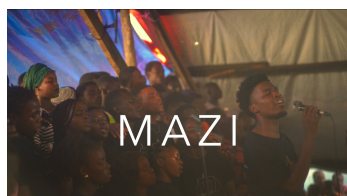


Welcome to Kingdom Life AV 5786!

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 this Kingdom Life document is also available for one 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.

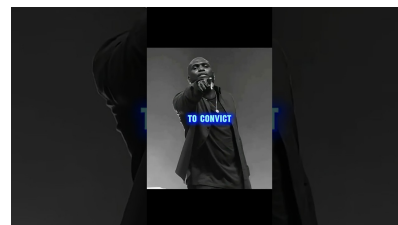
E - 1 Thes 2:19 For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?

✓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 of 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 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 disciple of an intermediary man) 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 so 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 is coming back, 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.