

WEEK 3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – MARK 6:7-8:30 (Hearts and Minds)

1) **(Read Mark 6:7-13)** In Mark 6:7-13, Jesus sends out the twelve, as anticipated in Mark 3:14-15. What do we learn about the nature of their mission from the instructions Jesus gives them?¹

2) **(Read Mark 6:14-29)** In what ways was John the Baptist's ministry similar to Jesus', and how does his death in Mark 6:14-29 cast an ominous shadow on Jesus' future?²

3) **(Read Mark 6:30-43)** Mark says that Jesus saw the people "like sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34). Read Genesis 48:15, Numbers 27:15-17, Psalm 23:1-4, and notice what God promises in Jeremiah 3:15, Jeremiah 23:2-4 and Ezekiel 34:10-16. What light might these Old Testament texts shed on who Jesus is and what he has come to do (see also John 10:11)?³

4) **(Read Mark 7:14-23)** What, according to Jesus, makes a person "unclean or "defiled," and why is that so important to understanding the gospel message?⁴

5) **(Read Mark 7:24-30)** Jesus' response to the Syrophenician woman is perplexing at first. How could Jesus withhold mercy from her, even calling her a dog? But Jesus was emphasizing

¹ Ortlund and Packer, 36.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Keller, 55.

that the first priority of His ministry was the children of Israel, followed by the Gentiles (note Jesus' use of the word "first" in 8:27)). However, his other reason for using this metaphor was to test her faith and teach his disciples (including us) about faith/prayer. With this in mind, what does the woman's response to Jesus teach us about how we should approach God in prayer?

6) **(Read Mark 8:1-10)** Unlike the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:30-44), which occurred in Galilee, the feeding of the four thousand in Mark 8:1-10 probably took place in Gentile territory. Taken with Mark 7:24-30, what does the feeding of the 4,000 show about who Jesus is for Gentiles?⁵ What does this say about Jesus' heart for those outside the church?

7) **(Read Mark 8:11-30)** In Mark 8:11-21, the Pharisees argue again with Jesus, leading Jesus to expose his own disciples' failure to fully comprehend His identity and mission. Indeed, Mark's emphasis in 8:17-21 is on the disciple's spiritual blindness. However, in Mark 8:29, Peter will announce that Jesus is the Messiah, even though he (and the other disciples) do not yet perceive that Jesus has come as a *suffering* Messiah. How might the two-staged healing of the blind man (Mark 8:22-26) help explain what is going on with the disciples – especially in regard to their spiritual perception of who Jesus truly is?

WEEK 3 APPLICATION QUESTIONS (Hands and Feet)

8) **(Review Mark 7:24-30 and 8:1-15)** Mark is making it clear that Jesus is the Messiah for Jews *and* non-Jews, but the disciples had difficulty understanding this. What group of people do

⁵ Ortlund and Packer, 38.

you think Christians find it hard to believe that Jesus loves, and what can we in the church do to change this situation?⁶

9) (**Review Mark 6:30-32**) In this passage, Jesus takes the initiative to meet the needs of his exhausted disciples by having them come away to a desolate place, to rest a while. What are some of the things the Lord has shown you, that have proven to be the most helpful for recharging your spiritual batteries? (Note: Sharing these kinds of ideas and practices with one another can help all of us take away some fresh ideas for renewing our souls in Christ)

WEEK 4 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – MARK 8:31-11:11 (Hearts and Minds)

1) (**Review Mark 8:31-33**) Read Daniel 7:9-14, noting especially verses 13-14. This is the text that Jesus appears to have had in mind more than any other in referring to himself as the “Son of Man” (Mark 8:31). How does the depiction of the “son of man” in Daniel 7 make even more surprising Jesus’ prediction of his imminent suffering in Mark 8:31?⁷

2) Upon a careful reading of **Mark 8:34-38**, what is the reason for self-denial on the part of a disciple of Jesus, and what is the danger if we resist self-denial and pursue instead the things of

⁶ Serendipity Bible, *Mark*, 44.

⁷ Ortlund and Packer, 45.

the world? How has Jesus set a pattern for self-denial in his own life in the verses immediately before Mark 8:34?⁸

3) (**Read Mark 9:1-8**) Jesus' statement in Mark 9:1 is puzzling if we read it apart from its larger context. To give us a better understanding of what Jesus' meant, **Read 2 Peter 1:16-18** and consider the event described in Mark 9:2-8.⁹ In light of these clues, what do you think Jesus was talking about when he said "some" of his disciples would see "the kingdom of God ... come with power"? BONUS QUESTION: How do you think Mark's audience would have been encouraged by the meaning/promise of the transfiguration?

4) Jesus turns upside down his disciples' intuitive understanding of what defines true greatness in **Mark 9:33-37**. How does he do this? How does the broader story told in Mark's Gospel portray Jesus as supremely displaying the kind of service and humility he commends in Mark 9:33-37?¹⁰

5) (**Read Mark 10:1-12**) Based on Jesus' teachings in this passage, what is God's ideal for marriage, and how does that compare with what today's culture says about marriage?

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

6) (**Read Mark 10:17-31**) The gospel doesn't teach that we get our approval from God based on the law. So why is Jesus directing the rich young ruler toward the commandments in his first response?¹¹

7) (**Review Mark 10:17-22**) Notice verse 21 where Mark pauses to tell us Jesus looked at this man and "loved him." How is Jesus' next response to the young man an act of love?¹²

8) (**Read Mark 11:1-11**) Read Psalm 118:25-26, Isaiah 9:1-7, Jeremiah 23:5-8, and Zechariah 9:9. What were these Old Testament writing looking forward to? How do these passages illuminate what is happening in Mark 11:1-11? (Note that "Save us we pray" in Ps. 118:25 is the Hebrew expression that is transliterated into Greek as *hosanna*.)

WEEK 4 APPLICATION QUESTIONS (Hands and Feet)

9) What did it mean (or would it mean) for you to lose your life in order to follow Christ? Think of at least one tangible change.¹³

10) (**Review Mark 10:17-31**) How can you pursue a successful career and not succumb to the trap wealth creates?¹⁴ Give some examples.

¹¹ Keller, 79.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Keller, 71.

¹⁴ Keller, 83