



Week 4: Mark 1-8

Study Guide for the week of Jan. 19-25

Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with Mark 8:27-30, Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah.

This passage is often considered the pivot point of Mark's gospel; the chapters leading up to it present evidence that Jesus is the Messiah while the subsequent chapters explore what the real Messiah actually is and does.

Who does the world say Jesus is? A great teacher, moral person, gifted healer, charismatic leader, miracle worker ... God? List those things you have heard people say about Jesus' identity. Now, who do you say Jesus is? This is the most important question you will ever answer; each human being will have to answer it for themselves.

Peter declared Jesus was the Messiah, but he didn't understand correctly or fully what kind of Messiah Jesus was (Mark 8:31-33). List the things you believe the Messiah should do and be for you. Now honestly assess how many of those things on your list have to do with your own agenda versus God's purposes.

How do you understand following Jesus – as a road to becoming healthy, wealthy, and wise, a life of ease? Or does it involve working hard, changing hurtful habits and attitudes, the possibility of being misunderstood or suffering, a life that may seem difficult? How are you like Peter in seeing things from a human point of view? What things can help you re-orient your view to be more like God's?

Discussion starters

1. Reread Mark 1:35-37. The disciples didn't understand how Jesus could spend time alone when so much had to be done. Have you ever had a similar feeling? Martin Luther once said that on the days he was the busiest, he needed to spend at least three hours in prayer. How do you react to Luther's assertion? Are you too busy to pray? Are you too busy? If finding time to pray in a busy life is a challenge for you, you might want to read the book "Too Busy Not to Pray" by Bill Hybels.
2. In the story of the paralyzed man (Mark 2:1-12) the crowd becomes a barrier to meeting Jesus. What barriers to meeting Jesus are present in people's lives today? What could you do to remove one of those barriers?
3. What is your family's reaction to your faith? How is your faith the same as your family's? Different from your family's? If your family misunderstands your faith, criticizes or mocks you for your faith, where do you find brothers and sisters in Christ to encourage and support you? Name one or two people who are Christian brothers or sisters for you.
4. How are you light (Mark 4:21-23) in the world? What are the "baskets" in your life that hide your light? How can you lift those "baskets" so your light shines? Who has been a light for you?
5. Brainstorm reasons why Jesus sent his disciples out in pairs (Mark 6:6b-13). What are the advantages of working with others? Disadvantages? Who are the people you're paired with? Assess your partnership:

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where are you effective? What new skills could you learn that would increase your effectiveness for the Kingdom?

6. Reread Mark 6:31. Does this sound like your life? Are you resting on a regular basis? Read Ex 20:8-11. Is rest optional in God's creation? What do you need to change in your life to obey this commandment?

Bible verse to memorize: Mark 8:29

Serving Opportunity

Hope will once again be collecting food donations for the area food pantries during "Souper Bowl" weekend, Jan. 31 and Feb. 1. Discuss ways your small group could serve together by shopping, sorting or delivering the food as a team. If you decide to either help sort the food at Hope or deliver food to the various food pantries, contact Dina Remington at 222-1520 or dina.remington@hopewdm.org to volunteer. Watch for a list of the specific items the food pantries are asking us to donate.