

Day 29 (Tuesday 2nd October)**Read Mark Chapter 6 verses 30 to 44**

Feeding the Five Thousand

Christ's disciples report back after their training mission and He takes them away to rest. Christ's fame now as a miracle worker is such that thousands want to see Him. He sees their real need and after teaching, uses the opportunity of the late hour to give a practical demonstration. The disciples just see a problem and their apparent lack of resources but Jesus takes what they have and uses it to feed everyone.

Questions to think about

1. Do we regularly take time out on our own to spend with Jesus – in prayer and listening to His word in the Bible?
2. Do we see times when people come to us, as inconvenient interruptions or opportunities to show compassion?
3. Do we look at our own resources and say we can't do anything, or do we look to God to mightily use the little we have?

A prayer you may wish to say

Lord of all things, please take the little we have and use it for your glory. Help us to see both the needs of those around us and your power to meet all those needs. Amen

Day 30 (Wednesday 3rd October)**Read Mark Chapter 6 verses 45 to 52**

Jesus walks on the Water

Immediately after feeding the 5000, Jesus sent the disciples away and dismissed the crowd. John 6.15 adds a reason: The crowd wanted to make him king. Again, the disciples were back on their own, but getting nowhere in their boat. Jesus came near them but they needed to actually take Him on board before the wind ceased. Calming their fear, Jesus said "It is I", literally in the Greek: 'I am'. This was the name by which God revealed Himself to Moses in Exodus 3.14.

Questions to think about

1. Herod Antipas liked to be called a King but was not a real one. Jesus is King but didn't let people then make Him one. Why might that have been? What sort of King did they want?
2. Do we ever feel we are battling against a storm and getting nowhere? Who do we need with us?
3. The disciples didn't understand about the loaves. What had the loaves shown about who Jesus is?

A prayer you may wish to say

Our Lord and our God, be king in our lives. Keep us, we pray, close to you and help us to trust more and more in you. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Amen

Day 31 (Thursday 4th October)**Read Mark Chapter 6 verses 53 to 56**

Healing the Sick in Gennesaret

Unlike the people of Nazareth we saw at the start of Chapter 6, those around Gennesaret saw past Christ's human background and put their faith in Him – so much so that they were prepared to carry their sick around until they caught up with Him. Still they were people wanting to see miracles, but now they wanted the miracles in the lives of those they loved.

Questions to think about

1. Do we earnestly bring those we love to Jesus in prayer?
2. What are our reasons for wanting to see our prayers answered?
3. What do we do when our prayers seem to go unanswered?

A prayer you may wish to say

Almighty God, thank you that we can bring all our friends and family to you in prayer. Help us to give glory to you in all circumstances and keep our faith in you strong even when we can't see you working. Amen.

Day 32 (Friday 5th October)**Read Mark Chapter 7 verses 1 to 13**

The Tradition of the Elders

Jesus and his disciples are reproached by the religious authorities for not performing the traditional washing rituals. Jesus points out their hypocrisy – they talk about worshiping God, but in reality, they are worshiping themselves. They are telling people to perform a set of man made rituals rather than obey God's Law. As an example, Jesus gives the scam where people didn't help their parents as the law required. Instead they said money they would have given to their parents was now dedicated to God (but still kept for their own use until they died).

Questions to think about

1. How can we tell what things are just man-made traditions?
2. How can we make sure we don't abandon the commandments of God?
3. Traditions are not necessarily wrong. (Having church services at 11am is not in the Bible but it's helpful that everyone meets at the same time.) When do traditions become wrong?

A prayer you may wish to say

Lord, please help us to focus on you in our worship and not on ourselves. Teach us your commandments and instructions in the Bible and help us to keep them. Keep us from hypocrisy and all attempts to justify ourselves by the things we do. Amen

Day 33 (Saturday 6th October)**Read Mark Chapter 7 verses 14 to 23**

What defiles us

From outward religion, Jesus moves on to something really important for us to understand. We are not defiled by anything we eat. It's what comes out from our heart that defiles us. Starting with evil intentions, all manner of evils can come from within us. Pride can mean we put consideration of our own status above that of God and our neighbour. Folly (or foolishness) in the context of sin is to treat it as a joke - or mock people who take it seriously.

Questions to think about

1. In what ways can we guard ourselves against sin? Could we avoid putting ourselves into positions for example where we would face temptation?
2. Are there situations at the moment where our pride is getting in God's way?
3. How do we know if something is sin?

A prayer you may wish to say

Lord, we are sorry for the things we have done that break your commandments. Please help us to turn away from our sins and live under your direction. In your mercy, forgive what we have done in the past and give us your grace to change now. Amen.

Day 34 (Sunday 7th October)**Read Mark Chapter 7 verses 24 to 31**

The Syrophenician Woman's faith

Having declared all foods clean (verse 19), abolishing a major distinction between Jews and Gentiles, Jesus now actually goes into Gentile territory. A woman is so desperate for her daughter that she, a woman and a Gentile, approaches Jesus and begs for the girl's deliverance. He points to the special claim on His attention of the Jews (the 'children'). She pleads that even dogs (the Gentiles) can pick up what the children leave. Her persistent faith is rewarded.

Questions to think about

1. What do non-Christians see in us – people who seem to stay aloof from them or people to whom they can turn?
2. The woman used what Christ had said to continue her petition. How might we use God's word in our prayers? (Maybe look at Luke 18.1)
3. Is anyone beyond Christ's help? Are we writing any people off?

A prayer you may wish to say

Lord, give us your heart for all those we meet. Take away our prejudices. Work in our lives so that others see you in us and through us can receive your healing power. Amen.

Day 35 (Monday 8th October)

Read Mark Chapter 7 verses 31 to 37

Jesus cures a Deaf Man

As a Jew, Mark would very likely have been aware of the prophesy of Isaiah 35. 4 -6: Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.....He will come and save you.....the ears of the deaf (shall be) unstopped...and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy". Christ at this time told people not to publicise him – possibly so that He could move around more easily. After the resurrection however He said "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation." (Mark 16.15)

Questions to think about

1. Who is Mark openly presenting Christ as now? (Isaiah 35.4)
2. What did the man and people of the region do after the healing? (Mark 7 verses 36 & 37)
3. The account could also be a picture of us. What happens after our ears are opened to hear God's word?

A prayer you may wish to say

Lord God, open our ears to hear your words and then open our mouths to proclaim how you have done everything well. Open our eyes to see just who you really are. Amen.