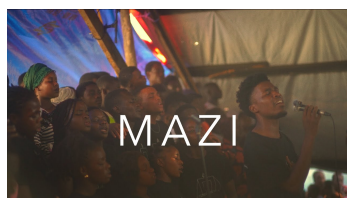


Welcome to Kingdom Life AV 5786!

Week 1 August 3-7

This Week's Worship

Here are 3 beautiful worship songs for this week (click to listen on YouTube) that strongly support our endeavor in living for Jesus. Enjoy, and know that the others are worshipping with these songs, too.



➤ Review of some takeaways from last month: John 4 worship in Spirit and truth

John 4:23-24 "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

"In the Spirit" - the worshippers must be enlivened, anointed, filled with the Holy Spirit.

Without the Spirit's presence, worship is merely human performance. This connects directly to John 3 - you must be born of the Spirit, and to John 7:37-39 where the living water Jesus promises is the flow of Holy Spirit.

"In Truth" — aligned with, abiding in, formed by the actual words and revelation of Jesus.

John 15:3 "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you." Truth here is JESUS and his words. The word Jesus speaks does what the temple rituals could only symbolize - it actually cleanses.

John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Jesus doesn't say he is a truth among truths. He is the truth. So worshipping in truth means worshipping in alignment with who Jesus is and what he has said - his revealing of himself, his commands, his word abiding in us. *John 8:31-32 To the Jews those who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. **Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**"*

The Paraclete (Advocate/ Counselor) passages:

John 14:17 — "the Spirit of truth"

John 16:13 — "when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth"

Holy Spirit forms his born-again people according to the truth of Jesus. We are made new, free to worship God with our lives - joining Him in His mission.

Note: The replays from the four team sessions on Zoom (plus much more!) are available at the Embassy of Zion YouTube channel. <https://www.youtube.com/@EmbassyofZion>

Also, the Kingdom Life (Worship in Spirit and Truth) document is also available for one extra month at <https://www.begingrowflourish.org>

MONDAY AND TUESDAY

Please review the first half and the second half of the video replay of *FIRST!* Av (you could change the rate to higher speed), with the ministry notes doc. You may want to take additional notes, as this is precious revelation from Holy Spirit and does not all fit on one page. <https://www.embassyofzion.org/first-fruits>. Pray in faith agreement through your notes and the ministry notes doc, as Holy Spirit leads.

Reflection Question 1. (about Holy Spirit working *IN* you/ us): Ask Holy Spirit to shine light and give you spiritual insight as you watch, listen, worship, and process *FIRST*. Is Holy Spirit speaking anything to you personally or for the group? Record aha's and questions.

Reflection Question 2. (about Holy Spirit working *THROUGH* you/us): How may you see yourself moving spiritually in this goodness from *FIRST*, impacting others - in situations where you are in a ministry relationship, through intercessory prayer, or in conversations at work, home, school? Is Holy Spirit speaking anything to you personally or for the group? Record.

WEDNESDAY

Welcome to Team Session 1 on Weds night 7 pm (eastern). See Zoom link in email.

~ Mark 8:34-38, and more of Jesus' Kingdom Words for Kingdom People ~

1. Examine the simplest outline of Mark, in two halves - you may want to leaf through the pages in your Bible to see the account of Jesus' life and ministry, according to Mark:

Who is He? Mark 1:1 - 8:29.

Pivotal passage: Mark 8:29 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"
Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

What is His way? Mark 8:30 -16:8.

2. Let's get to know this foundational, personally-challenging passage well. Read it carefully, repeatedly (versions of your choice.)

Mark 8:34 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.(A) 35 For whoever wants to save their life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.(B) 36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? 37 Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man(C) will be ashamed of them(D) when he comes(E) in his Father's glory with the holy angels." (NIV)

3. Bible Study Skills: Content and Context - historical, literary

✓**Look up the footnotes and cross references, verse by verse.** (These are clickable, built-in at biblegateway.com; different Bibles and versions will likely have variations here.)

Footnote [a] Mark 8:35 The Greek word means either life or soul; also in verses 36 and 37.

A - Matt 10:38 Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Luke 14:27 And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

B - John 12:25 Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

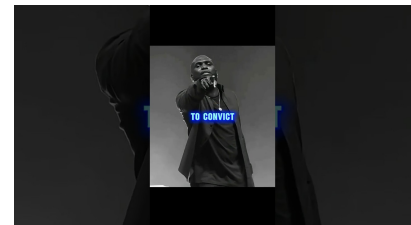
- C - Matt 8:20 Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."
- D - Matthew 10:33 But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.
 Luke 12:9 But whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God.
- E - 1 Thes 2:19 For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?

✓Next, **scope out and read the context**, the "Caesarea Philippi discourse" in **Mark 8:27-9:1**. Recall this shifts the outline of the book of Mark from "Who is He?" to "What is His way?" Let's read this focusing on **JESUS**. He revealed his true identity and described his way/ road ahead - different than what the culture of that day expected for their Messiah. Ponder what Jesus meant. (In the following questions we are beginning to explore content and context - historical and literary, to understand better what Jesus meant to be understood by his listeners).

- **Audience:** Who is Jesus talking to 8:27-8:33? Then 8:34-9:1?
- **Location:** Where does this take place? (Jesus was clearly intentional to take the disciples *to this place* to declare THE TRUE KING and HIS KINGDOM has now come!) Historically was a place of worship for Greek god Pan, and Herod build a marble temple to Roman Augustus Caesar. Here is a brief article with pictures. <https://www.bibleplaces.com/caesarea-philippi-banias/>
- **Do you see a rhetorical pattern** in Jesus' questions for them about who he is - from general to personal? In a way, Mark invites the reader into the same questions - who do the people in this narrative say Jesus is, and (implied to the reader) *who do you say that Jesus is?* Think about that for when you may be in a discussion with someone about who Jesus is.

4. 🔥 **Preaching an application/ exhortation.** Pastor Philip Anthony Mitchell, "2819 Church" in Atlanta [Click to play YouTube Short =>](#)

5. **Record your reflections and questions on the 5-verse passage, the larger context passage, the historical and literary elements, and anything else you see.**



On the team session Wednesday night, let's share revelation from the Word, let's worship and let's pray for each other, and let's join faith to see visible change manifest according to his breakthrough revelation given in AV *FIRST!* and through his enduring word in scripture.

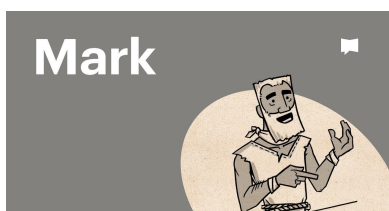
"For no word from God will ever fail." Luke 1:37

THURSDAY

Last month we began looking at Bible Study skills with assistance from chapter one in Gordon Fee's book, How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth. "The task of interpreting involves the student/reader at two levels. First, one has to hear the word *they* heard; we must try to understand what was said *to them back then and there* (exegesis). Second, we must learn to hear that same word in the here and now (hermeneutics)." We look at a passage and ask, "What is the point?"

Identifying the **genre** is critically important to accurate interpretation and thus appropriate application. Think about the unique genre of the four gospels. They are narratives, *and* they also include commands and teachings directly from Jesus. The Gospel of Mark is a theological biography with selective and arranged material meant to present Jesus' identity and to call for the reader's response.

1. **“How to Read the Gospels: Moving Beyond Individual Stories”**
<https://www.logos.com/grow/how-to-read-the-gospel-as-wholes/> This link goes to an article from Dr. Jeannine Brown, our sister who has taught and published on the New Testament for 25 years. She is a member of the NIV translation team.
2. **Next, let’s locate Mark 8:27-9:1 within the message of the book of Mark.** (By the way, you may notice there is a healing of a blind person prior to Jesus taking the disciples to Caesarea Philippi and laying out his discipleship message after being seen for who he is - Messiah.) Thanks to the brothers and sisters at **BibleProject** for their excellent overview of Mark!



<= Click to watch the overview of Mark on YouTube.

3. **Learning from a mistake sometimes made due to *not* considering historical context:**

Error: "Take up your cross" means "put up with your difficult circumstances." "My difficult boss is my cross." "My arthritis is my cross."

What Jesus meant/ his listeners would have understood: He is not talking about a personal inconvenience. In the Roman world, a cross meant a condemned man publicly marching to his own execution. Jesus is talking about voluntary allegiance to Him, even when it costs everything.

FRIDAY

Let’s examine Mark 8:34-38 and parallel passages and consider the challenge that Jesus gives which compels a response.

Matt 16:24–26 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”

Luke 9:23–25 Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”

Greek Note 1: Follow. All 3 passages share the same verb tense pattern that “deny” and “take up” are the aorist imperative tense, which often conveys decisive action each time the action occurs. Luke adds “daily” to emphasize regularity with taking up the cross. Also, in all three accounts “follow” changes tense to the present imperative, which normally emphasizes ongoing, habitual, or continuous action.

Next, see verse 38, *‘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.*

Greek Note 2: Ashamed. In the honor-shame culture of the first century, being “ashamed” of Jesus would mean refusing to identify with Him because of the social cost. The Greek word is

ἐπαισχύνομαι, meaning to feel shame about someone or something, specifically in the sense of public disgrace or embarrassment before others. Mark uses it twice in the same verse, and the doubling is the point: the relationship someone chooses with Jesus now is the relationship he will mirror back when he returns in glory.



<= Here is a YouTube short of **Billy Graham** bringing his piece.

C.S. Lewis wrote in Mere Christianity, "Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in: aim at earth and you will get neither."

Jim Elliot (missionary martyred in Ecuador, 1956), from his journal: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Discussion question: Back to the pivotal passage in Mark sitting between the simplest, two-point outline of Mark, "Who is He?" And "What is His way?" - consider *Mark 8:31* "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."

Also thinking about 8:34-38, if the gospel is primarily about Jesus (and it is) and it includes us because of his death, resurrection, and exaltation (and it does) then is this key passage about **recognizing and responding to the revelation of who Jesus is, by dying to (old) self and living for him a redeemed life?** Can you see someone going through the following progression to being born again into the Body of Christ?

- They come to realize that **the good news is true that Jesus really is the Messiah** who has come to untwist what is twisted "in this adulterous and sinful generation" by the rule of the kingdom of the world, and renew everything in beautiful LIFE wherever his way and his kingdom rule is chosen. (As the Samaritans at Sychar came to understand, He is the "Savior of the world.")
- **Required response:** "deny himself" and "take up his cross" - dying to the old ways of the fallen world, and following Jesus in His way, on His road, wherever He leads - because He is the Messiah, the Son of God. Is Jesus not talking about going through death to the old self in order to begin living again in His new way, a resurrected life? Is this not like the faith that was credited to Abraham as righteousness?
- **Ongoing discipleship** (disciple of Jesus - not of an intermediary human) through the power of Holy Spirit: *Follow Me*. Implied is that this will be a costly following (take up your cross). *Following* is not optional for disciples of Jesus. (May those who are His never abandon Him!) And implied is that the discipleship will be of much greater value (save his life) than the cost! What a way to live in this material world - to be alive spiritually - vibrantly and dynamically following Jesus, who shall return, the King of Glory!



<= click for praise song "Goodbye Yesterday" 🙌

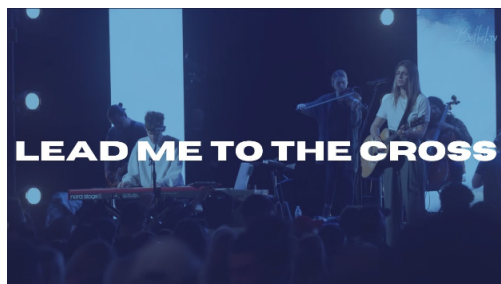
Significant! What impact does Jesus 'challenge have on laying out the cost and producing life-long, loyal followers? Pray about this, asking Holy Spirit to open your understanding about what Jesus said is the way to become a Christ-follower. (For this exercise set aside the ways that people have designed to explain how to become a Christ-follower. Also we have additional scripture to explore on this topic.) **Ponder carefully, and record your reflections on the passage and discussion question points to share with the group, or for your own edification. It will be interesting to see the outcome of our collaboration Saturday morning!**

SATURDAY

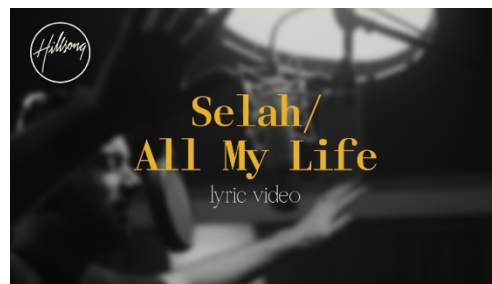
Welcome to Team Session 2 on Saturday morning 9 am (eastern). See Zoom link in email.

Week 2 August 17-21

This Week's Worship



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fo1DJRW3Y>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JgNoHhVAJI>

Those two songs above 📖🙌❤️ In that first song she reads Scripture during worship – YES! Enjoy, and know that the others are worshipping the Lord with these songs, too.

For those who may want to explore something additional, here are 4 artfully beautiful songs with a pertinent message, from our songwriting (*Is He Worthy?*) brother Andrew Peterson. (Copy and paste to listen on YouTube).

LAST WORDS (TENEBRAE) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kx3vDBtf78E	HIGH NOON https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNqssNW_Jc4&list=OLAK5uy_lggEB73bD_FDbivu_nnzJRB7WcWNNC2i4&index=8	REMEMBER AND PROCLAIM https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHclEDXXlq4&list=PLXmqM9qW8qu8vGXHEzmfitUFqNfVTd8q&index=5	SEIZED BY THE POWER OF A GREAT AFFECTION https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEtVIYO8qes&list=OLAK5uy_lMYeAOceSWv6ZZY6Zh3MdudFHVzggQmLY&index=9
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➤ Where We Are Headed This Week

So much happened before and after our pivotal passage, Mark 8:34 - 9:1. This week let's focus on

- 1) The mountain-moving in Mark 11
- 2) The way Jesus said he had to go – to suffer and be killed at the hands of the religious structure that opposed his Kingdom – *that which dared stop the move of God* - then be raised from the dead, Mark 14-16.
- 3) The Parable of the Sower in Mark 4, which he said is the secret to the Kingdom. (*Let's tell secrets!*)

Along the way let's sharpen our Bible study/interpretation/application skills: exegesis (what Jesus meant when He said it, in its original context) and hermeneutics (what it means for us today, walking with Him).

MONDAY AND TUESDAY

Let's explore the mountain-moving that Jesus described and ask the Lord to show us what He meant when He said it.

Read Mark 11:12-25. There are 3 descriptions (not setting norms) of happenings.

12-14 prophetic act - the fig tree looked good but did not serve the purpose

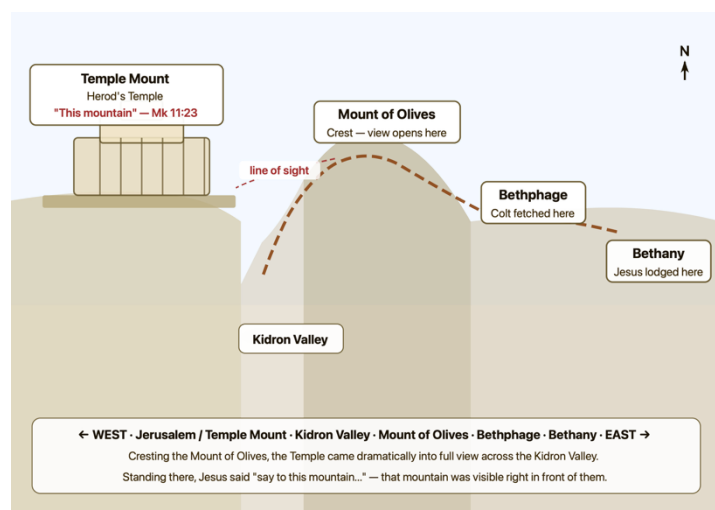
~ 15-19 (similar to fig tree) the Temple confrontation (the middle of this 3-part narrative)

~ 20-21 sign confirmed - fig tree found withered

- ⇒ Here is a very enlightening and compelling (21 min) message on Mark 11:12-21 from RC Sproul – who describes Jesus' action as a “miracle of destruction” and an object lesson on the sin of hypocrisy (of the Pharisees.) **Record your reflections.**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbxiiQ0HlwE>

Then in 22-25 Jesus answers about the fig tree with a lesson on mountain moving(?!)

Question: How does all this fit together in one message given by demonstration and by explanation?



Last session, when introducing this passage for this week, we imagined ourselves with Jesus in Mark 11:1 “As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives,...” Here is a computer-generated view of the Temple Mount with suppositions added that the mountain in view is “this mountain” Jesus was referencing. It is a solid possibility. Where they were standing/ walking, they likely would have a view to the Temple Mount.

Mark 11:12-25 has been described as a classic intercalation (sandwich): fig-tree cursing (v.12–14) → temple action (v.15–19) → fig tree found withered (v.20–25).

Ponder Jesus' judgment of what was happening at what should have been “His Father's house of prayer for all nations”. The fig tree had leaves - outward appearance, but no fruit; the people running the Temple activities had outward religion but lacked the fruit Jesus was looking for. (Recall – Jesus already set a new order of worship in John 4 – in Spirit and Truth – not on a mountain...)

He first emphasizes “have faith IN GOD” – perhaps contrasting Israel's sin Jeremiah had warned about – of trusting/ having faith in the “good luck charm” of the presence of the Temple itself and related activities.

Jesus' temple action quotes Isaiah 56:7 (“house of prayer for all nations”) against Jeremiah 7:11 (“den of robbers”).

Jer 7:1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ² “Stand^(A) at the gate of the Lord's house and there proclaim this message:

“Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the Lord. ³ This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways^(B) and your actions, and I will let you live^(C) in this place. ⁴ Do not trust^(D) in deceptive^(E) words and say, “This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!” ⁵ If you really change^(F) your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly,^(G) ⁶ if you do not oppress^(H) the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood^(I) in this place, and if you do not follow other gods^(J) to your own harm, ⁷ then I will let you live in this place, in the land^(K) I gave your ancestors^(L) for ever and ever. ⁸ But look, you are trusting^(M) in deceptive^(N) words that are worthless.

⁹ “Will you steal^(O) and murder,^(P) commit adultery^(Q) and perjury,^(R) burn incense to Baal^(S) and follow other gods^(T) you have not known,¹⁰ and then come and stand^(U) before me in this house,^(V) which bears my Name, and say, “We are safe”—safe to do all these detestable things?^(W) ¹¹ Has this house,^(X) which bears my Name, become a den of robbers^(Y) to you? But I have been watching!^(Z) declares the Lord.

N.T. Wright (*Jesus and the Victory of God*) argues "this mountain" (11:23) refers to the Temple Mount itself, standing visible from the Mount of Olives - that Jesus isn't giving a general teaching on faith-powered prayer but prophetically enacting the temple's coming overthrow (which he states plainly in 13:2). *Luke 13:1 As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"* ² *"Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."*

Do you see a Zechariah 4 / Mark 11 connection? *Zechariah 4:7 "What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground."* Here the mountain is an obstacle overcome by God's power. (He stopped that which dared to stop the move of God!)

Zechariah 4: Temple being built - Zerubbabel cannot accomplish it by human strength - "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit" (4:6). "What are you, mighty mountain?" (4:7) God removes the obstacle (mountain of difficulties), Temple completed.

Mark 11: Had Temple religious activity become an obstacle to people receiving Jesus? (People trusting in it; religious leaders manipulating them) temple was under judgment - Fig tree leaves without fruit. Fig tree withered. "Have faith in God" (11:22); "this mountain" can be removed (11:23).

Question: That part about people trusting in [religious activity] and leaders manipulating them – is that under judgment now in the pure move of God?

Record your reflections.

Now, seeing that Mark 11:22-25 lives within a context of the previous verses, (Verse 22 "Jesus answered" Peter talking about the withered fig tree) – has it usually been presented to you in connection with the passage, has it usually been presented to you by itself, or something in between?

Question: How does focus on the context of this passage inform you about 22-25? Does it give direction and/or elevation to mountain-moving?

WEDNESDAY

Welcome to Team Session 3 on Weds night 7 pm (eastern). See Zoom link in email.

~ Mark 8:34-38, and more of Jesus 'Kingdom Words for Kingdom People' ~

1. As you meditate on our focus passage below - what Jesus said after His true identity is revealed, imagine you are among those in the crowd or one of the disciples and you are hearing this for the first time. Write your reflections on the TRUTH that Jesus spoke and how it confronts us, values us, calls us up.

Mark 8:34 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.(A) 35 For whoever wants to save their life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.(B) 36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? 37 Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man(C) will be ashamed of them(D) when he comes(E) in his Father's glory with the holy angels." (NIV)

2. Re-examine the simplest outline of Mark, in two halves.

Who is He? Mark 1:1 - 8:29.

Pivotal passage: Mark 8:29 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

What is His way? Mark 8:30 -16:8.

✓ **Record 3 things in the first half (Mark 1:1 - 8:29) that speak to "Who is He?"**

✓ **Record 3 things in the second half (Mark 8:30 -16:8) that speak to "What is His way?"**

You may write 3 bullet points, 3 pages, or something in between – that's up to you. Next, look at this in equipping you for conversations with others about Jesus (whether by yourself or around a come-to-the-table table). It's really like Jesus doing the speaking, when we speak his very words. Mark is suited for this, yes?!

Imagine if you were in a meaningful conversation. Picture yourself being able to list (simply!) two to three things in Mark's first half that you find compelling about who Jesus is, and two to three things in Mark's second half that demonstrate his way and inspire you to follow Him – to live for Jesus. Imagine being ready to ask your conversation partner who do the people they know say Jesus is? (Listen). And who does your conversation partner say Jesus is? (Listen). Whenever you have the opportunity in this or a future conversation with them – you may want to articulate what Jesus spoke is the way to follow Him, in new, spiritual life! It's all in this passage, ready for you to practice. (The Holy Spirit can fill in specifics with anyone as they start walking with Him – this does not require you giving needle-threading details. Jesus inspired with the big picture within which people can supernaturally begin to see themselves, in their situation. Faith-sparking is internal once God gives them ears to hear Jesus' words, yes?)

THURSDAY

Bible Study Skills: Content and Context - historical, literary.

Today: Learning from Mistakes - *"Experience is the best teacher, but when learned secondhand, the tuition is less expensive!"*

Part I

✗ **Proof-texting** is the practice of pulling a Bible verse, sentence, or just a phrase out of its literary, historical, or theological context and using it to try to prove a point that the passage itself may not actually be making. The problem is when we begin with the conclusion we want and then use a verse as evidence without allowing its context to determine its meaning.

Good exegesis: Text → context → meaning → revelation → application

Proof-texting: My idea → find a verse → use the verse to validate my idea

So when evaluating what is being taught/ answered/ proposed, a good question to ask is:

"If I read the passages/ verses before and after this verse, would I naturally arrive at the conclusion the speaker just gave?" If not, that's a warning that the verse may be functioning as a proof text rather than being exegeted.

In the video clip below see his wife's reaction (and his answer) when she is asked by her (minister) husband to read the same verse in the Amplified version, and she realizes it does not say what he wants it to say. This comes immediately after he reads only part of the sentence in the KJV. *PS 49: 16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; ...*

She: AMP PS 49:16 Be not afraid when [an ungodly] man becomes rich, When the wealth and glory of his house are increased; 17 For when he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him.



In the clip you will see him using half of a sentence as justification for living in a 35,000 SF house with an expensive private plane (reportedly both purchased by the ministry, tax-free).

<https://youtu.be/yYQ04vsDc-Y>

Now read the entire Psalm 49 (any version of your choosing) and ask yourself if you would want to identify yourself (as he has) with the kind of wealthy people (ungodly) that this Psalm speaks of – those who go into eternal darkness rather than eternal light?!

Part II

✗Eisegesis is **reading into** the text a meaning from oneself, and claiming the text means that. It is subjective, supporting one's own preconceived viewpoint. This leads to misinterpretation and can potentially lead to wrong teaching and false doctrine and practice.

✓Exegesis is **drawing out** the text the author's meaning, and acknowledging content and context objectively. This leads to being informed by the truth with the choice to obey the truth, which then pleases God and matures the hearer-doer. This is why we sincerely treat so carefully the word of God, using skills of interpretation and application – asking what did Jesus/ the writers mean when they said/ wrote this?

Exercise: DISCERNING THE BODY — 1 CORINTHIANS 11:29

The following is an example of un-careful treatment of Scripture - an actual discussion session which a known prophet-pastor of a church posted on his ministry YouTube channel, regarding the judgment that awaits his critics and those who leave his church, when they take communion. This is a real-life example from which to learn. Do you see eisegesis below? He is trying to change the word “discerning” to “withdrawing” and/or “separating”/ causing separations, with the consequences those experience who take communion in an unworthy manner.

Here is a portion of what he published on his YouTube channel.

*“That word, not properly discerning the Lord's body.... The word for discerning there, in the Strong's Concordance, is G1252.... It is the Greek word *diakrinō*, and it means to separate thoroughly. That is, to withdraw from. Well - to withdraw from, oppose, to discriminate, to hesitate, to contend, to doubt, to judge, to be partial, to stagger, to waver. Guys, I'm not making this up.... Paul is saying that the damnation of eating and drinking unworthily comes from not discerning the Lord's body - to withdraw from. That's the Greek word. That's the meaning.... To separate thoroughly. That is, literally and reflexively, to withdraw from, or by implication oppose; figuratively, to discriminate.... I think about this when I take communion, because when someone takes communion, and in their heart they're making plans to trash the body and walk away and leave - to contend, to differ, to be bitter, to not properly discern or value the saints, or the Lord's body.... People withdraw and separate and judge over the pettiest, dumbest stuff. 'Well, you know, God said to move. God said to leave.' Really? Really? How much of that's happening on social media right now with the exposure ministries?... They're withdrawing from, being partial and judging parts of the Lord's body and hurting the church. With the intent to harm, withdraw from, to hesitate, to contend, to oppose.... Many die early, prematurely, because they do not properly discern the Lord's body.”*

Question: Notice how he moves from the Strong's/Thayer's lexical entry for *diakrinō* [discern] to reading into the verse his preferred gloss of that word, “withdrawing from” or “separating” the body – which suits him. Does his using “**withdraw from**” as the definition of “discern” in this passage make sense contextually? 1 Cor 11:29 For those who eat and drink **without discerning** [**withdrawing from**] the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.
Or, 1 Cor 11:29 For those who eat and drink **without discerning** [**separating from and judging**] the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.

Notice he is using a list of possible meanings for a word in various contexts – not considering **this particular context**. Does that sentence with his chosen definition(s) make sense in Paul's argument? Why would Paul say they must *withdraw from, separate from, or judge the body of Christ while taking communion*? He was not saying that, of course. The man who said this obviously did not consider how those definitions would read in Paul's sentence.

What the passage **does not** establish through *diakrinō* is his proposition: withdrawing from/leaving his church or criticizing him/ his ways = exposing oneself to sickness or premature death. That conclusion is being imported into the text (eisegesis) rather than derived from the meaning (exegesis).

When I think about discerning the body, I personally think of “discern the difference” – in this case the common vs. the holy. Social gatherings (Greeks had their cultural norms for such) are one thing; the honor of gathering with others in the Body of Christ to remember Jesus through communion is another, higher/ more precious thing. Paul is imploring them to discern the Body (members together with you in JESUS) when gathering for a communion meal. *(Stop it with the selfish practices!)*

Here is the note from Craig Keener in the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: 1Cor 11:27 – 29 *unworthy manner ... without discerning the body of Christ*. By treating those of lower worldly status as of lesser worth (vv. 21 – 22), believers in Corinth failed to discern Christ's body in one another (cf. 10:17), and thus demeaned the commemoration of Jesus' sacrificed body.

- ⇒ Please write your thoughts on 1 Cor 11:29. Ask Holy Spirit to help us interpret and apply this same passage using the skills and tools we have sharpened this month and last month – and especially asking Him to tell us the truth and open our understanding so we can walk in ways of wisdom. “What is the point?” You may want to read the footnotes and look up any cross-references.

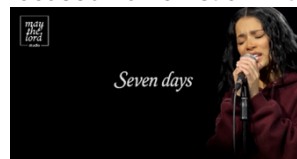
FRIDAY

Let's tell secrets! Mark 4:1-20 The Parable of the Sower ♥

Read this is a fresh, overview way – focusing on ways that Jesus' sower-parable-telling answers, “Who is this?” What does this tell you about Jesus? Reading this, what does it make you want to do? How is it the secret of the Kingdom? Who would we tell it to and in what kind of conversation?

Please complete and review everything from week 1 and week 2. Bring your reflections, questions – BRING YOUR PRAISE and let's worship Him as one in Christ!

We are in the PURE move of God. He is reforming, bringing his church out of the weakness of self-focused humanistic mixture, into the strength of surrender and supernatural love-allegiance to JESUS.



Fresh from our explorations in Mark, what do you think of this song's message in relation to our message of the Gospel (*the good news about King JESUS!*) and DISCIPLE-making realities?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=giutmzyjJcQ>

SATURDAY

Welcome to the Grande Finale on Saturday morning 9 am!

Congratulations! You have advanced with the team during these 2 weeks of dedication to worship, pray, and consume the word of God - improving your “serve” individually, and your together-ing with the Troop! We trust the Lord to make much of this! Advance → Occupy → Multiply and Fill!

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” Hab 2:14