



HOMEWORK FOR February 20, 2024

The Gospel According to Mark

Read Mark Chapters 4-7

1) Read Mark 4:1-20. The Old Testament often used the image of a vineyard or field or garden to represent Israel, and harvest to represent God's dealings with it (see Isaiah 5:1-7, 37:27; Jeremiah 26:18; Ezekiel 16:2, 7). In this parable, what might Jesus be saying about the past, present, and future of Israel? _____

2) Read Mark 4:11-12. We have already seen in Mark 1-3 that Jesus has attracted some negative attention. How might this inform why Jesus might not want some listeners to understand what he is saying? _____

3) Read Mark 4:21-34. What are the promise and the warning found in Mark 4:21-25? How do these carry on themes found in 4:1-20? _____

4) Read Mark 4:35-5:20. The sea represented for the Jews the dark power of evil, threatening to destroy God's creation, God's people, God's purposes. What Old Testament story involves someone who slept in a boat in a storm? How does this story in Mark 4:35-41 contrast with that one? _____

Why are the disciples still fearful after Jesus calms the storm? _____

5) Read Mark 5:21-43. While Jesus is walking to Jairus's house (the synagogue "president"), a woman with internal bleeding touches Jesus' clothes. Why does she do that instead of speaking directly to him? _____

Why do you suppose the story of the hemorrhaging woman "interrupts" the story of Jesus going to Jairus' house? _____

6) Read Mark 6:30-44. Pay attention to what has happened in chapter 6 leading up to this miracle feeding story. What are some human aspects to this story? What are the supernatural aspects? _____

7) Look at Jesus' relationship with his disciples in the chapters we have read so far (1-7). How would you describe how Jesus treats the disciples? _____

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Over the course of the week, here are some passages for you to contemplate on your own.

Mark 5:34 – Jesus felt “the power go out of him” when the woman touched his garments and was healed. Jesus was in a large crowd and in a hurry to get to Jairus’s house. He could have kept going, but he wanted to have a personal encounter with the person who was healed. And when he looked at her, he said, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace...” The Greek word for “faith” is usually better translated as “trust.” The woman trusted that just by touching Jesus’s garment she could be healed. And Jesus commended her for that. Is there an area of your life that you need to trust Jesus for? Can you turn over any concerns to Jesus in your prayer time and hear him tell you “Daughter, trust me to make all well...go in peace.”?

Mark 6:50 - Jesus said to his disciples when they thought it was a ghost walking on the water: “Take heart, it is I: do not be afraid.” Is there anything in your life right now that you feel Jesus is nudging you to let go of, or to trust him for, or to risk doing? Is there a situation in your life where you might be afraid to do the right thing (for any myriad of reasons)? Can you hear these words from Jesus being said directly to you?

Mark 7:24-30 - In this vignette, Jesus answers the woman’s request because she was persistent in her request. Do you have a persistent request for Jesus right now in your life? Have you “pushed back” at Jesus the way the woman in the story did?