



# AMAZED BY JESUS



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# PASSAGE SCHEDULE

<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>PASSAGE</b>
8/1	Mark 7:31-37
8/8	Mark 8:1-21
8/15	Mark 8:22-38
8/22	Mark 9:1-13
8/29	Mark 9:14-29
9/5	Stand alone sermon
9/12	Mark 9:30-37
9/19	Mark 9:38-50
9/26	Mark 10:1-12
10/3	Mark 10:13-16
10/10	Mark 10:17-31
10/17	Mark 10:32-52
10/24	Mark 11:1-11
10/31	Mark 11:15-19
11/7	Mark 11:12-14, 20-24
11/14	Mark 11:27-33
11/21	Mark 12:1-12
11/28	Advent begins

# AMAZED BY JESUS INTRO

## THE GOSPEL OF MARK PART 2: THE PERSON OF JESUS

In his Gospel, Mark often arranges events from the life and ministry of Jesus to clarify theological concepts. For example, the miracles of giving hearing to a deaf man (7:31-36) and sight to a blind man (8:22-26) are meant to not only show the power of Jesus but also to communicate the necessity of divine revelation for *spiritual* sight and hearing. Without the direct intervention of God, we cannot truly know the person of Jesus. After seven chapters of confusion and unbelief on the part of the disciples, Peter announces that Jesus is the Messiah. *This is the person of Jesus: He is the anointed King of the universe.*

After He is finally declared to be the Messiah by His disciples, Jesus immediately connects His identity as anointed King with suffering, rejection, death, and victorious resurrection. Jesus is the one who came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. Jesus, in the very essence of His character, is One who sacrifices Himself, One who gives Himself over to judgment and death, in order to give mercy and life to those whom the Father has given Him. The question before us is this: can we surrender to this kind of love, even if it costs us all of our so-called control? Will we give up our resistance to the love God has for us, and ask Him to give us hearts receptive to His love?

In the person of Jesus the story of Scripture finds fulfillment:

*Jesus faces the ultimate exile and death sentence of the Fall, not for His own sin but for the sin of His people;*

*Jesus bears the covenant curses so that the beautiful marriage between sinful humanity and their holy Creator can be accomplished;*

*Jesus earns the covenant blessings by perfectly obeying the Father, even unto death;*

Jesus fully reveals God, and the character of God is seen in His willingness to suffer and die for His beloved. And in the end, He wins, resurrecting as victor over all opposition.

In Christ,  
Your Pastors

# A BRIEF THEOLOGY OF THE GOSPELS

What's the difference between the *gospel* and the *Gospels*?

The *gospel* is the good news of what God has done in Jesus's life, death, resurrection, and ascension to redeem His people for His own glory.<sup>1</sup>

The *Gospels* are the four books that begin the New Testament - Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John. These four books are "historical narrative motivated by theological concerns"<sup>2</sup> and "stories of God's eschatological, redemptive, covenant-fulfilling activity through the person of Jesus of Nazareth."<sup>3</sup>

What does this mean? ***The four Gospels are historically-true, authoritative, and infallible narratives about Jesus the Messiah and how He is the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan.*** The *Gospels* are what G.K. Beale calls redemptive history, which he defines as "God's salvific dealings with his people throughout the entire history, from the fall of Adam until the final consummation."<sup>4</sup> We may not be told about Jesus's eye color or His childhood interactions with friends, but we are told and shown how He fulfills and even continues the story of the Old Testament, and how He will bring history to completion at His return.

The four documents we now call *Gospels* weren't designated as such until after the Second Century. But the earliest disciples of Jesus were anticipating written documents because the Jewish community already had a precedent for such documents: the entire Old Testament. Since the disciples were intimately familiar with covenantal documents, they were expecting new documents to come with the New Covenant. Not only this, but Jesus Himself tells of this reality in John 17:

*"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word."*

From the beginning, Christianity was going to continue in the tradition of Judaism as it advanced through "the word" of Jesus' disciples. We have that "word" recorded in the *Gospels*.

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<sup>1</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Gospel Coalition* ([www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org))

<sup>2</sup> Mark Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus*

<sup>3</sup> Michael J. Kruger, *Covenant Theology: Covenant in the Gospels*

<sup>4</sup> G.K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*

# BACKGROUND ON THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Biblical scholar Michael Kruger writes this about the Gospels:

*"The covenantal nature of these books means they are not so much human testimony about God as they are God's testimony to humans about the terms of his covenant through Jesus. God is the maker of divine covenants and therefore rightly understood to be the author of covenant documents. [...] The Gospels are authoritative [...] because the Gospels are, from their very inception, a legal and divine witness."<sup>5</sup>*

The Gospel of Mark, then, is about one thing: Jesus. This is not a narrative about social revolution, moral instruction, or religious experiences; this is a proclamation about Jesus the Son of God, written to provoke faith in Him. With this in mind, below is some basic information about the Gospel of Mark.

- This is the only Gospel that explicitly refers to itself as a proclamation of *good news or glad tidings*
- The first verse of Mark would have been immediately recognized by anyone familiar with Roman government as a direct rebuttal to the claim that the Caesar was divine. One inscription about Caesar Augustus says this: "Caesar, by his appearance excelled our expectations and surpassed all previous benefactors [...] the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning for the world of the good news that came by reason of him."
  - When Mark writes that his document is the good news about Jesus **Christ** (Messiah), he is immediately connecting the identity and actions of Jesus with the entire Old Testament story.
  - When Mark writes that his document is the good news about Jesus Christ, the **Son of God**, he is not only communicating truth, he is refuting the dominant cultural and political narrative of his day.
    - This makes the ending of Mark even more astounding because a centurion, who would have been required to have total devotion to Rome, announces the actual truth at the death of Jesus: "Truly *this man* was the Son of God!"
- Mark is the earliest written Gospel, having been written some time in the late 50's to early 60's AD (roughly 20-30 years after Jesus ascended)
- The Roman emperor Nero began his rule around the same time as the Mark was written; Nero would (in AD 64) begin heavily persecuting Christians - clothing them in animal skins so they'd be devoured, crucifying them, and lighting them on fire in his royal gardens

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<sup>5</sup> Kruger, *Covenant Theology*

- Most likely written from Rome by the man called John Mark in Acts 12:25 and “my son” in 1 Peter 5:13
- Mark orders events by topic, not chronologically
- Numerous scholars believe that the Apostle Peter’s experiences with Jesus form the background of the Gospel of Mark
  - This makes the Gospel’s appear even more historically accurate since the Apostle Peter would hardly want to make himself and his fellow disciples seem so ignorant about Jesus and His true mission, unless that is actually what happened

Four key verses:

- Mark 1:1 - “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”
  - Mark 1:11 - “And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”
  - Mark 8:29 - “And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, ‘You are the Christ.’”
  - Mark 15:39 - “And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was the Son of God!’”
- Mark begins his Gospel identifying Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God. Throughout the Gospel, Mark shows how these two titles of Jesus are intimately linked to His death and resurrection.

# COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE

WEEK 32

THE MAKER OF MARRIAGE

MARK 10:1-12

## RESOURCES

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/when-god-allows-divorce>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/divorce-and-remarriage/>

A summary of biblical grounds for divorce:

Adultery (in Deuteronomy 24:1, affirmed by Jesus in Matthew 19)

Emotional and physical neglect (in Exodus 21:10-11, affirmed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7)

Abandonment and abuse (included in neglect, as affirmed in 1 Corinthians 7)<sup>6</sup>

## PASSAGE SUMMARY

*Note for leaders: discussions about marriage and divorce can provoke uncomfortable emotions and strong opinions. As Christians, we are called to always speak with both love and truth. It may be helpful for you to begin group with an exhortation to act and speak in love, and pray for the Holy Spirit's help to do so.*

Since the bulk of His ministry was teaching, the opponents of Jesus often sought to discredit Him by attempting to show flaws in His understanding and teaching. As Jesus leaves Galilee and begins His final journey to Jerusalem, He is again confronted by Pharisees seeking to ruin His credibility.

Here, in Herod's territory, Pharisees bring a question about divorce, perhaps hoping that Jesus would condemn it and then be confronted by Herod (see Mark 6:27). Or perhaps the Pharisees wanted to discredit Jesus' theology of marriage and divorce, essentially asking Him, based on Deut. 24:1-4, "Jesus, what *kind* of indecency can a man point to as a legitimate reason for divorce?"

Jesus goes all the way back to the beginning of creation and God's invention and institution of marriage to answer that the ideal situation in God's sight is for one man and one woman to be united for a lifetime in loving marriage. Marriage is sacred, and the allowance for divorce is only here because we are broken sinners.

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<sup>6</sup> See this podcast interview with Wayne Grudem: <https://bit.ly/3CdAzS0>



## GROUP INTRO

In our cultural context, marriage is a hot-button *political* issue. For Christians, marriage is a *theological* issue, because marriage was invented and instituted by God. As God's people, we cannot walk in love while ignoring the questions, concerns, and objections surrounding a Christian view of marriage, which means we have to know what God says about marriage. Read aloud the following passages about marriage to see God's perspective on marriage:

**Genesis 2:18-25 • Malachi 2:13-16 • Matthew 19:8-9 • 1 Corinthians 7:8-17**

## TEXT

1. Where else in Mark's Gospel have we seen the topic of marriage and divorce come up? Why is this important to remember as we look at this passage?

*Leader help: In Mark 6, John the Baptist is killed because he prophetically rebuked Herod for marrying his brother's wife. The territory that Herod had authority over included the area where Jesus is tested by the Pharisees about divorce, and they're likely hoping that Jesus will suffer the same fate as John. Knowing that this occurred helps us understand that the Pharisees have evil intentions and desires, and acted in opposition to the Messiah.*

2. Read Deuteronomy 24:1-4. There were different "schools of thought" or "schools of interpretation" in Jesus' time, and these different groups held to different views on divorce, depending on their understanding of the phrase "he has found some indecency in her" in Deut. 24:1. These groups argued about the "indecency" that would allow a man to divorce his wife, and the Pharisees are seeking Jesus' opinion on this phrase. Rather than answer their question directly, what does Jesus state? Why?

*Leader help: Jesus states that the commandment in Deut. 24 was written because of human sinfulness, and that God's desire for marriage from creation on is faithful, lifelong union between one man and one woman. He is pointing out that God's ideal is not for divorce or for destructive marriages, but because of human hard-heartedness (i.e. human sinfulness due to the corrupted nature we all carry from the Fall) God provided some grounds for divorce, in order to protect people from destructive marriages where adultery, abuse, or abandonment occur.*

3. How does Jesus describe marriage? Why does Jesus go all the way back to creation?

*Leader help: Jesus describes marriage as being a committed, lifelong, inseparable relationship between one man and one woman. He also describes marriage as a union that God brings about. By going back to creation before the Fall in Genesis 3, where God called all He had made "good", Jesus is showing that God invented marriage, and His ideal for marriage does not include divorce.*

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4. What is the Bible's "big picture" presentation of marriage? In other words, according to the Bible, why does marriage matter? How does the Bible's big picture of marriage help us see the gospel in this passage?

*Leader help: marriage is a picture of God's covenantal love and faithfulness, which is the heart of the entire Bible. God has revealed Himself throughout Scripture as utterly holy, and utterly gracious, and it is in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus that God's holiness and grace are seen most clearly - godly, loving, lifelong marriages are a visual representation of Jesus' love for us. Paul makes this point in Ephesians 5:22-33, and John equates the arrival of the new heavens and new earth with a marriage ceremony in Revelation 21:1-4.*

### APPLICATION

1. Describe the difference between testing Jesus and seeking understanding or answers from Jesus. How would you help someone reorient their approach to Jesus when it comes to topics or experiences that confuse or trouble them?
2. How can we specifically apply the gospel to one another when we fail to meet God's ideals?
3. If you have not been married, or if you know someone who has not been married, why is this passage still crucial for understanding, believing, and applying to life? How does this passage help us grow as disciples of Jesus?
4. What are some helpful actions we can take to explain the beauty and ultimate purpose of God's design for marriage?

### PRAYER

Pray for those in your group, or loved ones of those in your group, who carry the shame and guilt of a divorce, asking God to have mercy on them and help them believe that Jesus has made them new.

***Biblical passage for this prayer: John 8:2-11***

Pray for Christians to remain committed to their marriages through seasons of suffering, difficulty, or boredom.

***Biblical passage for this prayer: Romans 5:1-5***

Pray for God to bring repentance across all Living Stones Churches in the following areas:

Adultery (including watching pornography) • abuse (physical, emotional, verbal, sexual) • low views of marriage/redefining marriage according to cultural demands

***Biblical passage for this prayer: Colossians 3:5-17***

## WEEK 33

### JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN

#### MARK 10:13-16

#### RESOURCES

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-kingdom-of-god/>

#### PASSAGE SUMMARY

Children are one of the most dependent groups of human beings, and it's because of this fact that they serve as a great illustration of the kind of character that is displayed by those receiving the kingdom of God.

In this passage, Jesus, still on His way toward Jerusalem where He will be betrayed and killed, shows His great compassion toward children by His willingness to have His ministry and journey interrupted simply to bless them. Jesus, being passionate about instilling truth and holy doctrine in His disciples, highlights the utter dependence of children, claiming that this kind of dependence isn't just good for disciples to possess, it is necessary for receiving God's kingdom. The reason is this: no one earns citizenship in God's kingdom by moral striving or earned election - God simply welcomes sinners who know by the light of His Word and the work of the Spirit that salvation is received by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

As one hymn states it: "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to the cross I cling."

#### GROUP INTRO

This week we are discussing the fact that receiving citizenship in God's kingdom is something that is simply accepted rather than earned.

Describe a time in your life when you felt embarrassed to ask for help but asked someone for help anyways. Why did you feel embarrassed to ask for help?

#### TEXT

1. Take a moment to observe the passage and write down or circle all of the action words. What do the crowds do? What do the disciples do? What does Jesus do?

*Leader help: the goal here isn't to gain profound insights but to simply notice what is present in this passage so that we're less likely to read assumptions into the passage.*

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2. How does the Bible define or describe the kingdom of God?

*Leader help: there are various definitions of the kingdom of God, but we could say that the kingdom of God is “the rule of God over his people in his creation, established through his Messiah in the new covenant, which is now present in the world, though it is awaiting its fulfillment.”<sup>7</sup>*

*Some passages that describe God’s kingdom:*

*Psalm 103:19-22*

*Daniel 4:34-35*

*2 Samuel 7:12-13*

*Matthew 12:28*

*Mark 1:15*

3. Which characteristics of Jesus are revealed in this passage?

*Leader help: His grace, love, truthfulness, selflessness, gentleness, meekness, and holiness (He is indignant toward His disciples for their failure to display God’s love and gentleness to children).*

4. What does Jesus mean by “whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it”? Why is the word “receive” in verse 15 key to our understanding of how someone belongs to God and His kingdom?

*Leader help: Jesus is stating that the kingdom of God can only be received - not earned or achieved - as a gift by those who are totally dependent on God. Unlike every other religious system in the world, the Bible clearly shows that God gives salvation as a gift to the underserving. The fact that we have to receive the kingdom like a gift also shows that human effort alone through things like political or cultural transformation won’t establish the kingdom of God.*

### **APPLICATION**

1. What kinds of words or actions would you expect to see in the life of someone who is dependent upon God? Are these words or actions present in our Community Group?
2. How does believing that we can earn or achieve our way into the kingdom of God impact our ability to live joyful, merciful, sacrificial lives?
3. What practical change do you need to make this week in order to grow in your dependence upon God?
4. How would you use Mark 10:15 to present the gospel to a Catholic, Mormon, or Atheist?

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<sup>7</sup> See “The Kingdom of God” by Christopher Morgan, linked above under “Resources”.

## PRAYER

Pray a prayer of confession and repentance for pride or distrust you have displayed in the last week.

***Biblical example of this kind of prayer: Daniel 9:3-6***

Give thanks to God for the gift of His kingdom.

***Biblical example of this kind of prayer: Matthew 11:25-30***

Ask God to make you someone who trusts that God loves you and has saved you simply because He chose to, not because of anything you've done.

***Biblical example of this kind of prayer: Ephesians 1:15-21***

Plead with God on behalf of those in your life who do not believe that the kingdom of God is received.

***Biblical example of this kind of prayer: Ephesians 6:10-20***

Thank God for children and their example of dependence. Ask God to help Living Stones be a safe, fun, and joyful place for children.

***Prayer idea: Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ.***

## WEEK 34

### TRUE RICHES

#### MARK 10:17-31

#### RESOURCES

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/sermons/mark-rich-young-ruler>

<https://www.ccef.org/video/what-idolatry/>

#### PASSAGE SUMMARY

At the end of a 50-year long stint of work in China, the famous missionary Hudson Taylor once stated that in those 50 years, "I never made a sacrifice."

Taylor's evaluation of his life summarizes a Jesus-centered, Jesus-empowered, Jesus-loving perspective, one that Jesus Himself invites us to as Christians.

Probably more often than we realize, we all face the choice of surrendering to Jesus and following Him, believing that He is better than anything we could get or give ourselves, or holding tight to something or someone we deem more valuable.

This week we meet a man whose deepest wrestles with Jesus exist within all of us: works-righteousness (believing that your good acts and words make you righteous in God's sight) and idolatry ("*anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give*"<sup>8</sup>).

Despite the man's rejection of Jesus, we're told that the Lord loved him, and then promised that the impossible is possible with God, and those who bank everything on Jesus and His good news will be rewarded in this life, and in the life to come.

#### GROUP INTRO

The poison of works-righteousness is a constant threat to all of us. A simple way to start discovering whether or not we've slipped into a works-righteousness mindset is to answer the following question:

If you were to die tonight and stand before God, and God said to you, "Why should I let you into My heaven?" what would you say?

#### TEXT

1. The man in verses 17-22 has two basic heart issues that prevent him from trusting Jesus. What are these core issues?

*Leader help: the man believes he has satisfactorily fulfilled the Law, thinking he has earned an inheritance to eternal life (works-righteousness or self-righteousness) and he treasures his possessions more than he treasures Jesus.*

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<sup>8</sup> Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods*.

2. Why does Jesus ask what He asks in verse 18? Is Jesus insinuating that He is not God? Why or why not?

*Leader help: Jesus isn't claiming that He is not God, He is simply challenging the man's perspective and attempting to get him to pause and consider his use of the title "good". Really, Jesus is trying to dismantle this man's conception of "good", since he obviously views himself as good. Instead of measuring himself by his external obedience to the Law, the man needs to consider the utter perfection of God, and realize that the only way he's going to get eternal life is by dependence upon God, not his good works.*

3. What is Jesus attempting to do for the man in verse 21? Is Jesus stating that this man can earn eternal life through his actions? What other Bible passages support your answer?

*Leader help: Jesus is extending an invitation to have true riches by faith alone. He does this by honing in on this man's greatest idol: his wealth, and calling him to abandon it in favor of something better (following Jesus). How Jesus knew he was wealthy we're not told, but we do know from passages such as Rom. 3:21-28 and Eph. 2:1-10 that sinners are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, not by actions they take.*

4. How are Jesus' promises in verses 29-31 fulfilled in the Bible and throughout church history?

*Leader help: mainly through church planting. Here's how: as gospel-centered churches are planted all over the world, the family of God is spread across the globe, providing a warm welcome to anyone who trusts Jesus. This family bond and access to hospitality does not do away with persecution, but it does provide comfort to those who trust Jesus and follow Him. Additionally, Christians may often look like they've come in "last place" - being fired, mistreated, rejected, imprisoned, harmed, or even killed - but those who experience persecution will be richly rewarded after Jesus returns.*

5. Why is the rich man's decision foolish and evil?

*Leader help: he has shown that he doesn't actually trust God and his external obedience was not evidence of devotion to the Lord, otherwise he would have obeyed Jesus and received Him as the greatest treasure. It's foolish because wealth doesn't gain entrance to the kingdom of God, and material possessions will rot.*

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## APPLICATION

1. Why is Jesus worth following even if it costs us things or relationships we highly and deeply value?
2. We get a picture of the gospel in verse 21 since Jesus loves this man in the midst of his sinful works-righteousness and idolatry. Read Romans 5:6-10 and 1 John 4:9-10. How does the gospel motivate you to abandon works-righteousness and idolatry?

3. In Philippians 3, the Apostle Paul writes this:

"If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I might gain Christ."

What in your life right now stands in the way of you trusting Jesus, obeying Jesus, or fully knowing Jesus?

How can we as a Community Group help you abandon this, and even consider it garbage compared to Jesus?

3. John Calvin wrote that "the human heart is a factory of idols. Every one of us is, from his mother's womb, expert in inventing idols."

On the next page is a chart that might help you assess some idols in your life. Take some time to review it and then pray prayers of:

Confession, admitting to God you value Him less than your idol  
Help, asking God to help you see how amazing and worthy He is  
Gratitude, thanking God for not leaving you in your idolatry



Identify which statement most closely resembles your own thoughts and attitudes and then specifically name the idol (out loud or written down), confess to God, and offer yourself in prayer to Him.<sup>9</sup>

"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I have power and influence over others."	(Power idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I am loved and respected by _____."	(Approval idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life."	(Comfort idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of _____."	(Control idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... people are dependent on me and need me."	(Helping idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... someone is there to protect me and keep me safe."	(Dependence idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I am completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone."	(Independence idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I am highly productive and getting a lot done."	(Work idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I am being recognized for my accomplishments, and I am excelling in my work."	(Achievement idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions."	(Materialism idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I am adhering to my religion's moral codes and accomplished in its activities."	(Religion idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... this one person is in my life and happy to be there, and/or happy with me."	(Individual person idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and am living by a self-made morality."	(Irreligion idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... my race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior."	(Racial/cultural idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... a particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in."	(Inner ring idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... my children and/or my parents are happy and happy with me."	(Family idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... Mr. or Ms. 'Right' is in love with me."	(Relationship idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I am hurting, in a problem; only then do I feel worthy of love or able to deal with guilt."	(Suffering idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... my political or social cause is making progress and ascending in influence or power."	(ideology idolatry)
"Life only has meaning/I only have worth if... I have a particular kind of look or body image."	(Image idolatry)

<sup>9</sup> Chart was compiled from *Gospel in Life* by Tim Keller.

## WEEK 35

### REDEFINING GREATNESS

#### MARK 10:32-52

#### RESOURCES

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-christian-life/>

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/sermons/mark-kingdom-climbers>

#### PASSAGE SUMMARY

Leadership, authority, power, and greatness are uniquely expressed in God's kingdom, for the King of this kingdom came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus has completely redefined what it means to lead and be great.

In this passage, Jesus predicts His suffering, death and resurrection for the third time in Mark's Gospel, describing in detail the brutality He will encounter in Jerusalem when He demonstrates kingdom greatness. But His disciples still have a twisted view of what the Messiah's ministry will look like as He enters the city of David. Jesus patiently addresses the self-centered assumptions of His disciples and, using Himself as the ultimate example and standard, teaches what God-centered greatness really looks like: self-denial, servanthood, and sacrifice. Even as He resolutely approaches Jerusalem where He knows suffering awaits Him, Jesus stops to provide attentive healing to a marginalized man because that's the character of our God: He didn't come to win the popularity contest, but to die in the place of His people for their sins.

#### GROUP INTRO

Think of someone in your life who has modeled godly, loving leadership. What words and actions set this person apart from other leaders? How did this person's leadership impact you?

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## TEXT

1. Describe the significance of each of these terms as they are found in this week's passage:

*"Son of Man" Leader help: Jesus claims this title for Himself based on Daniel 7:13-14, where a "son of man" comes "with the clouds of heaven", he is given eternal dominion over the entire world as well as God's kingdom, and he is able to enter the very presence of the Holy One without any kind of sacrifice.*

*"The cup" and "baptism" Leader help: "the cup" is a symbol of suffering in Old Testament passages such as Psalm 75:8 and Isaiah 51:17. This shows that Jesus will take on/bear God's wrath.*

*"Baptism" here is a reference to a flood or waterfall of trouble. See Psalm 18:16 and Psalm 69:1-2 for examples.*

*"Jerusalem" Leader help: this was the location of the temple where God's presence dwelt, starting during the time of King David's son Solomon. Later in biblical history, the city itself is known as the place where God dwelt. The city was also known for its turning away from God, an act which is rebuked by many prophets. Since this was the place where God was said to dwell, and it was considered a holy city, it is shocking that this is the very place where God's Son is rejected, killed, and resurrected.*

*"Son of David" Leader help: in Jesus' time, this was a messianic title, meaning that this title would only be applied to someone thought to be the Messiah. The title comes from Old Testament that indicate the Messiah would come from King David's lineage, so the Messiah would be a "son of David". See Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6.*

*"Ransom" Leader help: this word's significance can be seen in passages such as Psalm 49:7-8, Isaiah 51:11, Hosea 13:14, and 1 Timothy 2:6. It is a translation of the Greek word "lytron" which means "redemption" or "release". Jesus dies as a substitute, or in place of, His people who have sinned against God. What happens to Him should have happened to us.*

2. How does Jesus' predictions about His death and resurrection differ from the expectations of His disciples?

*Leader help: we know from other passages in Mark that the disciples expected Jesus to be a victorious political conqueror. What they did not expect or want was for Jesus to die. They did not understand that His death was necessary if they were to be forgiven and reconciled to God.*

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**

3. Verse 45 is thought by many to be the key verse for understanding the Gospel of Mark. What important truths about Jesus do we discover in this verse?

*Leader help: Jesus is the Son of Man, the divine and human figure prophetically seen by Daniel in Daniel 7.*

*Jesus is not "of this world"...He came here from heaven.*

*Jesus came here to die as a substitute for sinners.*

*Jesus willingly came to serve us and to die.*

*Jesus' death is enough to accomplish our redemption.*

*Jesus' death in our place and the ransom that He accomplishes is a gift that He gives, not something we earn.*

### **APPLICATION**

1. Read verses 33-34, John 15:18-21 and 2 Timothy 3:12. This is a picture of Christian discipleship: following the suffering, sacrificial, servant-minded example of Jesus. With this in mind, why do you follow Jesus? Why is Jesus worth believing and obeying in the midst of a hostile world?
2. Since Jesus has died as your substitute, what promises can we cling to and what hope do we have in our lives? How does this hope help you follow Jesus in your everyday life?
3. Where do you need to repent for trying to be noticed, great, or praised instead of being a servant?
4. How can you act as a servant in your neighborhood, school, workplace, or worship gathering this week?

### **PRAYER**

If you're a Christian, praise Jesus for His willingness to die in your place.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Psalm 49:15***

Confess to God the ways you have failed to live as a servant, and thank Him for adopting you.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: Colossians 3:1-14***

Ask God to help you endure whatever suffering or difficult situations He ordains this week with joy, hope, and a servant's mindset.

***Biblical passage to guide this prayer: 1 John 5:4-5***