

Life Group Notes 4/6/2022
Pastor Mark Life of Jesus Part 10

Scribe's appeal: I continue to produce these notes weekly during the interim period between Life Group sessions as a study guide to compliment and develop the principles presented weekly from the Word of God. Unlike any other human endeavor, there is a reward beyond measure in studying the Word of God, and no other way to get to know Him. If these notes are useful to you, and you've enjoyed them, please send me an email at tbeachhead@comcast.net. If they raise any questions or if you get inspired, share this with me...and we can encourage each other! -Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**)

The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the bar. Please enjoy!)

CROWD BREAKER Have your priorities changed since COVID? How so?

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions raised by Pastor Mark's message from this Sunday. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

Look at Mark's first questions. Take a brief moment to discuss them.

- **Are the things that you do in secret really secret?**
- **Is there unforgiveable sin? What is it?**
- **How does Jesus want us to view money and possessions?**
- **Does God want you to be rich? How does He want you to get those riches?**
- **Why does Jesus want us to think that He could be coming back at any moment?**

The Leaven of the Pharisees

1In the meantime, a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling one another. Jesus began to speak first to His disciples: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. **2**There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, and nothing hidden that will not be made known. **3**What you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the housetops. **What do you notice? Why did Jesus speak only to the disciples, and not the crowds? Why do these words matter more to me than to "them?" How irritated do you get when you're getting pushed around (trampled) by large crowds? Who hears you when you grumble? How will you feel when your secret grumblings about those around you get "hot miked" for all to hear? Do you have a testimony, when something you shouldn't have said got repeated? Who is at greatest risk of hypocrisy? For whom do I have the greatest hope for preventing hypocrisy? Can we help each other? Why is it important to "keep short accounts with God," and avoid covering up our mistakes? What does leaven do? How does the "leaven of the pharisees" stir up trouble? What is hurt most by hypocrisy?**

Fear God Alone

[\(Matthew 10:26-31\)](#)

4I tell you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. **How does this speak to today?** **5**But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear the One who, after you have been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. (Gehenna...hell fire) Yes, I tell you, fear Him! **How do these words give perspective to the threat of persecution? If persecution puts you to death, is that the end? What comes next? Can these words inspire courage? Why fear** (see note below)?

6Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? (an eighth of a day's wage) Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. **7**And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. **How important is this statement? Where, then, is worry? How close is God to us actually, from what He says here?**

Confessing Christ

[\(Matthew 10:32-33\)](#)

8I tell you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will also confess him before the angels of God. **9**But whoever denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. **Connect this to the things spoken in secret. Do you find it easy to talk of Jesus around others? What happened when Peter denied Jesus before men? Can you relate? Do you have a testimony, where the conversation might have surprised you for its direction?**

10And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. **See the definitions for blasphemy below in the after notes. Why is it so dangerous to slander the Holy Spirit? To whom did the Pharisees ascribe the authority Jesus had to cast out demons? Explain. What does this make you think about the dangers of speaking out of ignorance and malice? Who will represent the one who has reviled the One who was actually sent to be their advocate? What proves that you have not committed the unpardonable sin? Why are you here? How is that proof?**

11When you are brought before synagogues, rulers, and authorities, do not worry about how to defend yourselves or what to say. **12**For at that time the Holy Spirit will teach you what you should say.” **In some churches it is taught that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not for today. How has Jesus proven that we need the gifts most in days of persecution? Will He EVER leave us or forsake us to our persecutors?**

The Parable of the Rich Fool

13Someone in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” **What strikes you when you hear this prayer?**

14But Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed Me judge or executor between you?” **What strikes you when you hear Jesus’ answer? Is Jesus the judge or executor between us?** **15**And He said to them, “Watch out! Guard yourselves against every form of greed, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” **What makes this the best possible answer to the man’s request? What is he saying to the man who asked for help? What was that man’s motivation? What is Jesus’ message to him? In what does one’s life consist, if not abundance of possessions? Is it possible to be rich with few possessions?**

16Then He told them a parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced an abundance. **17**So he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, since I have nowhere to store my crops?’ **18**Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and will build bigger ones, and there I will store up all my grain and my goods. **19**Then I will say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry!’”

20But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be required of you. Then who will own what you have accumulated?’

21This is how it will be for anyone who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God.” **What does this say to someone whose retirement account is abundantly endowed? How secure is he in this day? Could that endowment disappear at the click of a button? How do you become rich toward God? Where do you lay up your treasures? How?**

Do Not Worry

(Matthew 6:25–34)

22Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. **23**For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. **24**Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap; they have no storehouse or barn; yet God feeds them. How much more valuable you are than the birds! **25**Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? **26**So if you cannot do such a small thing, why do you worry about the rest? **Answer Jesus’ questions. If worry is not the solution, what is?**

27Consider how the lilies grow: They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was adorned like one of these. **28**If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith! (See scribe’s note below on the fields of Galilee.) **Answer Jesus’ questions.**

29And do not be concerned about what you will eat or drink. Do not worry about it. **30**For the Gentiles of the world strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need

them. **31**But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added unto you. **Describe the priorities Jesus is giving us. How do you "reorient your time and energy," as Pastor Mark suggests? Can you help understand how to do this practically? According to these words, which is riskier: To give? Or to store up goods?**

Treasures in Heaven

([Matthew 6:19-21](#))

32Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom. (Pastor Mark says, "Wow! Wow!" **Why? What does this statement tell you? What is involved in the gift? How sure is this promise? How does it change your perspective? Your priorities?** **33**Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide yourselves with purses that will not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. **34**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ? **Look again at the priorities Jesus set above. What does "...an inexhaustible treasure" look like? Do you believe this is possible? Do you have a testimony? Pastor Mark says, "Jesus wants you rich." Does He? Where is your treasure stored? Can you "sell all your goods" and retain stewardship for someone else? Explain? What comes first if you do that?**

Readiness at Any Hour

([Matthew 24:36-51](#); [Mark 13:32-37](#))

35Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning. **36**Then you will be like servants waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks, they can open the door for him at once. **37**Blessed are those servants whom the master finds on watch when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve and will have them recline at the table, and he himself will come and wait on them. **38**Even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night and finds them alert, those servants will be blessed. **What is the message here? How imminent is the return? Looking at today's news how imminent is the return? Think about this: How much closer are we to His return this year than we were last year? How do you know this?**

Look up Matthew 11: 1"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. **2**Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. **3**The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take along any extra oil. **4**But the wise ones took oil in flasks along with their lamps. **5**When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

7Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. **8**The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

9'No,' said the wise ones, 'or there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' **What? Why can they not share? Aren't they Christian, after all? Why is each responsible for the oil she has? Where do you purchase oil? What is happening to the price of oil today? How urgent is this message?**

10But while they were on their way to buy it, the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut.

11Later the other virgins arrived and said, 'Lord, lord, open the door for us!'

12But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.'

13Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

What happened? How many were virgins? How many virgins were sleeping? What is the difference between the wise and the foolish? What is the only way to know the day and the hour? What does it take, then, to be ready for that day?

Luke 12:39 But understand this: If the homeowner had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. 40 You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour you do not expect.” **What would change if you absolutely knew that Jesus was coming in one week? How would you behave differently? What is preventing you from behaving like that anyway?**

Take a moment. In Luke 9, we saw Jesus being prepared for the end by Elijah and Moses on the mountain. How has His word become more urgent? How many weeks remain in His ministry? What is Jesus’ priority in this message?

41 “Lord,” said Peter, “are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone else as well?” 42 And the Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their portion at the proper time? 43 Blessed is that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. 44 Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. **Did Jesus answer Peter’s question? What is His answer? Who risks being inattentive and careless? Who has been put in charge of His master’s goods? Is there anyone who has not been put in charge of His master’s goods? What are your master’s goods and what are yours? What is the increase in cost of inattentiveness, as the last day approaches?**

Mark says, “Live your life with intention and with purpose, as if Jesus is coming at any time.” How does this help? How can I prepare for Jesus’ return?

45 But suppose that servant says in his heart, ‘My master will be a long time in coming,’ and he begins to beat the menservants and maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk. 46 The master of that servant will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not anticipate. Then he will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. **To whom is this warning spoken? What are the dangers? What are the consequences?**

47 That servant who knows his master’s will but does not get ready or follow his instructions will be beaten with many blows. 48 But the one who unknowingly does things worthy of punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and from him who has been entrusted with much, even more will be demanded. **Are all punishments alike? Whom do you know who has been given much? How much more fearsome would be his discipline? Why? How vigilant should that one be? How much does responsibility increase with each gift? Describe the importance of good stewardship.**

Mark says, “Remember this: Your heavenly father loves you. He sees the number of hairs on your head. Do not be so entangled with the things of this world that you are not prepared to accept Jesus’ priorities.” **Comments?**

Mark’s summary. Comment on each:

1. **Confess your sins. It is preferable for you to bring things to the light than for others to bring things to the light for you. Look up James 5: 16** [Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be](#)

healed. [The prayer of a righteous man has great power to prevail.](#) ***How does this help to prevent the deeds done in darkness and to prepare for the days ahead, so that what gets shouted from the housetops is good?***

Look up 1 John 1: ⁶If we say we have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷[But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.](#) ⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ***How does John echo James, and help prepare us? What kind of oil do we purchase by walking in the light? How does our love walk improve with our neighbors?***

- 2. God sees you and He values you. And you do need to keep watch over your soul.***
- 3. Have courage to serve Jesus.***
- 4. Determine where you want your treasure stored.***
- 5. Be watchful and ready. This is not a time to be sloppy. You will have to give account for your actions. (Jesus said for "...every idle word.") How sobering is this?***

The rest of the story...

Not Peace but Division

[\(Micah 7:1-6; Matthew 10:34-39\)](#)

⁴⁹I have come to ignite a fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! ***How many baptisms does Jesus undergo? Name them. What is this one of which he's speaking now? When did he accomplish this one?***

⁵¹Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but division. ⁵²From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." ***How do political discussions go around you? Did Jesus predict this? What do you learn from an argument? What do you do when there is division in your house? If you have overcome division, what has worked best for you?***

Interpreting the Present Time

[\(Matthew 16:1-4; Mark 8:11-13\)](#)

⁵⁴Then Jesus said to the crowds, "As soon as you see a cloud rising in the west, you say, 'A shower is coming,' and that is what happens. ⁵⁵And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It will be hot,' and it is. ⁵⁶You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and sky. Why don't you know how to interpret the present time? ***What is He talking about? Why are the last days at the center of His focus at this moment in His ministry? How important was it for those who heard to be ready? How much more is it important for us today?***

Reconciling with an Adversary

[\(Matthew 5:21-26\)](#)

57 And why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? 58 Make every effort to reconcile with your adversary while you are on your way to the magistrate. Otherwise, he may drag you off to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and the officer may throw you into prison. 59 I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the very last penny." **How does this address the division that Jesus says He brings? Whose responsibility is it to reconcile? What did Jesus do to bring reconciliation? How do we become imitators of Jesus?**

Scribe's biblical notes:

The word *Gehenna* is the biblical word for hell-fire punishment. It's derived from the Hebrew word for the valley of Hinnom, or Tophet, an ancient place of pagan worship in the Kidron Valley outside the gates of Jerusalem, where the kings Ahaz and Manasseh went with many others to burn their sons in the fire to foreign gods. Jeremiah, in talking of Tophet, evokes the eternal punishment that awaits those who do such things, and Isaiah says, "Where their worm dies not, nor their fire quenched." Jesus quotes Isaiah in these terms when he speaks of this hell.

On fear: To be clear, the Greek word *phobeo* gives us the word "phobia." It's means "to put to flight, to terrify or frighten." Displeasing God should be as a nightmare to us. "Fearing God" in the biblical sense is much more than "having respect." "The fear of the Lord is the **beginning** of wisdom." Christianity is not to be dabbled with lightly. And here's the promise: "There is no fear in love. Perfect love casts out all fear." (1 John 4:18) That is why fear is only the beginning, but wisdom has a beginning and an end.

From Merriam Webster:

Definition of *blaspheme*

intransitive verb

: to speak in a way that shows irreverence for God or something sacred : to speak of or address with irreverence

The Greek word *blasphemeo* means to slander, to speak lightly or profanely of sacred things. to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate

Usage: I speak evil against, blaspheme, use abusive or scurrilous language about (God or men). (Strong's and Thayers)

Note on the fields of Galilee: I lived in Nazareth, in upper Galilee in the spring of 1987. We drove from village to village and town to town to visit and share. Every week in the fields a new wildflower would predominate, changing the rich colors of the fields from week to week. Those who heard this message knew what Jesus was referring to.