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## There is more

What would you say if Mark, the writer of this book, could show you that life is not just what you can see and feel around you, that there is more, so much more? He discovered this 2,000 years ago and he wrote down this eyewitness account so that you could see for yourself. It is about a man called Jesus, a seemingly normal man, who became a counter-cultural leader, a healer, a revolutionary; a man who was labelled a criminal by the leaders of the day. The drastic end of this story twists to reveal something so enormous that it shocked and surprised the people then as it does today. A truth, from before time began, a hope, far greater than we could dream, and a purpose to life so much greater than Mark or you and I could have imagined!

**Read it and decide for yourself –  
Who is Jesus?**



# the time has come

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## Chapter one

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This is the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. Long ago Isaiah the prophet wrote,

*'I will send my messenger ahead of you.*

*He will prepare your way.'*<sup>1</sup>

*'A messenger is calling out in the desert,*

*"Prepare the way for the Lord.*

*Make straight paths for him.''*<sup>2</sup>

And so John the Baptist appeared in the desert. He preached that people should be baptised and turn away from their sins. Then God would forgive them. All the people from the countryside of Judea went out to him. All the people from Jerusalem went too. When they admitted they had sinned, John baptised them in the River Jordan. John wore clothes made out of camel's hair. He had a leather belt around his waist. And he ate locusts and wild honey. Here is what John was preaching. 'After me, there is someone coming who is more powerful than I am. I'm not good enough to bend down and untie his sandals. I baptise you with water. But he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

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1. The Bible book of Malachi chapter 3 verse 1

2. The Bible book of Isaiah chapter 40 verse 3

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee. John baptised Jesus in the River Jordan. Jesus was coming up out of the water. Just then he saw heaven being torn open. Jesus saw the Holy Spirit coming down on him like a dove. A voice spoke to him from heaven. It said, 'You are my Son, and I love you. I am very pleased with you.'

At once the Holy Spirit sent Jesus out into the desert. He was in the desert 40 days. There Satan tempted him. The wild animals didn't harm Jesus. Angels took care of him.

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee. He preached the good news of God. 'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Turn away from your sins and believe the good news!'

One day Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee. There he saw Simon and his brother Andrew. They were throwing a net into the lake. They were fishermen. 'Come and follow me,' Jesus said. 'I will send you out to fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed him.

Then Jesus walked a little further. As he did, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat preparing their nets. Right away he called out to them. They left their father Zebedee in the

boat with the hired men. Then they followed Jesus.

Jesus and those with him went to Capernaum. When the Sabbath day came, he went into the synagogue. There he began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching. That's because he taught them like one who had authority. He did not talk like the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue cried out. He was controlled by an evil spirit. He said, 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are. You are the Holy One of God!'

'Be quiet!' said Jesus firmly. 'Come out of him!' The evil spirit shook the man wildly. Then it came out of him with a scream.

All the people were amazed. So they asked each other, 'What is this? A new teaching! And with so much authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits, and they obey him.' News about Jesus spread quickly all over Galilee.

Jesus and those with him left the synagogue. Right away they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was lying in bed with a fever. They told Jesus about her right away. So he went to her. He took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her. Then she began to serve them.

# 'At once they left their nets'

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That evening after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who were ill. They also brought all who were controlled by demons. All the people in town gathered at the door. Jesus healed many of them. They had all kinds of diseases. He also drove out many demons. But he would not let the demons speak, because they knew who he was.

It was very early in the morning and still dark. Jesus got up and left the house. He went to a place where he could be alone. There he prayed. Simon and his friends went to look for Jesus. When they found him, they called out, 'Everyone is looking for you!'

Jesus replied, 'Let's go somewhere else. I want to go to the nearby towns. I must preach there also. That is why I have come.' So he travelled all around Galilee. He preached in their synagogues. He also drove out demons.

## **'Everyone is looking for you!'**

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A man who had a skin disease came to Jesus. On his knees he begged Jesus. He said, 'If you are willing to make me "clean", you can do it.'

Jesus became angry. He reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing to do it,' Jesus said. 'Be "clean"! Right away the disease left the man, and he was 'clean'.

Jesus sent him away at once. He gave the man a strong warning. 'Don't tell this to anyone,' he said. 'Go and show yourself to the priest. Offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded. It will be a witness to the priest and the people that you are "clean".' But the man went out and started talking right away. He spread the news to everyone. So Jesus could no longer enter a town openly. He stayed outside in lonely places. But people still came to him from everywhere.





# get up

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## Chapter two

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A few days later, Jesus entered Capernaum again. The people heard that he had come home. So many people gathered that there was no room left. There was not even room outside the door. And Jesus preached the word to them. Four of those who came were carrying a man who could not walk. But they could not get him close to Jesus because of the crowd. So they made a hole by digging through the roof above Jesus. Then they lowered the man through it on a mat. Jesus saw their faith. So he said to the man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'

Some teachers of the law were sitting there. They were thinking, 'Why is this fellow talking like that? He's saying a very evil thing! Only God can forgive sins!'

Right away Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to them, 'Why are you thinking these things? Is it easier to say to this man, "Your sins are forgiven"? Or to say, "Get up, take your mat and walk"? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' So Jesus spoke to the man who could not walk. 'I tell you,' he said, 'get up. Take your mat and go home.' The man got up and took his mat. Then he walked away while everyone watched. All the people were amazed. They praised God and said, 'We have never seen anything like this!'

# “Follow me,” Jesus told him.’

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Once again Jesus went out beside the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd came to him. He began to teach them. As he walked along he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus. Levi was sitting at the tax collector’s booth. ‘Follow me’, Jesus told him. Levi got up and followed him.

Later Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house. Many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples. They were part of the large crowd following Jesus. Some teachers of the law who were Pharisees were there. They saw Jesus eating with sinners and tax collectors. So they asked his disciples, ‘Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?’

Jesus heard that. So he said to them, ‘Those who are healthy don’t need a doctor. Ill people do. I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to follow me.’

John’s disciples and the Pharisees were going without eating. Some people came to Jesus. They said to him, ‘John’s disciples are fasting. The disciples of the Pharisees are

also fasting. But your disciples are not. Why aren’t they?’

Jesus answered, ‘How can the guests of the groom go without eating while he is with them? They will not fast as long as he is with them. But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them. On that day they will go without eating.

‘No-one sews a patch of new cloth on old clothes. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old. That will make the tear worse. No-one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins. Then the wine and the wineskins will both be destroyed. No, people pour new wine into new wineskins.’

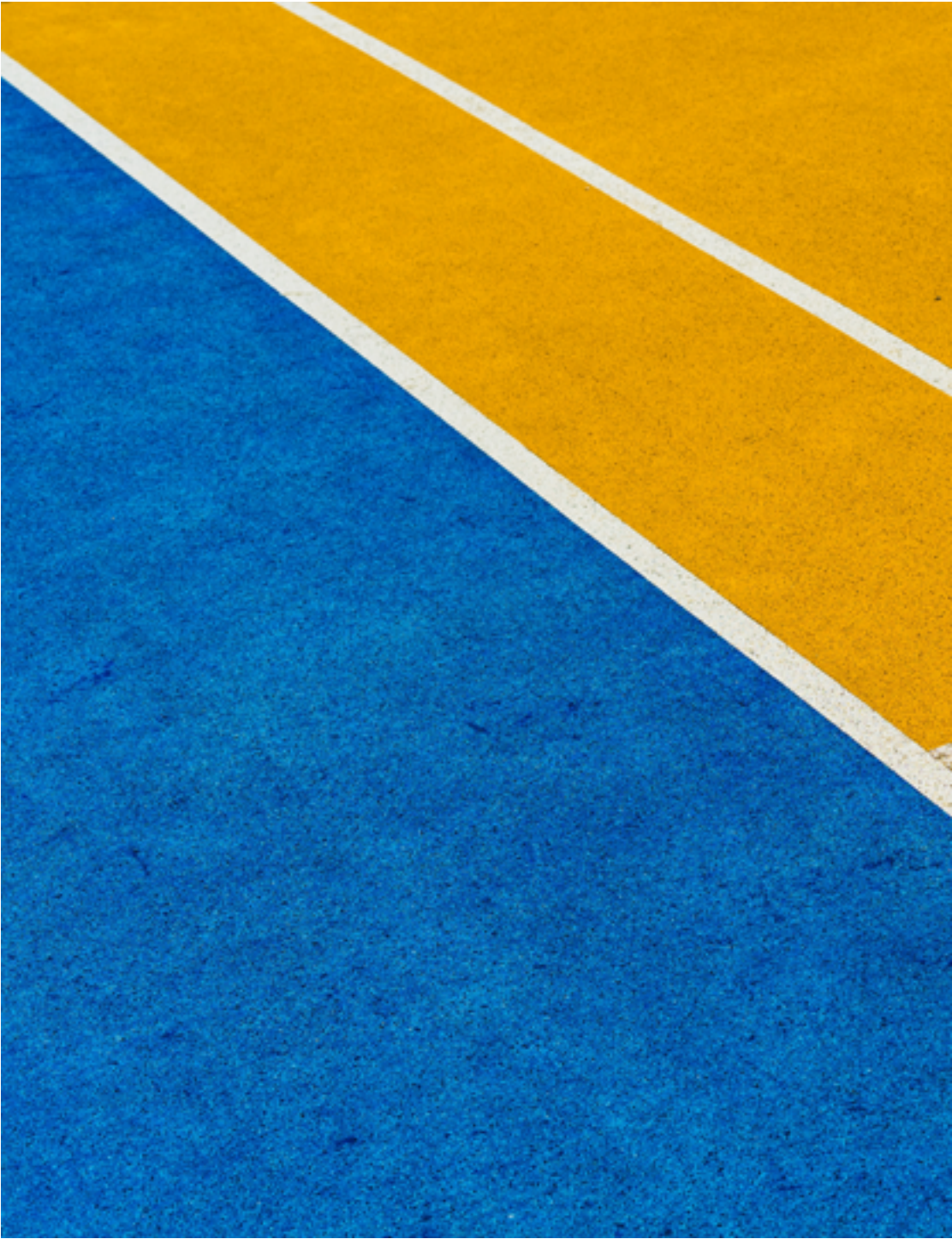
One Sabbath day Jesus was walking with his disciples through the cornfields. The disciples began to break off some ears of corn.

The Pharisees said to Jesus, ‘Look! It is against the Law to do this on the Sabbath day. Why are your disciples doing it?’

He answered, ‘Haven’t you ever read about what David did? He and his men were hungry. They needed food. It was when Abiathar was high priest. David entered the house of God and ate the holy bread. Only priests were allowed to eat it. David also gave some to his men.’

Then Jesus said to them, ‘The Sabbath day was made for man. Man was not made for the Sabbath day. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.’







# out of his mind

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## *Chapter three*

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Another time Jesus went into the synagogue. A man with a weak and twisted hand was there. Some Pharisees were trying to find fault with Jesus. They watched him closely. They wanted to see if he would heal the man on the Sabbath day. Jesus spoke to the man with the weak and twisted hand. 'Stand up in front of everyone,' he said.

Then Jesus asked them, 'What does the Law say we should do on the Sabbath day? Should we do good? Or should we do evil? Should we save life? Or should we kill?' But no-one answered.

Jesus looked around at them in anger. He was very upset because their hearts were stubborn. Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand had become as good as new. Then the Pharisees went out and began to make plans with the Herodians. They wanted to kill Jesus.

Jesus went off to the Sea of Galilee with his disciples. A large crowd from Galilee followed. People heard about all that Jesus was doing. And many came to him. They came from Judea, Jerusalem and Idumea. They came from the lands east of the River Jordan. And they came from the area around Tyre and Sidon. Because of the crowd, Jesus told his disciples to get a small boat ready for him. This would keep the people from crowding him. Jesus had healed many people. So those who were ill were pushing forward to touch him. When people controlled by evil spirits saw him, they fell down in front of him. The spirits shouted, 'You are the Son of God!' But Jesus ordered them not to tell people about him.

# **‘Stretch out your hand’**

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Jesus went up on a mountainside. He called for certain people to come to him, and they came. He appointed 12 of them so that they would be with him. He would also send them out to preach. And he gave them authority to drive out demons.

So Jesus appointed the 12 disciples.

Simon was one of them. Jesus gave him the name Peter.

There were James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John. Jesus gave them the name Boanerges. Boanerges means Sons of Thunder.

There were also Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, and James, son of Alphaeus.

And there were Thaddaeus and Simon the Zealot.

Judas Iscariot was one of them too. He was the one who was later going to hand Jesus over to his enemies.

Jesus entered a house. Again a crowd gathered. It was so large that Jesus and his disciples were not even able to eat. His family heard about this. So they went to take charge of him. They said, 'He is out of his mind.'

Some teachers of the law were there. They had come down from Jerusalem.

They said, 'He is controlled by Beelzebul! He is driving out demons by the power of the prince of demons.'

So Jesus called them over to him. He began to speak to them using stories. He said, 'How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom fights against itself, it can't stand. If a family is divided, it can't stand. And if Satan fights against himself, and his helpers are divided, he can't stand. That is the end of him. In fact, none of you can enter a strong man's house unless you tie him up first. Then you can steal things from his house. What I'm about to tell you is true. Everyone's sins and evil words against God will be forgiven. But whoever speaks evil things against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. Their guilt will last for ever.'

Jesus said this because the teachers of the law were saying, 'He has an evil spirit.'

Jesus' mother and brothers came and stood outside. They sent someone in to get him. A crowd was sitting around Jesus. They told him, 'Your mother and your brothers are outside. They are looking for you.'

'Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?' he asked.

Then Jesus looked at the people sitting in a circle around him. He said, 'Here is my mother! Here are my brothers! Anyone who does what God wants is my brother or sister or mother.'





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Mark 4: Who is this?

Page 18



# who is this?

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## Chapter four

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Again Jesus began to teach by the Sea of Galilee. The crowd that gathered around him was very large. So he got into a boat. He sat down in it out on the lake. All the people were along the shore at the water's edge. He taught them many things using stories. In his teaching he said, 'Listen! A farmer went out to plant his seed. He scattered the seed on the ground. Some fell on a path. Birds came and ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky places, where there wasn't much soil. The plants came up quickly, because the soil wasn't deep. When the sun came up, it burned the plants. They dried up because they had no roots. Other seed fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and crowded out the plants. So the plants did not bear corn. Still other seed fell on good soil. It grew up and produced a crop 30, 60, or even 100 times more than the farmer planted.'

Then Jesus said, 'Whoever has ears should listen.'

Later Jesus was alone. The 12 disciples asked him about the stories. So did the others around him. He told them, 'The secret of God's kingdom has been given to you. But to outsiders everything is told using stories. In that way,

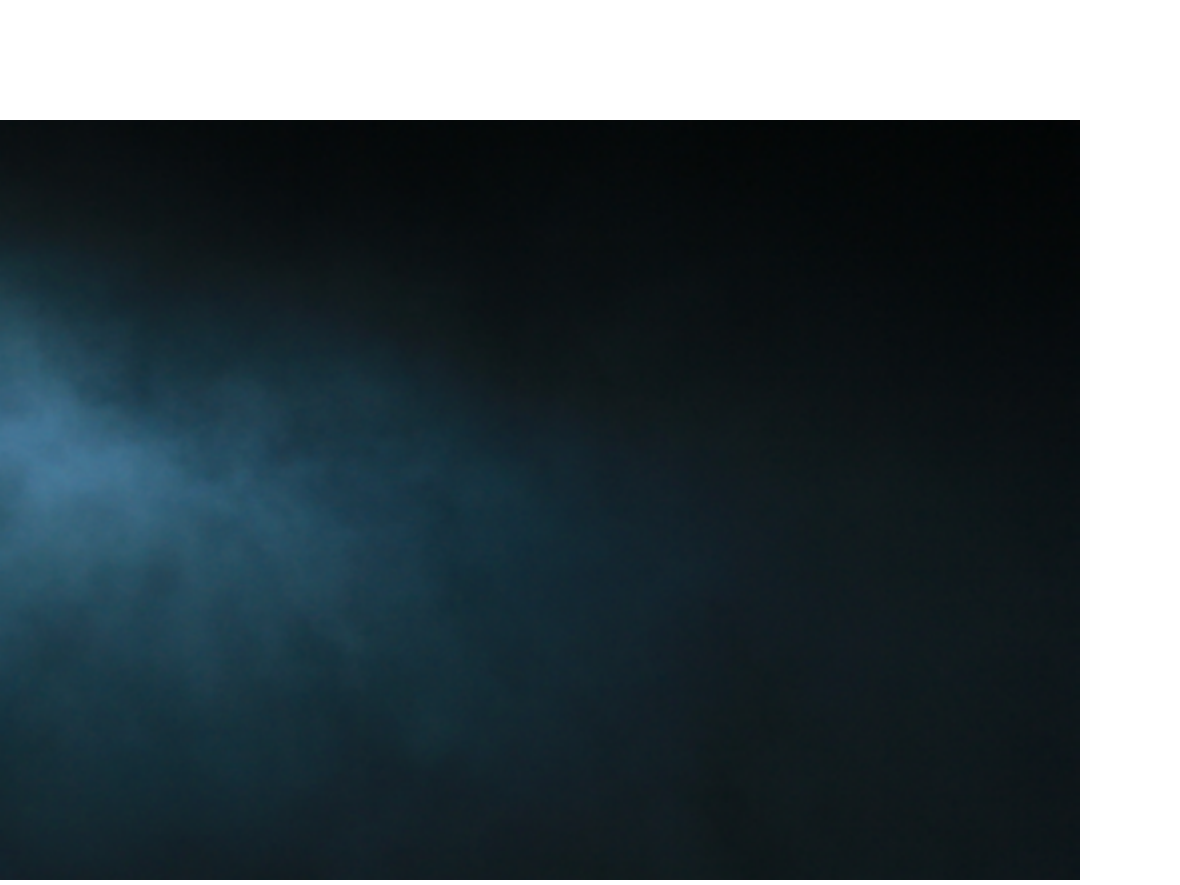
*"They will see but never know what they are seeing.  
They will hear but never understand.  
Otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"*<sup>11</sup>



Then Jesus said to them, 'Don't you understand this story? Then how will you understand any stories of this kind? The seed the farmer plants is God's message. What is seed scattered on a path like? The message is planted. The people hear the message. Then Satan comes. He takes away the message that was planted in them. And what is seed scattered on rocky places like? The people hear the message. At once they receive it with joy. But they have no roots. So they last only a short time. They quickly fall away from the faith when trouble or suffering comes because of the message. And what is seed scattered among thorns like? The people hear

the message. But then the worries of this life come to them. Wealth comes with its false promises. The people also long for other things. All of these are the kinds of things that crowd out the message. They keep it from producing fruit. And what is seed scattered on good soil like? The people hear the message. They accept it. They produce a good crop 30, 60, or even 100 times more than the farmer planted.'

Jesus said to them, 'Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Don't you put it on its stand? What is hidden is meant to be seen. And what is put out of sight is meant to be brought out into the open. Whoever has ears should listen.'



‘Think carefully about what you hear,’ he said. ‘As you give, so you will receive. In fact, you will receive even more. Whoever has something will be given more. Whoever has nothing, even what they have will be taken away from them.’

Jesus also said, ‘Here is what God’s kingdom is like. A farmer scatters seed on the ground. Night and day the seed comes up and grows. It happens whether the farmer sleeps or gets up. He doesn’t know how it happens. All by itself the soil produces corn. First the stalk comes up. Then the ear appears. Finally, the full corn appears in the ear. Before long the corn ripens.

So the farmer cuts it down, because the harvest is ready.’

Again Jesus said, ‘What can we say God’s kingdom is like? What story can we use to explain it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. But when you plant the seed, it grows. It becomes the largest of all garden plants. Its branches are so big that birds can rest in its shade.’

Using many stories like these, Jesus spoke the word to them. He told them as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a story. But when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything.





# **‘Even the wind and waves obey him!’**

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When evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let’s go over to the other side of the lake.’ They left the crowd behind. And they took him along in a boat, just as he was. There were also other boats with him. A wild storm came up. Waves crashed over the boat. It was about to sink. Jesus was in the back, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him up. They said, ‘Teacher! Don’t you care if we drown?’

He got up and ordered the wind to stop. He said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ Then the wind died down. And it was completely calm.

He said to his disciples, ‘Why are you so afraid? Don’t you have any faith at all yet?’

They were terrified. They asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’





# tell them

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## Chapter five

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They went across the Sea of Galilee to the area of the Gerasenes. Jesus got out of the boat. A man controlled by an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. The man lived in the tombs. No-one could keep him tied up any more. Not even a chain could hold him. His hands and feet had often been chained. But he tore the chains apart. And he broke the iron cuffs on his ankles. No-one was strong enough to control him. Night and day he screamed among the tombs and in the hills. He cut himself with stones.

When he saw Jesus a long way off, he ran to him. He fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, 'Jesus, Son of the Most High God, what do you want with me? Swear to God that you won't hurt me!' This was because Jesus had said to him, 'Come out of this man, you evil spirit!'

Then Jesus asked the demon, 'What is your name?'

‘My name is Legion,’ he replied. ‘There are many of us.’ And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, ‘Send us among the pigs. Let us go into them.’ Jesus allowed it. The evil spirits came out of the man and went into the pigs. There were about 2,000 pigs in the herd. The whole herd rushed down the steep bank. They ran into the lake and drowned.

Those who were tending the pigs ran off. They told the people in the town and countryside what had happened. The people went out to see for themselves. Then they came to Jesus. They saw the man who had been controlled by many demons. He was sitting there. He was now dressed and thinking clearly. All this made the people afraid. Those who had seen it told them what had happened to the man. They told about the pigs as well. Then the people began to beg Jesus to leave their area.

Jesus was getting into the boat. The man who had been controlled by demons begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him. He said, ‘Go home to your own people.

Tell them how much the Lord has done for you. Tell them how kind he has been to you.’ So the man went away. In the area known as the Ten Cities, he began to tell how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee in a boat. It landed at the other side. There a large crowd gathered around him. Then a man named Jairus came. He was a synagogue leader. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He begged Jesus, ‘Please come. My little daughter is dying. Place your hands on her to heal her. Then she will live.’ So Jesus went with him.

A large group of people followed. They crowded around him. A woman was there who had a sickness that made her bleed. It had lasted for 12 years. She had suffered a great deal, even though she had gone to many doctors. She had spent all the money she had. But she was getting worse, not better. Then she heard about Jesus. She came up behind him in the crowd and touched his clothes. She thought, ‘I just need to touch his clothes. Then I will be healed.’ Right away her bleeding stopped. She felt in her body that her suffering was over.



# **‘She is only sleeping’**

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At once Jesus knew that power had gone out from him. He turned round in the crowd. He asked, 'Who touched my clothes?'

'You see the people,' his disciples answered. 'They are crowding against you. And you still ask, "Who touched me?"'

But Jesus kept looking around. He wanted to see who had touched him. Then the woman came and fell at his feet. She knew what had happened to her. She was shaking with fear. But she told him the whole truth. He said to her, 'Dear woman, your faith has healed you. Go in peace. You are free from your suffering.'

While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus. He was the synagogue leader. 'Your daughter is dead,' they said. 'Why bother the teacher any more?'

Jesus heard what they were saying. He told the synagogue leader, 'Don't be afraid. Just believe.'

He let only Peter, James, and John, the brother of James, follow him. They came to the home of the synagogue leader. There Jesus saw a lot of confusion. People were crying and sobbing loudly. He went inside. Then he said to them, 'Why all this confusion and sobbing? The child is not dead. She is only sleeping.' But they laughed at him.

He made them all go outside. He took only the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him. And he went in where the child was. He took her by the hand. Then he said to her, '*Talitha koum!*' This means, 'Little girl, I say to you, get up!' The girl was 12 years old. Right away she stood up and began to walk around. They were totally amazed at this. Jesus gave strict orders not to let anyone know what had happened. And he told them to give her something to eat.





# go and see

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## *Chapter six*

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Jesus left there and went to his home town of Nazareth. His disciples went with him. When the Sabbath day came, he began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard him were amazed.

‘Where did this man get these things?’ they asked. ‘What’s this wisdom that has been given to him? What are these remarkable miracles he is doing? Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son? Isn’t this the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?’ They were not pleased with him at all.

Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is honoured everywhere except in his own town. He doesn’t receive any honour among his relatives or in his own home.’ Jesus placed his hands on a few ill people and healed them. But he could not do any other miracles there. He was amazed because they had no faith.

Jesus went around teaching from village to village. He called the 12 disciples to him. Then he began to send them out two by two. He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits.

Here is what he told them to do. 'Take only a walking stick for your trip. Do not take bread or a bag. Take no money in your belts. Wear sandals. But do not take extra clothes. When you are invited into a house, stay there until you leave town. Some places may not welcome you or listen to you. If they don't, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet. That will be a witness against the people living there.'

They went out. And they preached that people should turn away from their sins. They drove out many demons. They poured olive oil on many ill people and healed them.

King Herod heard about this. Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, 'John the Baptist has been raised from the dead! That is why he has the power to do miracles.'

Others said, 'He is Elijah.'

Still others claimed, 'He is a prophet. He is like one of the prophets of long ago.'

But when Herod heard this, he said, 'I had John's head cut off. And now he has been raised from the dead!'

In fact, it was Herod himself who had given orders to arrest John. He had him tied up and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias. She was the wife of Herod's brother Philip. But now Herod was married to her. John had been saying to Herod, 'It is against the Law for you to be married to your brother's wife.' Herodias couldn't

forgive John for saying that. She wanted to kill him. But she could not, because Herod was afraid of John. So he kept John safe. Herod knew John was a holy man who did what was right. When Herod heard him, he was very puzzled. But he liked to listen to John.

Finally the right time came. Herod gave a banquet on his birthday. He invited his high officials and military leaders. He also invited the most important men in Galilee. Then the daughter of Herodias came in and danced. She pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, 'Ask me for anything you want. I'll give it to you.' And he gave her his promise. He said to her, 'Anything you ask for I will give you. I'll give you up to half my kingdom.'

She went out and said to her mother, 'What should I ask for?'

'The head of John the Baptist,' she answered.

At once the girl hurried to ask the king. She said, 'I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist on a big plate right now.'

The king was very upset. But he thought about his promise and his dinner guests. So he did not want to say no to the girl. He sent a man right away to bring John's head. The man went to the prison and cut off John's head. He brought it back on a big plate. He gave it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. John's disciples heard about this. So they came and took his body. Then they placed it in a tomb.



# **‘Give them something to eat’**





The apostles gathered around Jesus. They told him all they had done and taught. But many people were coming and going. So they did not even have a chance to eat. Then Jesus said to his apostles, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place. You need to get some rest.'

So they went away by themselves in a boat to a quiet place. But many people who saw them leaving recognised them. They ran from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus came ashore, he saw a large crowd. He felt deep concern for them. They were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

By that time it was late in the day. His disciples came to him. 'There is nothing here,' they said. 'It's already very late. Send the people away. Then they can go to the nearby countryside and villages to buy something to eat.'

But Jesus answered, 'You give them something to eat.'

They said to him, 'That would take more than half a year's pay! Should we go and spend that much on bread? Are we supposed to feed them?'

'How many loaves do you have?' Jesus asked. 'Go and see.'

When they found out, they said, 'Five loaves and two fish.'

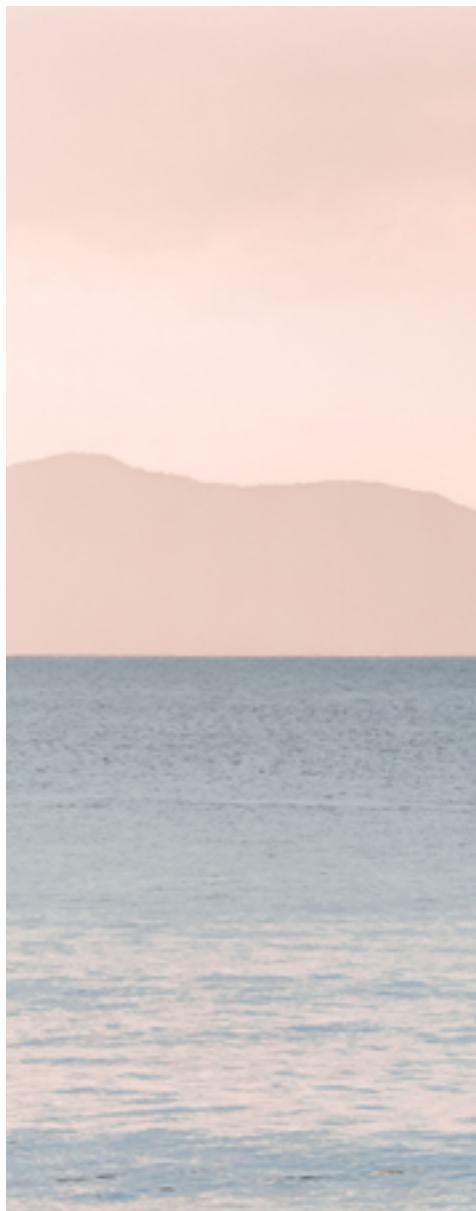
Then Jesus instructed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of 100s and 50s. Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He broke the loaves into pieces. Then he gave them to his disciples to pass around to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. All of them ate and were satisfied. The disciples picked up 12 baskets of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of men who had eaten was 5,000.

Right away Jesus made his disciples get into the boat. He had them go on ahead of him to Bethsaida. Then he sent the crowd away. After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was alone on land. He saw the disciples pulling hard on the oars. The wind was blowing against them. Shortly before dawn, he went out to them. He walked on the lake. When he was about to pass by them, they saw him walking on the lake. They thought he was a ghost, so they cried out. They all saw him and were terrified.

Right away Jesus said to them, 'Be brave! It is I. Don't be afraid.' Then he climbed into the boat with them. The wind died down. And they were completely amazed. They had not understood about the loaves. They were stubborn.

They went across the lake and landed at Gennesaret. There they tied up the boat. As soon as Jesus and his disciples got out, people recognised him. They ran through that whole area to bring to him those who were ill. They carried them on mats to where they heard he was. He went into the villages, the towns and the countryside. Everywhere he went, the people brought the ill to the market areas. Those who were ill begged him to let them touch just the edge of his clothes. And all who touched his clothes were healed.



# **‘He walked on the lake’**

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# unclean

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## *Chapter seven*

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The Pharisees gathered around Jesus. So did some of the teachers of the law. All of them had come from Jerusalem. They saw some of his disciples eating food with ‘unclean’ hands. That means they were not washed. The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands to make them ‘clean’. That’s what the elders teach. When they come from the market, they do not eat unless they wash. And they follow many other teachings. For example, they wash cups, pitchers, and kettles in a special way.

So the Pharisees and the teachers of the law questioned Jesus. ‘Why don’t your disciples live by what the elders teach?’ they asked. ‘Why do they eat their food with “unclean” hands?’

He replied, ‘Isaiah was right. He prophesied about you people who pretend to be good. He said,

*“These people honour me by what they say.  
But their hearts are far away from me.  
Their worship doesn’t mean anything to me.  
They teach nothing but human rules.”<sup>1</sup>*



You have let go of God's commands. And you are holding on to teachings that people have made up.'

Jesus continued speaking, 'You have a fine way of setting aside God's commands! You do this so you can follow your own teachings. Moses said, "Honour your father and mother."<sup>1</sup> He also said, "Anyone who asks for bad things to happen to their father or mother must be put to death."<sup>2</sup> But you allow people to say that what might have been used to help their parents is Corban. Corban means A Gift Set Apart for God. So you no longer let them do anything for their parents. You make the word of God useless by putting your own teachings in its place. And you do many things like this.'

Again Jesus called the crowd to him. He said, 'Listen to me, everyone. Understand this. Nothing outside of a person can make them "unclean" by going into them. It is what comes out of them that makes them "unclean".'

Then he left the crowd and entered the house. His disciples asked him about this teaching.

## **'Don't you see?'**

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'Don't you understand?' Jesus asked. 'Don't you see? Nothing that enters a person from the outside can make them "unclean". It doesn't go into their heart. It goes into their stomach. Then it goes out of the body.' In saying this, Jesus was calling all foods 'clean'.

He went on to say, 'What comes out of a person is what makes them "unclean". Evil thoughts come from the inside, from a person's heart. So do sexual sins, stealing and murder. Adultery, greed, hate and cheating come from a person's heart too. So do desires that are not pure, and wanting what belongs to others. And so do telling lies about others and being proud and being foolish. All these evil things come from inside a person and make them "unclean".'

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1. The Bible books of Exodus chapter 20 verse 12 and Deuteronomy chapter 5 verse 16  
2. The Bible books of Exodus chapter 21 verse 17 and Leviticus chapter 20 verse 9

Jesus went from there to a place near Tyre. He entered a house. He did not want anyone to know where he was. But he could not keep it a secret. Soon a woman heard about him. An evil spirit controlled her little daughter. The woman came to Jesus and fell at his feet. She was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

'First let the children eat all they want,' he told her. 'It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.'

'Lord', she replied, 'even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.'

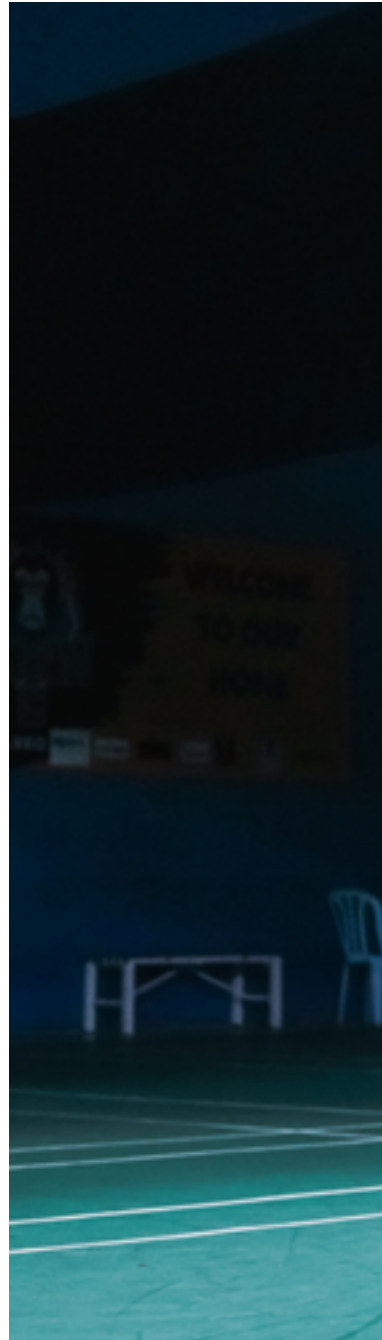
Then he told her, 'That was a good reply. You may go. The demon has left your daughter.'

So she went home and found her child lying on the bed. And the demon was gone.

Then Jesus left the area of Tyre and went through Sidon. He went down to the Sea of Galilee and into the area known as the Ten Cities. There some people brought a man to Jesus. The man was deaf and could hardly speak. They begged Jesus to place his hand on the man.

Jesus took the man to one side, away from the crowd. He put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spat and touched the man's tongue. Jesus looked up to heaven. With a deep sigh, he said to the man, '*Ephphatha!*' That means 'Be opened!' The man's ears were opened. His tongue was freed up, and he began to speak clearly.

Jesus ordered the people not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. People were really amazed. 'He has done everything well,' they said. 'He even makes deaf people able to hear. And he makes those who can't speak able to talk.'







# but what about you?

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## Chapter eight

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During those days another large crowd gathered. They had nothing to eat. So Jesus called for his disciples to come to him. He said, 'I feel deep concern for these people. They have already been with me three days. They don't have anything to eat. If I send them away hungry, they will become too weak on their way home. Some of them have come from far away.'

His disciples answered him. 'There is nothing here,' they said. 'Where can anyone get enough bread to feed them?'

'How many loaves do you have?' Jesus asked.

'Seven', they replied.

He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. He took the seven loaves and gave thanks to God. Then he broke them and gave them to his disciples. They passed the pieces of bread around to the people.

The disciples also had a few small fish. Jesus gave thanks for them too. He told the disciples to pass them around. The people ate and were satisfied. After that, the disciples picked up seven baskets of leftover pieces. About 4,000 people were there. After Jesus sent them away, he got into a boat with his disciples. He went to the area of Dalmanutha.

# ‘Can’t you understand yet?’

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The Pharisees came and began to ask Jesus questions. They wanted to test him. So they asked him for a sign from heaven. He sighed deeply. He said, ‘Why do you people ask for a sign? What I’m about to tell you is true. No sign will be given to you.’ Then he left them. He got back into the boat and crossed to the other side of the lake.

The disciples had forgotten to bring bread. They had only one loaf with them in the boat. ‘Be careful’, Jesus warned them. ‘Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees. And watch out for the yeast of Herod.’

They talked about this with each other. They said, ‘He must be saying this because we don’t have any bread.’

Jesus knew what they were saying. So he asked them, ‘Why are you talking about having no bread? Why can’t you see or understand? Are you stubborn? Do you have eyes and still don’t see? Do you have ears and still don’t hear? And don’t you remember? Earlier I broke five loaves for the 5,000. How many baskets of pieces did you pick up?’

‘Twelve’, they replied.

‘Later I broke seven loaves for the 4,000. How many baskets of pieces did you pick up?’

‘Seven’, they answered.

He said to them, ‘Can’t you understand yet?’





Jesus and his disciples came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him. They begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand. Then he led him outside the village. He spat on the man's eyes and placed his hands on him. 'Do you see anything?' Jesus asked.

The man looked up. He said, 'I see people. They look like trees walking around.'

Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened so that he could see again. He saw everything clearly. Jesus sent him home. He told him, 'Don't even go into the village.'

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, 'Who do people say I am?'

They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. Still others say one of the prophets.'

'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?'

Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah.'

Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus then began to teach his disciples. He taught them that the Son of Man must suffer many things. He taught them that the elders would not accept him. The chief priests and the teachers of the law would not accept him either. He must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke clearly about this. Peter took Jesus to one side and began to scold him.

Jesus turned and looked at his disciples. He scolded Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You are not thinking about the things God cares about. Instead, you are thinking only about the things humans care about.'

Jesus called the crowd to him along with his disciples. He said, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must say no to themselves. They must pick up their cross and follow me. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it. But whoever loses their life for me and for the good news will save it. What good is it if someone gains the whole world but loses their soul? Or what can anyone trade for their soul? Suppose anyone is ashamed of me and my words among these adulterous and sinful people. Then the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.'



# a voice came from the cloud

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## *Chapter nine*

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Jesus said to them, 'What I'm about to tell you is true. Some who are standing here will not die before they see that God's kingdom has come with power.'

After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him. He led them up a high mountain. They were all alone. There in front of them his appearance was changed. His clothes became so white they shone. They were whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. Elijah and Moses appeared in front of Jesus and his disciples. The two of them were talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters. One will be for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' Peter didn't really know what to say, because they were so afraid.

Then a cloud appeared and covered them. A voice came from the cloud. It said, 'This is my Son, and I love him. Listen to him!'

# ‘And they ran to greet him’

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They looked around. Suddenly they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

They came down the mountain. On the way down, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen. He told them to wait until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves. But they asked each other what ‘rising from the dead’ meant.

Then they asked Jesus, ‘Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah has to come first?’

Jesus replied, ‘That’s right. Elijah does come first. He makes all things new again. So why is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and not be accepted? I tell you, Elijah has come. They have done to him everything they wanted to do. They did it just as it is written about him.’

When Jesus and those who were with him came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them.

The teachers of the law were arguing with them. When all the people saw Jesus, they were filled with wonder. And they ran to greet him.

‘What are you arguing with them about?’ Jesus asked.

A man in the crowd answered. ‘Teacher’, he said, ‘I brought you my son. He is controlled by an evil spirit. Because of this, my son can’t speak any more. When the spirit takes hold of him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth. He grinds his teeth. And his body becomes stiff. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit. But they couldn’t do it.’

‘You unbelieving people!’ Jesus replied. ‘How long do I have to stay with you? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring the boy to me.’

So they brought him. As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it threw the boy into a fit. He fell to the ground. He rolled around and foamed at the mouth.







## **‘Everything is possible for the one who believes’**

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Jesus asked the boy’s father, ‘How long has he been like this?’

‘Since he was a child,’ he answered. ‘The spirit has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us. Please help us.’

‘“If you can?”’ said Jesus. ‘Everything is possible for the one who believes.’

Right away the boy’s father cried out, ‘I do believe! Help me overcome my unbelief!’

Jesus saw that a crowd was running over to see what was happening. Then he ordered the evil spirit to leave the boy. ‘You spirit that makes him unable to hear and speak!’ he said. ‘I command you, come out of him. Never enter him again.’

The spirit screamed. It shook the boy wildly. Then it came out of him. The boy looked so lifeless that many people said, ‘He’s dead.’ But Jesus took him by the hand. He lifted the boy to his feet, and the boy stood up.

Jesus went indoors. Then his disciples asked him in private, ‘Why couldn’t we drive out the evil spirit?’

He replied, ‘This kind can come out only by prayer.’

They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were. That was because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, 'The Son of Man is going to be handed over to men. They will kill him. After three days he will rise from the dead.' But they didn't understand what he meant. And they were afraid to ask him about it.

Jesus and his disciples came to a house in Capernaum. There he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the road?' But they kept quiet. On the way, they had argued about which one of them was the most important person.

Jesus sat down and called for the 12 disciples to come to him. Then he said, 'Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last. They must be the servant of everyone.'

Jesus took a little child and had the child stand among them. Then he took the child in his arms. He said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me. And anyone who welcomes me also welcomes the one who sent me.'

'Teacher', said John, 'we saw someone driving out demons in your name. We told him to stop, because he was not one of us.'

'Do not stop him,' Jesus said. 'For no-one who does a miracle in

my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me. Anyone who is not against us is for us. What I'm about to tell you is true. Suppose someone gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah. That person will certainly not go without a reward.

'What if someone leads one of these little ones who believe in me to sin? If they do, it would be better if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It would be better for you to enter God's kingdom with only one hand than to go into hell with two hands. In hell the fire never goes out. If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It would be better to enter God's kingdom with only one foot than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. If your eye causes you to sin, poke it out. It would be better for you to enter God's kingdom with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell. In hell,

*'The worms that eat them do not die.*

*The fire is not put out.'*<sup>1</sup>

Everyone will be salted with fire.

'Salt is good. But suppose it loses its saltiness. How can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves. And be at peace with each other.'





# why do you call me good?

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## Chapter ten

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Jesus left that place and went into the area of Judea and across the River Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him. As usual, he taught them.

Some Pharisees came to test Jesus. They asked, 'Does the Law allow a man to divorce his wife?'

'What did Moses command you?' he replied.

They said, 'Moses allowed a man to write a letter of divorce and send her away.'

'You were stubborn. That's why Moses wrote you this law,' Jesus replied. 'But at the beginning of creation, God "made them male and female."<sup>1</sup> "That's why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.

The two of them will become one."<sup>2</sup> They are no longer two, but one. So no-one should separate what God has joined together.'

When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. He answered, 'What if a man divorces his wife and gets married to another woman? He commits adultery against her. And what if she divorces her husband and gets married to another man? She commits adultery.'

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1. The Bible book of Genesis chapter 1 verse 27

2. The Bible book of Genesis chapter 2 verse 24

# Anyone who will not receive God's kingdom like a little child will never enter it.'

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People were bringing little children to Jesus. They wanted him to place his hands on them to bless them. But the disciples told them to stop. When Jesus saw this, he was angry. He said to his disciples, 'Let the little children come to me. Don't keep them away. God's kingdom belongs to people like them. What I'm about to tell you is true. Anyone who will not receive God's kingdom like a little child will never enter it.' Then he took the children in his arms. He placed his hands on them to bless them.

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him. He fell on his knees before Jesus. 'Good teacher', he said, 'what must I do to receive eternal life?'

'Why do you call me good?' Jesus answered. 'No-one is good except God. You know what the commandments say. "Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not be a false witness. Do not cheat. Honour your father and mother."<sup>1</sup>

'Teacher', he said, 'I have obeyed all those commandments since I was a boy.'

Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'You are missing one thing,' he said.

'Go and sell everything you have. Give the money to those who are poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.'

The man's face fell. He went away sad, because he was very rich.

Jesus looked around. He said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for rich people to enter God's kingdom!'

The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter God's kingdom! Is it hard for a camel to go through the eye of a needle? It is even harder for someone who is rich to enter God's kingdom!'

The disciples were even more amazed. They said to each other, 'Then who can be saved?'

Jesus looked at them and said, 'With people, this is impossible. But not with God. All things are possible with God.'

Then Peter spoke up, 'We have left everything to follow you!'

'What I'm about to tell you is true,' Jesus replied. 'Has anyone left home or family or fields for me and the good news? They will receive 100 times as much in this world. They will have homes and families and fields. But they will also be treated badly by others. In the world to come they will live for ever. But many who are first will be last. And the last will be first.'

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1. The Bible books of Exodus chapter 20 verses 12-16; Deuteronomy chapter 5 verses 16-20



**‘What do  
you want  
me to do  
for you?’**

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They were on their way up to Jerusalem. Jesus was leading the way. The disciples were amazed. Those who followed were afraid. Again Jesus took the 12 disciples to one side. He told them what was going to happen to him. 'We are going up to Jerusalem,' he said. 'The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will sentence him to death. Then they will hand him over to the Gentiles. They will make fun of him and spit on him. They will whip him and kill him. Three days later he will rise from the dead!'

James and John came to Jesus. They were the sons of Zebedee. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we would like to ask you for a favour.'

'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked.

They replied, 'Let one of us sit at your right hand in your glorious kingdom. Let the other one sit at your left hand.'

'You don't know what you're asking for,' Jesus said. 'Can you drink the cup of suffering I drink? Or can you go through the baptism of suffering I must go through?'

'We can', they answered.

Jesus said to them, 'You will drink the cup I drink. And you will go through the baptism I go through. But it is not for me to say who will sit at my right or left hand. These places belong to those they are prepared for.'

The other ten disciples heard about it. They became angry at James and John. Jesus called them together. He said,

'You know about those who are rulers of the Gentiles. They hold power over their people. Their high officials order them around. Don't be like that. Instead, anyone who wants to be important among you must be your servant. And anyone who wants to be first must be the slave of everyone. Even the Son of Man did not come to be served. Instead, he came to serve others. He came to give his life as the price for setting many people free.'

Jesus and his disciples came to Jericho. They were leaving the city. A large crowd was with them. A blind man was sitting by the side of the road begging. His name was Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus means Son of Timaeus. He heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. So he began to shout, 'Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me!'

Many people commanded him to stop. They told him to be quiet. But he shouted even louder, 'Son of David! Have mercy on me!'

Jesus stopped and said, 'Call for him.'

So they called out to the blind man, 'Cheer up! Get up on your feet! Jesus is calling for you.' He threw his coat to one side. Then he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, 'Rabbi, I want to be able to see.'

'Go', said Jesus. 'Your faith has healed you.' Right away he could see. And he followed Jesus along the road.





# one question

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## *Chapter eleven*

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As they all approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent out two of his disciples. He said to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you. Just as you enter it, you will find a donkey's colt tied there. No-one has ever ridden it. Untie it and bring it here. Someone may ask you, "Why are you doing this?" If so, say, "The Lord needs it. But he will send it back here soon."'

So they left. They found a colt out in the street. It was tied at a doorway. They untied it. Some people standing there asked, 'What are you doing? Why are you untying that colt?' They answered as Jesus had told them to. So the people let them go. They brought the colt to Jesus. They threw their coats over it. Then he sat on it. Many people spread their coats on the road. Others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those in front and those behind shouted,

*'Hosanna!'*

*'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'<sup>1</sup>*

*'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!'*

*'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'*

# ‘May no-one ever eat fruit from you again!’

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Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courtyard. He looked around at everything. But it was already late. So he went out to Bethany with the 12 disciples.

The next day as Jesus and his disciples were leaving Bethany, they were hungry. Not too far away, he saw a fig tree. It was covered with leaves. He went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves. It was not the season for figs. Then Jesus said to the tree, ‘May no-one ever eat fruit from you again!’ And his disciples heard him say it.

When Jesus reached Jerusalem, he entered the temple courtyard. He began to drive out those who were buying and selling there.

He turned over the tables of the people who were exchanging money. He also turned over the benches of those who were selling doves. He would not allow anyone to carry items for sale through the temple courtyard. Then he taught them. He told them, ‘It is written that the Lord said, “My house will be called a house where people from all nations can pray.”<sup>1</sup> But you have made it a “den for robbers.”’<sup>2</sup>

The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard about this. They began looking for a way to kill Jesus. They were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

When evening came, Jesus and his disciples left the city.





In the morning as Jesus and his disciples walked along, they saw the fig tree. It was dried up all the way down to the roots. Peter remembered. He said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, look! The fig tree you put a curse on has dried up!'

'Have faith in God,' Jesus said. 'What I'm about to tell you is true. Suppose someone says to this mountain, "Go and throw yourself into the sea." They must not doubt in their heart. They must believe that what they say will happen. Then it will be done for them. So I tell you, when you pray for something, believe that you have already received it. Then it will be yours. And when you stand praying, forgive anyone you have anything against. Then your Father in heaven will forgive your sins.'

Jesus and his disciples arrived again in Jerusalem. He was walking in the temple courtyard. Then the chief priests came to him. The teachers of the law and the elders came too. 'By what authority are you doing these things?' they asked. 'Who gave you authority to do this?'

Jesus replied, 'I will ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. Was John's baptism from heaven? Or did it come from human authority? Tell me!'

They talked to each other about it. They said, 'If we say, "From heaven", he will ask, "Then why didn't you believe him?" But what if we say, "From human authority"?' They were afraid of the people. Everyone believed that John really was a prophet.

So they answered Jesus, 'We don't know.'

Jesus said, 'Then I won't tell you by what authority I am doing these things either.'

# man of honour

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## *Chapter twelve*

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Jesus began to speak to the people using stories. He said, 'A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it. He dug a pit for a winepress. He also built a lookout tower. He rented the vineyard out to some farmers. Then he went to another place. At harvest time he sent a servant to the renters. He told the servant to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. But they grabbed the servant and beat him up. Then they sent him away with nothing. So the man sent another servant to the renters. They hit this one on the head and treated him badly. The man sent still another servant. The renters killed him. The man sent many others. The renters beat up some of them. They killed the others.

'The man had one person left to send. It was his son, and he loved him. He sent him last of all. He said, "They will respect my son."

'But the renters said to each other, "This is the one who will receive all the owner's property someday. Come, let's kill him. Then everything will be ours." So they took him and killed him. They threw him out of the vineyard.



‘What will the owner of the vineyard do then? He will come and kill those renters. He will give the vineyard to others. Haven’t you read what this part of Scripture says,

*“The stone the builders didn’t accept  
has become the most important stone of all.  
The Lord has done it.  
It is wonderful in our eyes?”<sup>1</sup>*

Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest Jesus. They knew he had told the story against them. But they were afraid of the crowd. So they left him and went away.

Later the religious leaders sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus. They wanted to trap him with his own words. They came to him and said, ‘Teacher, we know that you are a man of honour. You don’t let other people tell you what to do or say. You don’t care how important they are. But you teach the way of God truthfully. Is it right to pay the royal tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn’t we?’

But Jesus knew what they were trying to do. So he asked, ‘Why are you trying to trap me? Bring me a silver coin. Let me look at it.’ They brought the coin. He asked them, ‘Whose picture is this? And whose words?’ ‘Caesar’s,’ they replied.

Then Jesus said to them, ‘Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. And give back to God what belongs to God.’

They were amazed at him.





# ‘You are not far from God’s kingdom’

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The Sadducees came to Jesus with a question. They do not believe that people rise from the dead. ‘Teacher’, they said, ‘Moses wrote for us about a man who died and didn’t have any children. But he did leave a wife behind. That man’s brother must get married to the widow. He must provide children to carry on his dead brother’s name. There were seven brothers. The first one got married. He died without leaving any children. The second one got married to the widow. He also died and left no child. It was the same with the third one. In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. When the dead rise, whose wife will she be? All seven of them were married to her.’

Jesus replied, ‘You are mistaken because you do not know the Scriptures. And you do not know the power of God. When the dead rise, they won’t get married. And their parents won’t give them to be married. They will be like the angels in heaven. What about the dead rising? Haven’t you read in the Book of Moses the story of the burning bush? God said to Moses, “I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. And I am the God of Jacob.”<sup>1</sup> He is not the God of

the dead. He is the God of the living. You have made a big mistake!’

One of the teachers of the law came and heard the Sadducees arguing. He noticed that Jesus had given the Sadducees a good answer. So he asked him, ‘Which is the most important of all the commandments?’

Jesus answered, ‘Here is the most important one. Moses said, “Israel, listen to me. The Lord is our God. The Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your mind and with all your strength.”<sup>2</sup> And here is the second one. “Love your neighbour as you love yourself.”<sup>3</sup> There is no commandment more important than these.’

‘You have spoken well, teacher,’ the man replied. ‘You are right in saying that God is one. There is no other God but him. To love God with all your heart and mind and strength is very important. So is loving your neighbour as you love yourself. These things are more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.’

Jesus saw that the man had answered wisely. He said to him, ‘You are not far from God’s kingdom.’ From then on, no-one dared to ask Jesus any more questions.

1. The Bible book of Exodus chapter 3 verse 6

2. The Bible book of Deuteronomy chapter 6 verses 4-5

3. The Bible book of Leviticus chapter 19 verse 18

Jesus was teaching in the temple courtyard. He asked, 'Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? The Holy Spirit spoke through David himself. David said,

*' "The Lord said to my Lord,  
'Sit at my right hand  
until I put your enemies  
under your control.' "1*

David himself calls him "Lord". So how can he be David's son?

The large crowd listened to Jesus with delight.

As he taught, he said, 'Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in long robes. They like to be greeted with respect in the market. They love to have the most important seats in the synagogues. They also love to have the places of honour at dinners. They take over the houses of widows. They say long prayers to show off. God will punish these men very much.'

Jesus sat down opposite the place where people put their temple offerings. He watched the crowd putting their money into the offering boxes. Many rich people threw large amounts into them. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins. They were worth only a few pennies.

Jesus asked his disciples to come to him. He said, 'What I'm about to tell you is true. That poor widow has put more into the offering box than all the others. They all gave a lot because they are rich. But she gave even though she is poor. She put in everything she had. That was all she had to live on.'







# watch out!

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## *Chapter thirteen*

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Jesus was leaving the temple. One of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher! What huge stones! What wonderful buildings!'

'Do you see these huge buildings?' Jesus asked. 'Not one stone here will be left on top of another. Every stone will be thrown down.'

Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, opposite the temple. Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him a question in private. 'Tell us', they said. 'When will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to come true?'

Jesus said to them, 'Keep watch! Be careful that no-one fools you. Many will come in my name. They will claim, "I am he." They will fool many people. You will hear about wars. You will also hear people talking about future wars. Don't be alarmed. These things must happen. But the end still isn't here. Nation will fight against nation. Kingdom will fight against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in many places. People will go hungry. All these things are the beginning of birth pains.'

**‘You will be  
arrested  
and brought  
to trial’**

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'Watch out! You will be handed over to the local courts. You will be whipped in the synagogues. You will stand in front of governors and kings because of me. In that way you will be witnesses to them. The good news has to be preached to all nations before the end comes. You will be arrested and brought to trial. But don't worry in advance about what you will say. Just say what God brings to your mind at the time. It is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

'Brothers will hand over brothers to be killed. Fathers will hand over their children. Children will rise up against their parents and have them put to death. Everyone will hate you because of me. But the one who remains strong in the faith will be saved.

'You will see "the hated thing that destroys."<sup>1</sup> It will stand where it does not belong. The reader should understand this. Then those who are in Judea should escape to the mountains. No-one on the roof should go down into the house to take anything out. No-one in the field should go back to get

their coat. How awful it will be in those days for pregnant women! How awful for nursing mothers! Pray that this will not happen in winter. Those days will be worse than any others from the time God created the world until now. And there will never be any like them again.

'If the Lord had not cut the time short, no one would live. But because of God's chosen people, he has shortened it. At that time someone may say to you, "Look! Here is the Messiah!" Or, "Look! There he is!" Do not believe it. False messiahs and false prophets will appear. They will do signs and miracles. They will try to fool God's chosen people if possible. Keep watch! I have told you everything in advance.

'So in those days there will be terrible suffering. After that, Scripture says,

*' "The sun will be darkened.  
The moon will not shine.  
The stars will fall from the sky.  
The heavenly bodies will be shaken."<sup>2</sup>*

# ‘No-one knows about that day or hour’

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‘At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds. He will come with great power and glory. He will send his angels. He will gather his chosen people from all four directions. He will bring them from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

‘Learn a lesson from the fig tree. As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that the end is near. It is right at the door. What I’m about to tell you is true. The people living now will certainly not pass away until all those things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away. But my words will never pass away.

‘But no-one knows about that day or hour. Not even the angels in heaven know. The Son does not know. Only the Father knows. Keep watch! Stay awake! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away. He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge. Each one is given a task to do. He tells the one at the door to keep watch.

‘So keep watch! You do not know when the owner of the house will come back. It may be in the evening or at midnight. It may be when the cockerel crows or at dawn. He may come suddenly. So do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone. “Watch!”’





# what do you think?

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## *Chapter fourteen*

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The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were plotting to arrest Jesus secretly. They wanted to kill him. 'But not during the feast,' they said. 'The people may stir up trouble.'

Jesus was in Bethany. He was at the table in the home of Simon, who had a skin disease. A woman came with a special sealed jar. It contained very expensive perfume made out of pure nard. She broke the jar open and poured the perfume on Jesus' head.

Some of the people there became angry. They said to one another, 'Why waste this perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's pay. The money could have been given to poor people.' So they found fault with the woman.

'Leave her alone,' Jesus said. 'Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. You will always have poor people with you. You can help them any time you want to. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body to prepare me to be buried. What I'm about to tell you is true. What she has done will be told anywhere the good news is preached all over the world. It will be told in memory of her.'

Judas Iscariot was one of the 12 disciples. He went to the chief priests to hand Jesus over to them. They were delighted to hear that he would do this. They promised to give Judas money. So he watched for the right time to hand Jesus over to them.

It was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That was the time to sacrifice the Passover lamb. Jesus' disciples asked him, 'Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover meal?'

So he sent out two of his disciples. He told them, 'Go into the city. A man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. He will enter a house. Say to its owner, "The Teacher asks, "Where is my guest room? Where can I eat the Passover meal with my disciples?"' He will show you a large upstairs room. It will have furniture and will be ready. Prepare for us to eat there.'

The disciples left and went into the city. They found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover meal.

When evening came, Jesus arrived

with the 12 disciples. While they were at the table eating, Jesus said, 'What I'm about to tell you is true. One of you who is eating with me will hand me over to my enemies.'

The disciples became sad. One by one they said to him, 'Surely you don't mean me?'

'It is one of you,' Jesus replied. 'It is the one who dips bread into the bowl with me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But how terrible it will be for the one who hands over the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.'

While they were eating, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to his disciples and said, 'Take it. This is my body.'

Then he took a cup. He gave thanks and handed it to them. All of them drank from it.

'This is my blood of the covenant,' he said to them. 'It is poured out for many. What I'm about to tell you is true. I won't drink wine with you again until the day I drink it in God's kingdom.'

Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

**‘Take it. This  
is my body’**

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'You will all turn away,' Jesus told the disciples. 'It is written,

*"I will strike the shepherd  
down.  
Then the sheep will be  
scattered."*<sup>1</sup>

But after I rise from the dead, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.'

Peter said, 'All the others may turn away. But I will not.'

'What I'm about to tell you is true,' Jesus answered. 'It will happen today, in fact tonight. Before the cockerel crows twice, you yourself will say three times that you don't know me.'

But Peter would not give in. He said, 'I may have to die with you. But I will never say I don't know you.' And all the others said the same thing.

Jesus and his disciples went to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus said to them, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took Peter, James and John along with him. He began to be very upset and troubled. 'My soul is very sad. I feel close to death,' he said to them. 'Stay here. Keep watch.'

He went a little further. Then he fell to the ground. He prayed that, if possible, the hour might pass by him. 'Abba, Father,' he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup of suffering away from me. But let what you want be done, not what I want.'

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Simon', he said to Peter, 'are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray. Then you won't fall into sin when you are tempted. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.'

Once more Jesus went away and prayed the same thing. Then he came back. Again he found them sleeping. They couldn't keep their eyes open. They did not know what to say to him.

Jesus returned the third time. He said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look! The Son of Man is about to be handed over to sinners. Get up! Let us go! Here comes the one who is handing me over to them!'

**‘Enough!  
The hour  
has come’**

---



Just as Jesus was speaking, Judas appeared. He was one of the 12 disciples. A crowd was with him. They were carrying swords and clubs. The chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders had sent them.

Judas, who was going to hand Jesus over, had arranged a signal with them. 'The one I kiss is the man,' he said. 'Arrest him and have the guards lead him away.' So Judas went to Jesus at once. Judas said, 'Rabbi!' And he kissed Jesus. The men grabbed Jesus and arrested him. Then one of those standing nearby pulled his sword out. He struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

'Am I leading a band of armed men against you?' asked Jesus. 'Do you have to come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I was with you. I taught in the temple courtyard, and you didn't arrest me. But the Scriptures must come true.' Then everyone left him and ran away.

A young man was following Jesus. The man was wearing nothing but a piece of linen cloth. When the crowd grabbed him, he ran away naked. He left his clothing behind.

The crowd took Jesus to the high priest. All the chief priests, the elders, and the teachers of the law came together. Not too far away, Peter followed Jesus. He went right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards. He warmed himself at the fire.

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for something to use against Jesus. They wanted to put him to death. But they did not find any proof. Many witnesses lied about him. But their stories did not agree.

Then some of them stood up. Here is what those false witnesses said about him. 'We heard him say, "I will destroy this temple made by human hands. In three days I will build another temple, not made by human hands."' But what they said did not agree.

Then the high priest stood up in front of them. He asked Jesus, 'Aren't you going to answer? What are these charges these men are bringing against you?' But Jesus remained silent. He gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah? Are you the Son of the Blessed One?'

'I am', said Jesus. 'And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One. You will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven.'

The high priest tore his clothes. 'Why do we need any more witnesses?' he asked. 'You have heard him say a very evil thing against God. What do you think?'

They all found him guilty and said he must die. Then some began to spit at him. They blindfolded him. They hit him with their fists. They said, 'Prophecy!' And the guards took him and beat him.



# ‘I don’t know this man’

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Peter was below in the courtyard. One of the high priest’s female servants came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

‘You also were with Jesus, that Nazarene,’ she said.

But Peter said he had not been with him. ‘I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,’ he said. He went out to the entrance to the courtyard.

The servant saw him there. She said again to those standing around, ‘This fellow is one of them.’ Again he said he was not.

After a little while, those standing nearby said to Peter, ‘You must be one of them. You are from Galilee.’

Then Peter began to curse. He said to them, ‘I don’t know this man you’re talking about!’

Right away the cockerel crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had spoken to him. ‘The cockerel will crow twice,’ he had said. ‘Before it does, you will say three times that you don’t know me.’ Peter broke down and cried.







# what wrong has he done?

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## *Chapter fifteen*

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It was very early in the morning. The chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law, and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they tied Jesus up and led him away. Then they handed him over to Pilate.

'Are you the king of the Jews?' asked Pilate.

'You have said so,' Jesus replied.

The chief priests brought many charges against him. So Pilate asked him again, 'Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they charge you with.'

But Jesus still did not reply. Pilate was amazed.



It was the usual practice at the Passover Feast to let one prisoner go free. The people could choose the one they wanted. A man named Barabbas was in prison. He was there with some other people who had fought against the country's rulers. They had committed murder while they were fighting against the rulers. The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

'Do you want me to let the king of the Jews go free?' asked Pilate. He knew that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him because they wanted to get their own way. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd. So the crowd asked Pilate to let Barabbas go free instead.

'Then what should I do with the one you call the king of the Jews?' Pilate asked them.

'Crucify him!' the crowd shouted.

'Why? What wrong has he done?' asked Pilate.

But they shouted even louder, 'Crucify him!'

Pilate wanted to satisfy the crowd. So he let Barabbas go free. He ordered that Jesus be whipped. Then he handed him over to be nailed to a cross.

The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace. It was called the Praetorium. They called together the whole company of soldiers. The soldiers put a purple robe on Jesus. Then they twisted thorns together to make a crown. They placed it on his head. They began to call out to him, 'We honour you, king of the Jews!' Again and again they hit him on the head with a stick. They spat on him. They fell on their knees and pretended to honour him. After they had made fun of him, they took off the purple robe. They put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to nail him to a cross.

A man named Simon was passing by. He was from Cyrene. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus. Simon was on his way in from the country. The soldiers forced him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha. The word Golgotha means the Place of the Skull. Then they gave him wine mixed with spices. But he did not take it. They nailed him to the cross. Then they divided up his clothes. They cast lots to see what each of them would get.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. They wrote out the charge against him. It read,

THE KING OF THE JEWS.

They crucified with him two rebels against Rome. One was on his right and one was on his left. Those who passed by shouted at Jesus and made fun of him. They shook their heads and said, 'So you are going to destroy the temple and build it again in three days? Then come down from the cross! Save yourself!' In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law made fun of him among themselves. 'He saved others,' they said. 'But he can't save himself! Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross! When we see that, we will believe.' Those who were being crucified with Jesus also made fun of him.

At noon, darkness covered the whole land. It lasted three hours. At three o'clock in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, '*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*' This means 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?'<sup>1</sup>

Some of those standing nearby heard Jesus cry out. They said, 'Listen! He's calling for Elijah.'

Someone ran and filled a sponge with wine vinegar. He put it on a stick. He offered it to Jesus to drink. 'Leave him alone,' he said. 'Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down.'

With a loud cry, Jesus took his last breath.

The temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. A Roman commander was standing there in front of Jesus. He saw how Jesus died. Then he said, 'This man was surely the Son of God!'

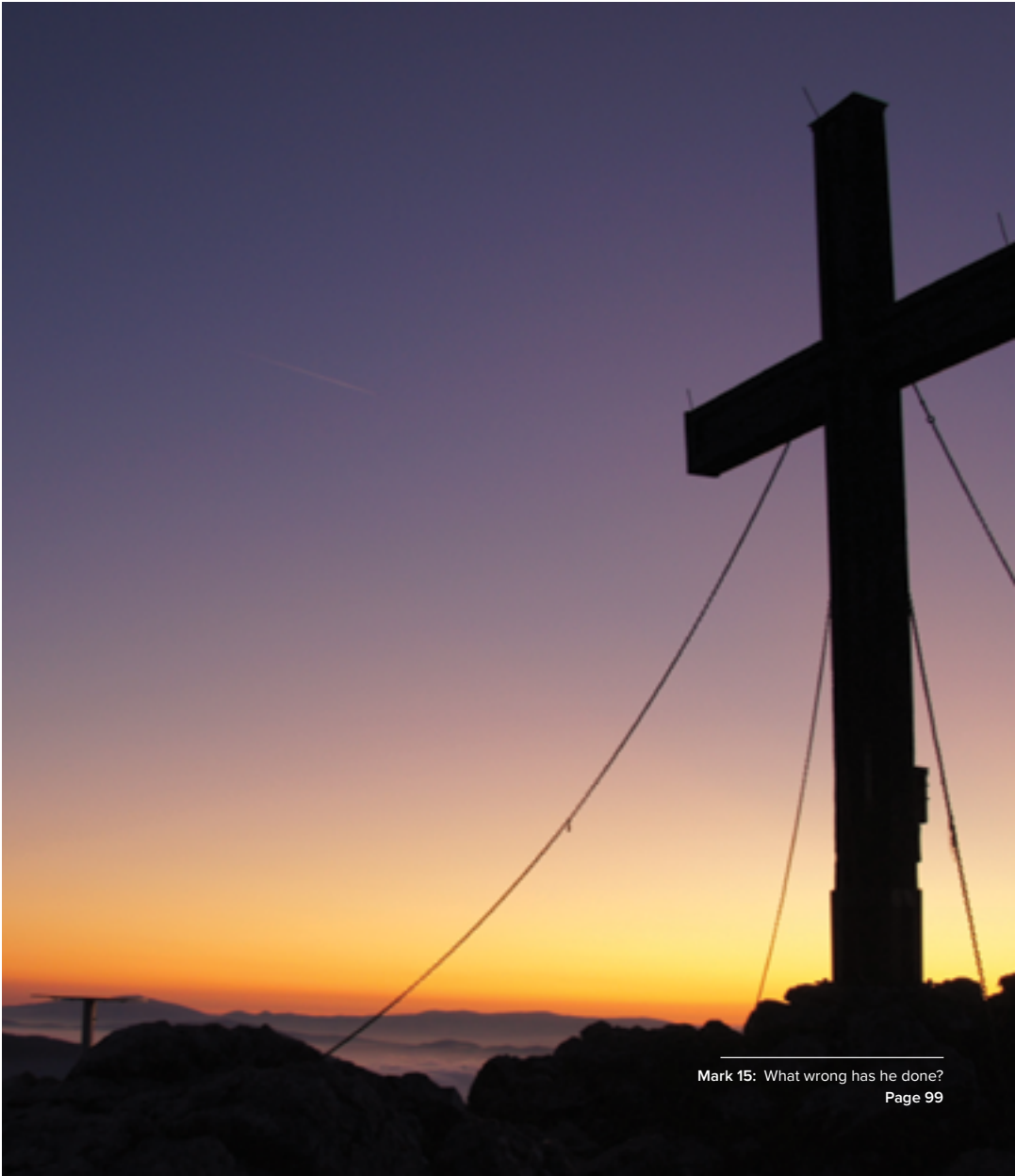
Not very far away, some women were watching. Mary Magdalene was among them. Mary, the mother of the younger James and of Joseph, was also there. So was Salome. In Galilee these women had followed Jesus. They had taken care of his needs. Many other women were also there. They had come up with him to Jerusalem.

It was the day before the Sabbath. That day was called Preparation Day. As evening approached, Joseph went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Joseph was from the town of Arimathea. He was a leading member of the Jewish Council. He was waiting for God's kingdom. Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead. So he called for the Roman commander. He asked him if Jesus had already died.

The commander said it was true. So Pilate gave the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought some linen cloth. He took down the body and wrapped it in the linen. He put it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus' body had been placed.

**‘When we  
see that,  
we will  
believe’**

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# who will roll the stone?

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## Chapter sixteen

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The Sabbath day ended. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices. They were going to use them for Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, they were on their way to the tomb. It was just after sunrise. They asked each other, 'Who will roll the stone away from the entrance to the tomb?'

Then they looked up and saw that the stone had been rolled away. The stone was very large. They entered the tomb. As they did, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe. He was sitting on the right side. They were alarmed.

'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. But he has risen! He is not here!

See the place where they had put him. Go! Tell his disciples and Peter, "He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him. It will be just as he told you."'

The women were shaking and confused. They went out and ran away from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Jesus rose from the dead early on the first day of the week. He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. He had driven seven demons out of her. She went and told those who had been with him. She found them crying. They were very sad. They heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him. But they did not believe it.



# ‘The Lord worked with them’

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After that, Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them. This happened while they were walking out in the country. The two returned and told the others about it. But the others did not believe them either.

Later Jesus appeared to the 11 disciples as they were eating. He spoke firmly to them because they had no faith. They would not believe those who had seen him after he rose from the dead.

He said to them, ‘Go into all the world. Preach the good news to everyone. Anyone who believes and is baptised will be saved. But anyone who does not believe will be punished. Here are the miraculous signs that those who believe will do. In my name they will drive out demons. They will speak in languages they had not known before. They will pick up snakes with their hands. And when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all. They will place their hands on ill people. And the people will get well.’

When the Lord Jesus finished speaking to them, he was taken up into heaven. He sat down at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere. The Lord worked with them. And he backed up his word by the signs that went with it.

# Read Mark's Gospel

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*Use these 6 studies alongside a copy  
of Mark's gospel*

## **Study 1**

Mark 1:14-34

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## **Study 2**

Mark 2:1-13

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## **Study 3**

Mark 4:35-41

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## **Study 4**

Mark 5:21-24, 16:1-8

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## **Study 5**

Mark 8:27-38

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## **Study 6**

Mark 10:35-52

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# Ready, Set, Go...

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Whenever someone new turns up to our sports club or team, it takes some time for us to build up a full picture of them.

First we see them train and play. We judge them and decide how good they are and where they'll fit in (or not).

In time we then get to know them better. We find out what they like and don't like. We find out about how they respond to good times and hard times. We find out how they treat people who they like and those who they don't.

In time, we build up a picture and can answer the question "Who are they?" more fully.

Mark wrote his account of Jesus' life to answer the question "Who is Jesus?"

If you read through the book of Mark, you'll have seen what Jesus did and what he said. You'll have seen how he spoke with his closest friends and those who opposed him.

Mark is convinced that the most important thing you can do is to find out who Jesus is. He thinks discovering Jesus is the best news in the world.

**We'll take a deep dive into Marks account through six short studies.**

**In each study we're going to look at three things:**

# Ready

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Answer a question to start thinking and read some context to the study.



# Set

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Look at the Bible and see what it says to us today.



# Go

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Think about what you're going to do in response to the Bible.



# Study 1

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*Mark 1:14-34*

In sport and in life, we recognise all is not as it should be, and we hope for a better future.

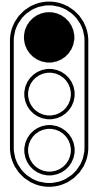
**Where do  
you look for  
hope for the  
future?**

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# Ready

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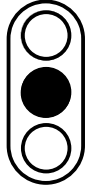
Mark starts his gospel with a bold claim:

**“The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.”**

*Mark 1:1*

The Romans were familiar with the term “good news” (gospel) as it was used to announce great historic moments such as when emperors came to power. For the Jews reading the book it was even more significant. It spoke of ancient hope for a time when God himself would come to restore a broken world.

Mark wants his readers to know that what he is claiming about Jesus is incredibly significant.



## Read Mark 1:14-34

<sup>14</sup> After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. <sup>15</sup> “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” <sup>16</sup> As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup> “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” <sup>18</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him. <sup>19</sup> When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. <sup>20</sup> Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. <sup>21</sup> They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. <sup>22</sup> The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. <sup>23</sup> Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, <sup>24</sup> “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” <sup>25</sup> “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” <sup>26</sup> The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

<sup>27</sup> The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” <sup>28</sup> News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. <sup>29</sup> As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. <sup>30</sup> Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. <sup>31</sup> So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. <sup>32</sup> That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door, <sup>34</sup> and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

- 1 Which coach has had the most impact on your life? Why?
- 2 What are your first impressions of this man Jesus?
- 3 In verse 15 Jesus enters by declaring the arrival of the 'Kingdom of God' – what do you think he meant by this? Why could this be good news?

**Mark will explain this more as he continues to write but Jesus makes clear the right response is to “repent and believe.” To “repent” means to stop what you were doing and turn around. Jesus’ announcement calls for a radical change. Verses 16-20 show us this radical change in action with the fishermen**

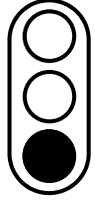
**Jesus then goes to a small town called Capernaum and begins to teach.**

- 4 The people were amazed and fearful of Jesus because of how he taught (v22) and they responded to Jesus (v32-34). Why would people have responded to Jesus like this?
- 5 Today people might say Jesus was a historical figure but would not want to believe or trust in his teaching. Why do you think that’s the case?



# Go

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**Jesus announced the arrival of the ‘Kingdom of God’ and then begins to heal many and teach with real authority. The healings are not something Jesus wants to draw attention to and instead are to be seen as signs of a broken world being restored.**

- 9** What have you learnt about Jesus? Is there anything so far in his teaching/character that sheds light on our starting point that sport and life are not all as they should be?

*use the space below to answer these questions*

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# Study 2

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## *Mark 2:1-12*

If you could change one thing about your life what would it be?

Maybe it would be more talent in your sport or restored relationships with your family and friends.

What we desire shows us what we think we need.

**What do  
you think  
humanity's  
greatest  
need is?**

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# Ready

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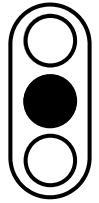


In this next story we meet the Pharisees – a respected Jewish religious group. They were the ones most committed to keeping the laws and longing for God’s kingdom to come. How will they respond to Jesus? He says he is the one they are waiting for but does he fit their expectations?

In Mark 15 we read the account of the death of Jesus and see why it is necessary for the forgiveness of sins. The story in Mark 2 points to the reality of what Jesus achieved in Mark 15.

# Set

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## Read Mark 2:1-12

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralysed man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 'Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?'

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, 'Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to this paralysed man, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Get up, take your mat and walk"? 10 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' So he said to the man, 11 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'

- 1** What do you think the friends of the paralysed man thought his greatest need was? How did Jesus show what the paralysed man's greatest need actually was? What did Jesus see as the man's greatest need and what did the man gain by having it sorted?

**Sin is a word used to describe our rebellion against God who made the world and us. It refers to the actions and thoughts we do because of our rebellious nature. The Bible tells us the punishment for unforgiven sin is eternal punishment.**

- 2** The Pharisees were so offended by Jesus' claim to forgive sins and therefore claim to be God. Look at verse 9 - How did Jesus show his authority to do what only God can do? What do you make of his claim?

**That story that Mark records shows us two very significant things about ourselves and about Jesus.**

**Our greatest need is not security of wealth or success in sport, or being injury free. Our greatest need is the forgiveness of sins, because that's our greatest sin is our big problem.**

**Jesus is the only one who can forgive sins because he is the God-man.**

**The next passage of the bible is the account of Jesus' death – this was the point that Jesus, the God-man died to forgive sins.**

## Read Mark 15:25-39

<sup>25</sup> It was nine in the morning when they crucified him.<sup>26</sup> The written notice of the charge against him read: the king of the jews.

<sup>27</sup> They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>29</sup> Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, <sup>30</sup> come down from the cross and save yourself!" <sup>31</sup> In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself!"<sup>32</sup> Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

<sup>33</sup> At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

<sup>34</sup> And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

<sup>35</sup> When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

<sup>36</sup> Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

<sup>37</sup> With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

<sup>38</sup> The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup> And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

- 3** Look and see how many different groups of people were mocking Jesus. What were they saying? Why do think Jesus didn't save himself?

**Between 12pm and 3pm darkness covered the land. The Jewish prophets understood darkness during the day as a sign of God's judgement. Jesus was experiencing the judgement of God, being treated as sin deserves.**

- 4** In verse 38 we read that the curtain was ripped from top to bottom. What do you think is significant about this?

**The temple was a divided by huge curtains to separate different sections. The one great curtain (30m high) separated the main area from the most holy place where only the priest could go once a year. It was a powerful reminder that God was hidden and God was separate from His people because of their sin.**

- 5** The Centurion acknowledges something about Jesus that others don't – what is it? What might have caused him to make this cry?



# Study 3

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*Mark 4:35-41*

Sport is full of incredible moments.

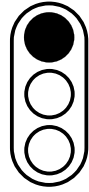
**When was the  
last time you saw  
something amazing  
in your sport?**

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# Ready

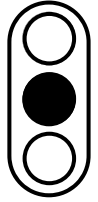
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In the first half of his gospel, Mark is trying to show us the true identity of Jesus. In today's story, Jesus has spent the day teaching and now, at the end of the day, He suggests crossing a lake. He will use this experience to show physically, what he'd been explaining and teaching earlier. Why not have a read of the start of Chapter 4 and then continue with this story.

# Set

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## Read Mark 4:35-41

<sup>35</sup> That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” <sup>36</sup> Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. <sup>37</sup> A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. <sup>38</sup> Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

<sup>39</sup> He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

<sup>40</sup> He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

<sup>41</sup> They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

**This was a serious storm. The disciples were experienced fishermen and yet we see that their fear of drowning was very real in this storm.**

- 1 What impression do we get of the disciples here? How would you describe their feelings?

- 2 Compare the disciples to Jesus. How would you describe his reaction to the situation?
- 3 Who or what was Jesus speaking to in verse 39? What are these words meant to show the disciples?

**In verses 40-41 we see the disciples are terrified and frightened. This is not a surprise considering what they have just seen!**

- 5 Jesus challenges the disciple's faith in v40. Why does he ask this question?
- 6 The disciples reply with a question of their own – why were they asking this?







# Study 4

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*Mark 5:21-24, 35-43 and Mark 16:1-8*

Every sports person has to face the inevitable decline. Age, injuries, change in performance or motivation force all of us to retire and step away from competing at some point. This can be a real challenge as we look to navigate the next phase in life.

In sport retirement is often known as the “first death.” It is called the “first death” because we all know the “second” and final death is on its way.

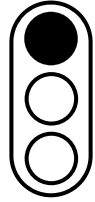
**We struggle to talk about retirement and even more so about death. Why do you think this is?**

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# Ready

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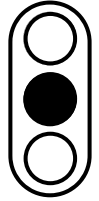


Jesus has been attracting large crowds and people are travelling to hear him speak and see his miracles. As we've seen, Jesus was reluctant to be known as a healer and yet here, as he is confronted with sickness and death, he heals.

In Mark 16 we read the account of the resurrection of Jesus and see why it is essential to confirm the forgiveness of sins has happened and the promise of new life. The story in Mark 5 points to the reality of what Jesus achieved in Mark 16.

# Set

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## Read Mark 5:21-24

<sup>21</sup> When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. <sup>22</sup> Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. <sup>23</sup> He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” <sup>24</sup> So Jesus went with him.

**Jairus was a religious leader, those who were often opposed to Jesus, and yet he falls at Jesus’ feet and begs him to come with him.**

- 1 What do Jairus’ actions suggest to us about his situation?

## Read Mark 5:25-39

<sup>35</sup> While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

<sup>36</sup> Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

<sup>37</sup> He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. <sup>38</sup> When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup> He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” <sup>40</sup> But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. <sup>41</sup> He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha kum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). <sup>42</sup> Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. <sup>43</sup> He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

**Jesus had delayed his arrival at the house of a critically ill child to help a woman who was very poorly. We see during this delay that the child has now died.**

- 2** After Jesus eventually arrives he tells Jairus “Do not be afraid, just believe.” What was Jairus being asked to believe about Jesus?
  
- 3** Jesus speaks to the girl and the unimaginable happens. What does this show us about Jesus?

**Faith is an important theme in Mark and it simply means to put our trust and confidence, not in ourselves, but in Jesus as the one who alone can meet our deepest needs.**

**The woman Jesus healed and Jairus both place their faith in Jesus as they experience their own powerlessness.**

Jesus won't always bring the dead back to life if we have faith. So what do you think this story means for us today?

**This story is a preview of the most dramatic story in Jesus' life – his resurrection where he came back from the dead. Let's read that account now:**

## **Read Mark 16:1-8**

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. <sup>2</sup> Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb <sup>3</sup> and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

<sup>4</sup> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. <sup>5</sup> As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

<sup>6</sup> “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

<sup>8</sup> Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

**Mark mentions the names of the women in account of the death of Jesus in Chapter 5 and here at the tomb. At that time, a woman’s testimony was seen as unreliable and not accepted in a court of law.**

- 4** What do you think the women went to the tomb to do? Why were they shocked?
- 5** Consider the words of the young man dressed in white. How do these words change everything?



# Study 5

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*Mark 8:27-38*

It takes time to get to know a new coach. To understand their values, their methods, the way they treat people and respond to challenges.

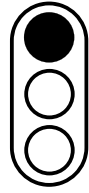
**As we've been looking at Jesus, you've seen what he did and what he said. At this stage – what is your opinion of Jesus?**

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# Ready

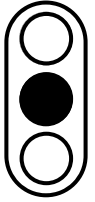
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We've already seen much of Jesus' teaching and miracles. Here we come to a major climax where we find out what Jesus' closest friends thought about who he was.

# Set

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## Read Mark 8:27-30

<sup>27</sup> Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, 'Who do people say I am?' <sup>28</sup> They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' <sup>29</sup> 'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah.'

<sup>30</sup> Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

- 1 Jesus often taught and asked questions about himself. Why do you think he did that rather than about what people should do and be like?

**Peter calls him 'the Messiah.' Messiah means 'anointed one'. This term refers to God's promised king who would come to save his people.**

- 2 The people were expecting God's chosen king to rule powerfully and lead with authority. They were waiting for major political deliverance. How had this expectation shaped their answers to who Jesus was, in verse 28?

Jesus now begins to say some difficult and troubling things.

## Read Mark 8:31-33

<sup>31</sup> He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

<sup>33</sup> But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.'

- 3** A King who comes and dies seems quite shameful and confusing. Jesus often talked about his death and resurrection. What do these two events ultimately tell us about Jesus; who he is and what he came to do?

## Read Mark 8:34-38

<sup>34</sup> Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? <sup>37</sup> Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? <sup>38</sup> If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

**Jesus now says that not only will he die, but his followers are also to “follow the way of the cross.”**

- 4** What do you make of Jesus’ instruction in v34-35
  
- 5** Jesus then says “what good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” What do you make of this claim from Jesus?





# Study 6

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*Mark 10:35-52*

Sport is all about performance.

We have to perform well to get into the next team.  
To impress the coach. To get a new contract and to  
keep playing.

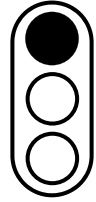
**How does this  
need to constantly  
perform in your  
sport make you feel?**

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# Ready

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James and John, alongside Peter, were two of Jesus' closest friends.

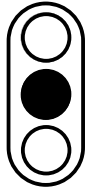
James and John thought their performances as Jesus' close friends would earn them a high status in Jesus' kingdom.

In so many areas of our lives we are told that if we work hard and perform well, we will get what we deserve.

The problem is, when it comes to faith, we can never work hard enough to be good enough for God. We saw that in study 2. We can never earn our way into God's good books because the greatest problem (sin) acts as a barrier. It is not about what we do or 'how good' we are.

# Set

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## Read Mark 10:35-45

<sup>35</sup> Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. ‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘we want you to do for us whatever we ask.’ <sup>36</sup> ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ he asked. <sup>37</sup> They replied, ‘Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.’ <sup>38</sup> ‘You don’t know what you are asking,’ Jesus said. ‘Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with?’ <sup>39</sup> ‘We can,’ they answered. Jesus said to them, ‘You will drink the cup I drink and be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with, <sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.’ <sup>41</sup> When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. <sup>42</sup> Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’

- 1 James and John ask Jesus for honour and power. What does this show us of how they understood Jesus?

**When Jesus talks about the ‘cup’ and ‘baptism’ he is talking about his death.**

- 2 Why do you think the other disciples would have been annoyed at their request?

- 3** Why do you think the other disciples would have been annoyed at their request?

**The word 'ransom' in verse 45 refers to the sum of money needed to free someone from slavery if they were in debt.**

- 4** What new thing do we learn about how Jesus understood what he was on earth to do?
- 5** What do you make of the fact Jesus is calling you a slave who needs freeing, not a person who needs to perform?

**Now we meet a blind man, Bartimaeus, who responds in contrast to James and John.**

## Read Mark 10:46-52

<sup>46</sup> Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means 'son of Timaeus'), was sitting by the roadside begging. <sup>47</sup> When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' <sup>48</sup> Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' <sup>49</sup> Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.' So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' <sup>50</sup> Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup> 'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked him. The blind man said, 'Rabbi, I want to see.' <sup>52</sup> 'Go,' said Jesus, 'your faith has healed you.' Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

**This is the last healing in Mark's account of Jesus' life. Bartimaeus calls Jesus 'the son of David' – this is another way of calling him the Messiah.**

- 6** Jesus asks Bartimaeus the same question he asked James and John – "What do you want me to do?" What does Bartimaeus' response here reveal about how he viewed both himself and Jesus?

**Bartimaeus recognised he didn't deserve anything and he cried out for mercy. Jesus responded by healing him and commending his faith.**





# What now?

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Mark says this is “good news” and Jesus asks you “who do you say I am?”

Now you’ve read Mark’s gospel and looked at it in depth – what do you make of Mark’s claim and Jesus’ question?

It may be that you want to accept Jesus’ invitation to put your trust in him. A prayer like this might help you begin speaking to Jesus about what you have come to believe and want to accept for yourself:

*Jesus, please help me to believe as you helped the disciples to. I am sorry that I have lived for myself for so long. Thank you that you came, lived, and died for me so I can be forgiven. I want to trust and obey you. Amen.*

If you have decided to follow Jesus, tell a Christian you know (maybe someone who read this with you) and if you can, find a local church where you can meet others who have also discovered Jesus and put their trust in him.

You can find further resources, including a selection of Bible studies about being a Christian in the world of sport at:  
**[christiansinsport.org.uk/academy](https://christiansinsport.org.uk/academy)**



**‘But what  
about you?’  
he asked.  
‘Who do you  
say I am?’**

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