE EXISTENCE?

SAY...

Because we are so distracted. We have passion and desire that lead us into places where God is not present. We chase so many things like fame, fortune and power yet we neglect the foundational, driving aspect of our Christian heritage: complete and unwavering love of the Father. Think about it for a little bit. Last week you were supposed to fill out how many times you served God. How often did you find yourself serving him and meeting his needs? At the core of your issues is one simple word: distraction.

Have a student turn to Mark 12:31 and read it.

ASK...

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS AS OURSELVES?

SAY...



Loving our neighbor is the natural response to loving our God. Why? Because, according to Genesis 1:26, all of creation is made in the image of God. Black, white, brown, yellow or somewhere in between we are all equal before God. We are a people of oneness who serve one God. So that means even our enemies we are called to love. Those people who mistreat us? We are called to love them. Those people who have wronged us? We are called to love them. Those people who live in a different country? We are called to love them. Those people who are a different political party than we are? We are called to love them. Again John says, *"If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"* (1 John 3:17).

ASK...

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF HOW WE MUST LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR IN OUR DAY AND TIME?

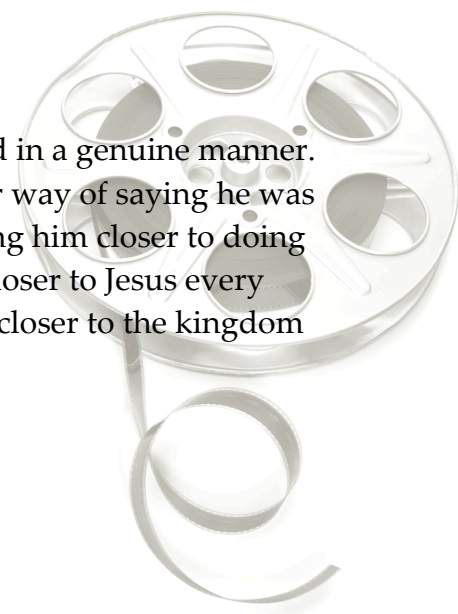
SAY...

Maybe it is going to a soup-kitchen and serving the poor somewhere. Maybe it means you go to volunteer at a homeless shelter and offer your time as a gift of love. Maybe it means you give money to a friend at school who doesn't have enough money to buy lunch. Maybe it means you offer your services up at a local church by becoming involved in youth activities or becoming involved with the elderly. Maybe it means you start something huge and begin a small company at your young age. Genuine, biblical love has no boundaries and is not a respecter of persons. It is worse to hold the love in than to let it out freely.

Have a student turn to Mark 12:32-34 and read it.

SAY...

The Scribe here seemed to be searching for the way of God in a genuine manner. Jesus said that he was not far from the kingdom which is another way of saying he was close to the kingdom of God. He was on a journey that was taking him closer to doing what God had called him to do. We each are called to become closer to Jesus every step of the way. Each day is another opportunity for us to grow closer to the kingdom which is another opportunity for us to do the same.



The Challenge



SAY...

Today we are going to close differently. Today we are going to spend some time in prayer. I want you to break up into groups of 2-3 and pray for each other. Pray that each other understand the love of God more and pray that each other would love others as much as they love themselves. Pray for understanding and pray for guidance.



Lesson 6: Death—the Sentence of Action

Mark 14:53-65; 15:1-39

TEACHER NOTES

- It would be beneficial to remind the students what was learned a week ago. Talk about the applications and see if they participated in some of the challenges for the week. Try not to take up too much of class time though.
- This lesson is centered on the theme of death, which is kind of morbid. The goal though is to paint a picture of what happened to Christ as a result of his living for the gospel and in turn our fate in living for the gospel.
- To make a visual illustration you may want to borrow a railroad tie and a hammer and a crown of thorns if you could get your hands on one.

The Creed and Connection



CREED

“A Christian’s lifelong service in the kingdom will lead to one result and one result alone: death.”

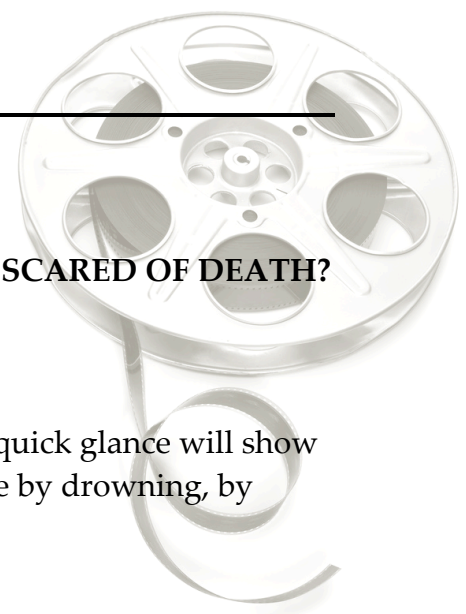
CONNECTION

ASK....

RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU ARE SCARED OF DEATH?

SAY...

This is kind of a sobering question to start class with but a quick glance will show that most of us are afraid of dying. Some people are scared to die by drowning, by



dying in a car accident or dying of cancer. As a human being the reality of death is upon every single person. It is an inescapable reality.

ASK...

WHY ARE WE SO AFRAID OF DYING?

SAY...

Because that is one thing you can't prepare for entirely. When one dies it is the final experience on this earth. After that we await judgment from God the Father (see 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27). Even though as Christians death is merely the beginning for us we still have a sense in us that does not want to die. In fact, if we do die a large percentage of us want to either die quickly and painless or we want to die in our sleep. The number one way a person dies in the United States is by a heart-attack. Most people die from heart disease and, in fact, this is the number one killer in the entire world. Makes you think twice before you eat that hamburger.

SAY...

Today we are going to learn about the death of Christ as a consequence for living out what he was called to do. We are going to walk through his trial (according to the book of Mark of course) and experience his death then we are going to ask, "What does this mean for us?"

The Core



TEACHER NOTES

IDEA: This lesson needs some study, prayer and plenty of preparation. It's tempting just to ask questions and ramble for 45 minutes but do some homework and allow the Spirit to work with you on this lesson. You can carry the nail (railroad tie) and hammer with you as you are leading discussion

BIBLE LESSON

Have a student turn to Mark 14:53-64 and read it.

ASK...

**DO YOU THINK THE TRIAL JESUS HAD WITH THE COUNCIL WAS FAIR?
WHY OR WHY NOT?**

SAY...

It was totally unfair. They had false witnesses and sought to find people so that they could accuse Jesus of things he should not be tried for. But all of this testimony was sought out by the members of the council in an effort to convict Jesus legally. According to Jewish custom you have to have two to three credible witnesses to punish someone by death.

ASK...

**WHAT DID JESUS DO THAT CAUSED HIM TO BE BETRAYED BY JESUS AND
TRIED BY THE JEWS?**

SAY...

The thing about this is that Jesus served the poor, healed the sick and gave food to the hungry. He also established a whole set of laws for people to follow and how he changed the ways of the world to focus on him and the Father. The reason Jesus was tried by the Jews was because he said things that let them know of their hypocrisy. He sat with the sinners, he did things on the Sabbath (Mark 2:18-28) and he spoke against the tradition of the Pharisees (Mark 7:1-23). Jesus was a misfit who caused trouble among the upity-dos and because of his service to mankind he is now on trial.

Have a student turn to Mark 15:1-15 and read it.

ASK...

WHY DID JESUS GO TO PILATE?

SAY...



First of all, Pilate was a Roman Governor and the Jews were under Roman rule. This is important because they cannot have Jesus killed unless the Romans said it was ok, so they had to work with the current court system.

ASK...

HOW DO YOU THINK PILATE FELT ABOUT JESUS?

SAY...

Pilate seemed that Jesus was under trial wrongfully. He tried to convince the Jews they were doing the wrong thing by releasing a known criminal by offering them to release the customary prisoner and that being Jesus. However, the crowds yelled that they release Barabbas, a known criminal, instead of Jesus. Jesus' fate is sealed when they scream "Crucify him!"

Have a student read Mark 15:16-20

ASK...

WHAT SORT OF IMAGE DO YOU GET AT WHAT IS TAKING PLACE?

SAY...

What is recorded in these verses is nothing short of pandemonium mixed with the worst of humanity. The Romans were known for a lot of things but something they were well known for is their ability to torture a person for the longest amounts of time before they died. After Pilate gave his word for Jesus to be crucified they beat him with a multi-lashed whip containing imbedded pieces of bone and metal (ESV Study Bible, footnote 4, page 1930). After that they invited a whole battalion (600+ soldiers) to come and mock of Jesus, and to beat him severely, and to spit on him. Isaiah prophesying about Jesus said this: *"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep before its shearers silent, so he opened not his mouth"* (Isa. 53:7).



ASK...

AGAIN, WHY IS THIS HAPPENING TO JESUS?

SAY...

It is the direct result of following his Father's will. He told his disciples this would happen on numerous occasions and for humanity to have access to the Father there had to be atonement for sin. Atonement is a fancy word that means somebody has to pay for something so that there is no sin. Jesus was that payment. Jesus was that ransom.

Have a student read Mark 15:21-39

ASK...

**EVEN WHEN JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED, WHAT ATTITUDE DID HE POSSESS
TOWARDS ALL PEOPLE?**

SAY...

Jesus was mocked, beaten and hung on a cross. He is in so much pain and anguish right now. Every breath he takes is a painful exercise that puts pressure on his wounds and he still had the wherewithall to save a thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43). Jesus experienced all sorts of pain and torture for the sake of humanity but while on that cross his pain became humanity's peace. His burden became our blessings and his suffering became our salvation.

SO WHAT????

SAY...

There are a few lessons we need to learn from the death of Jesus and how it relates to us.



WRITE THESE ON THE BOARD...

LESSON #1 – PREPARE FOR THE WORST.

Jesus said that we would be persecuted for being Christians and that it is not a matter of “if” but “when.” Sometimes life throws some unfair things at us and life can be a bit unfair at times. The death Jesus died was unfair, unwarranted and cruel.

But...

LESSON #2 – FOR THE CHRISTIANS, DEATH MEANS LIFE

It’s not all doom and gloom is it? How could Paul say, *“For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain”* (Phil 1:21)? He said it because he knew that death was the only way one can experience life. Physical death for the Christian is the best thing that could happen. The worst this world can do to you is kill you which is the best thing that can happen for the Christian. That is why Paul could say, *“neither death nor life...shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Rom. 8:38-39).

LESSON #3 – BE A MAN OR WOMAN OF ACTION

Jesus sought to do God’s will all the way until he died which is exactly our task. We seek to serve until we can serve no longer. Our action goes until we meet the Lord in the air.



The Challenge



SAY...

I am going to ask you a personal question that I want you everyone to answer. There is no right or wrong answers just speak what comes to your heart.

UPON HEARING AND STUDYING ABOUT THE DEATH OF JESUS, I NEED TO _____!

Take a few moments and fill out what you need to do with your spiritual life based on the death of Jesus. Fill it out and share with the class.



Lesson 7: Rebirth—the Sustainment of Action

Mark 15:42-47; 16:1-8

TEACHER NOTES

- It would be beneficial to remind the students what was learned a week ago. Talk about the applications and see if they participated in some of the challenges for the week. Try not to take up too much of class time though.
- This lesson is centered on the theme of the resurrection. For the Christian the resurrection is the focal point of our Christian and eternal lives. Without the resurrection all of what we say and do is pointless. It is a fair statement to say that Christianity lives and dies on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the final lesson in this series and it is a huge one.

The Creed and Connection



CREED

“Our final chapter in life will be the beginning of our experience with a resurrected body and with this body we spend eternity with Christ in heaven.”

CONNECTION

ASK....

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE LIKE TO NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THINGS LIKE PAIN, MONEY, HOMEWORK OR EVEN DYING?

SAY...

Remember last week we talked about death and we witnessed Christ on the cross as a punishment for our sin. We also talked about how we too will ultimately



experience death and that is something we cannot avoid. But what if we could live in a world where death, pain, suffering, sin and everything negative in this world simply does not exist? Would you be interested? I think most of us would. This only happens though when we die.

ALLOW THEM TO FILL IN THE NEXT QUESTION AND ASK FOR SOME VOLUNTEERS TO SHARE THEIR ANSWERS....

ASK...

WHY DO YOU GO TO CHURCH SERVICES?

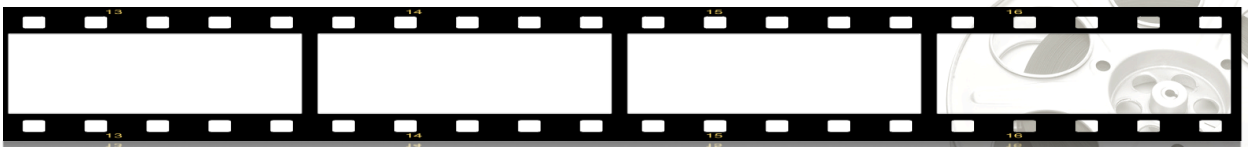
SAY...

Most of you go to services because it is a routine that you have done over and over again. Some of you come because it is an absolute joy for you to be present in class learning a word from Scripture. Here's the deal: we go to church services to learn how to be disciples and make disciples. There's no way around this and our ultimate goal should be to bring heaven on earth so that we might experience a little now of what will be ultimate when we die.

SAY...

Today we are going to learn about the resurrection of Jesus as a framing story for our own resurrection. Our own resurrection only happens when we understand the significance of Jesus' resurrection as our beginning point for discussion on Christianity.

The Core



TEACHER NOTES

IDEA: This lesson needs some study, prayer and plenty of preparation. It's tempting just to ask questions and ramble for 45 minutes but do some homework and allow the Spirit to work with you on this lesson. An idea is to, before the class, draw all over the board making it as dirty as possible. You can draw things up there like GOSSIP,

LYING, DRESSING DIRTY, CUTTING, etc. As you go through the lesson talking about resurrection you can clean the board bit-by-bit.

BIBLE LESSON

Have a student turn to Mark 15:42-47 and read it.

ASK...

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING A PLACE FOR JESUS TO BE BURIED SO QUICKLY?

SAY...

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the the Council (or Sanhedrin) and according to Matthew's account he was a rich man (Matt. 27:57-60). He had a tomb and wanted to bury Jesus in it quickly because this was a Friday and the Jews were not allowed to work on a Saturday since it was the Sabbath. It took a lot of courage for Joseph to ask Pilate for the body of Jesus. The burial had to be done in accordance with Jewish customs so Joseph took care of all the arrangements. It is interesting to note that Joseph was called a disciple and was one who was looking for the kingdom of God. At a time when most of Jesus' apostles left him Joseph had the courage to seek Pilate and get the body of Jesus.

Have a student turn to Mark 16:1-8 and read it.

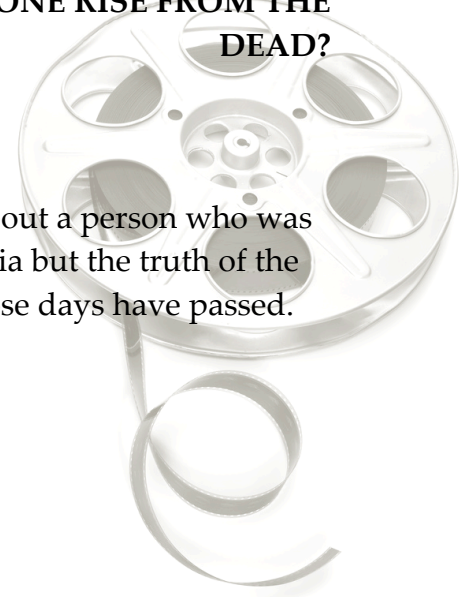
ASK...

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IF YOU SAW SOMEONE RISE FROM THE DEAD?

SAY...

Most of us would probably freak out. You always hear about a person who was raised from the dead in some remote village in Africa or Indonesia but the truth of the matter is that nobody can be raised from the dead anymore. Those days have passed.

ASK...



ALONG THE SAME LINES, WHAT DO YOU THINK THE REACTION OF THOSE WHO SAW HIM WAS?

SAY...

Think about this for a minute. In Mark 8:31 and 10:34 Jesus told his disciples that he had to suffer, he had to die and then three days later he was going to rise from the dead. The disciples initially could not accept this (partly because they wanted an earthly king) so in the back of their head they must have had some level of doubt. I mean who says that they are going to die, be buried and raised three days later? They are called lunatics. People who predict the end of the world and things like that in these days are usually dismissed as crazy or simply misinformed. But Jesus was different. He could heal people. He could cast demons away from people. He had the power to forgive people. Certainly rising from the dead was just another day in the job of Jesus.

ASK...

WHY DO YOU THINK PETER'S NAME IS THE ONLY DISCIPLE MENTIONED WHEN THE ANGEL TOLD MARY AND MARY MAGDALENE TO TELL THE DISCIPLES (16:7)?

SAY...

If you remember that Peter was the one who denied Christ three times. What God was saying through the angel was that in spite of the brokenness Peter was in, he still was needed in the kingdom of God. In about 40 days from this time Peter would deliver his masterful sermon in Acts 2 where 3,000 people and more were baptized.

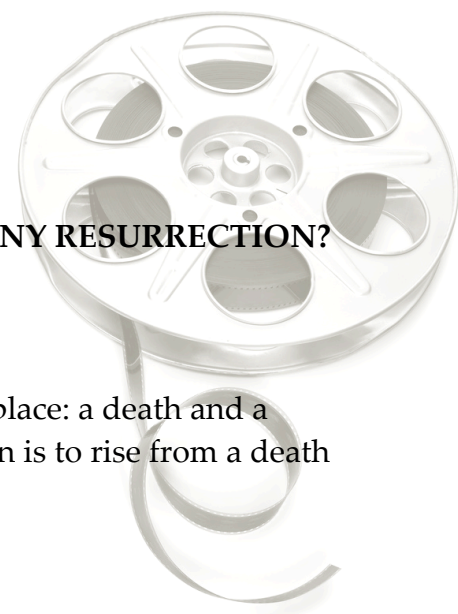
THIS LEADS ME TO THE POINT OF THIS LESSON....

ASK...

WHAT IS THE POINT OF ANY RESURRECTION?

SAY...

In order to have a resurrection two things must first take place: a death and a burial. I know that sounds obvious but the point of a resurrection is to rise from a death and a burial.



ASK...

WHAT DOES THE RESURRECTION MEAN FOR YOU?

SAY...

Three things...

1. It means that old ways are old.

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient” (Eph. 2:1-2).

Without Christ’s sacrifice we are nothing and we have nothing. The resurrection makes everything possible so that we can have forgiveness. Without a resurrection we are stuck in death. All of our old ways of living remain in the past. Our sins, our struggles, our brokenness and all of our corrupt humanity become dead the moment a resurrection occurs.

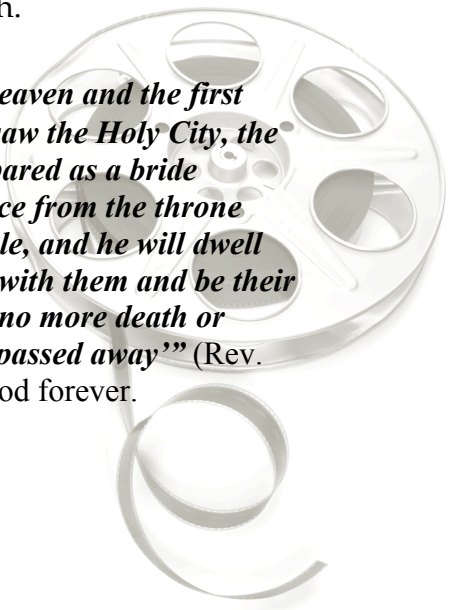
2. It means we have new possibilities.

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:1-4). What does it feel like when you do something wrong and your parents let it go? It feels like you have a clean slate. It feels like you are set free. With a clean slate that allows you to do new and exciting things for God.

3. It means eternal life in the New Heavens and New Earth.

“Then I saw ‘a new heaven and a new earth,’ for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away’” (Rev. 21:1-4). There are no worries. Permanent fellowship with God forever.

But here is the more difficult question....



ASK...

HOW DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESURRECTION?

SAY...

By dying. Metaphorically speaking. *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin”* (Rom. 6:3-7). We must die to the world and live for Christ in order to be set free. Our resurrection comes from our own death, burial and resurrection through baptism. This way we can experience newness in life.



The Challenge



SAY...

This is the deal breaker. We have looked at various aspects in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. We titled these lessons "ACTION" and now it is up to you to decide what you need to do.

ASK...

WHAT STEPS DO I NEED TO TAKE TO BE A PERSON OF ACTION IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

ALLOW THEM TO FORMULATE THEIR ANSWERS AND THEN ASK FOR SOME VOLUNTEERS TO SHARE...

