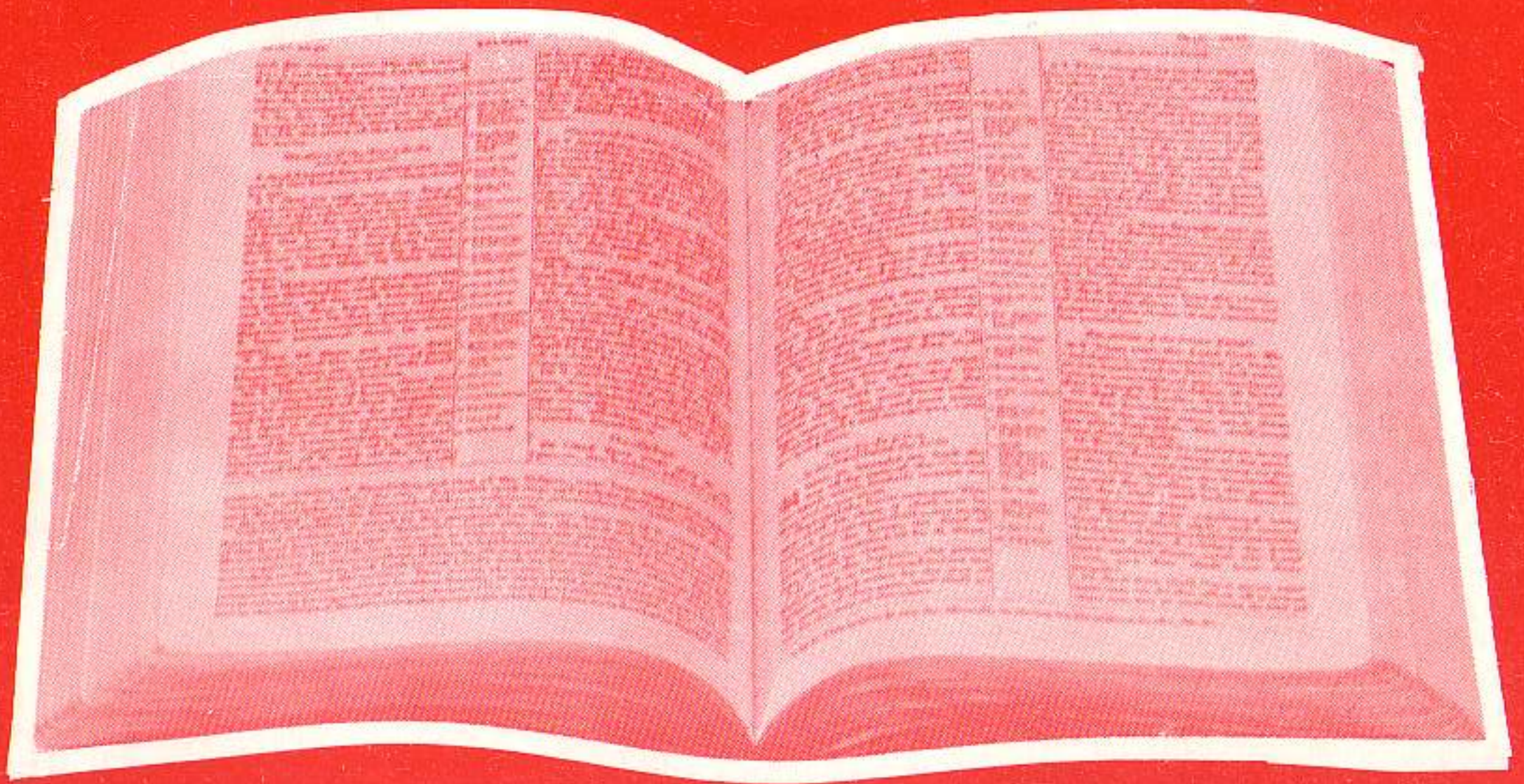


STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK



BIBLE LESSONS FOR ADULTS

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK

BIBLE LESSONS FOR ADULTS

**Africa Coordinated Curriculum
for Bible Study**

Used by permission of International Publications Services

A1-1Pe



**Published and Printed by
BAPTIST PUBLICATIONS HOUSE
Thika Road, Ruaraka
Box 30370, NAIROBI**

©Copyright, 1989
Baptist Publications House
All Rights Reserved

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. Jesus Prepares For His Work.	5
2. Jesus Begins His Work.	7
3. Jesus Meets His Enemies.	9
4. People Do Not Understand Jesus.	11
5. Jesus Teaches About the Kingdom of God.	13
6. The Mighty Power of Jesus.	15
7. Helpers in Jesus' Ministry.	17
8. Jesus Calls For True Religion.	19
9. Jesus, the Christ, God's Beloved Son.	21
10. The Way of the Servant.	23
11. The Authority of Jesus.	25
12. Jesus Prepares For His Death.	27
13. Jesus Rejected and Crucified	29

CHAPTER ONE

JESUS PREPARES FOR HIS WORK

AIM: I will be willing to prepare for any work I want to do.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 1:1-20; Luke 2:40-52

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 1:1-20; Luke 2:52

MEMORY VERSE: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

A man came to the school committee and said, "I want to be a teacher here." The committee members said, "Tell us about your schooling. Show us your certificates."

The man answered, "Well, I have no papers, but I can read and write. I need a job."

The committee did not hire this man. He was not prepared to teach. He was not a teacher! To do well at any work, we must prepare.

Today we will learn about Jesus as he prepared for his work. We will study the book (in the Bible) which Mark wrote. Mark's stories are about Jesus' amazing work. Mark wrote to help Christians who were suffering. He wanted them to know that Jesus was the strong Son of God.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL

Read Mark 1:1-8. Long ago, prophets like Isaiah and Malachi, gave

a great message of hope. They said that a king would be born to save the people. They said that a messenger would announce the king's coming. That messenger was John, the baptizer.

John was different. He dressed in rough clothes and lived in the desert. He ate strange food. John was a brave man. He was ready to do what God wished.

He went to the Jordan river and preached. His sermons were about sin, evil and repentance. Many people came to hear John.

They repented and John baptized them.

So a great crowd heard John give a special message. John announced that the promised one's coming was at hand.

JESUS' BAPTISM

Read Mark 1:9-11. That mighty one was Jesus! He came to John and asked for baptism. This was the way Jesus prepared for his new life. He wanted people to know that he was that one of whom John spoke.

God also announced who Jesus was. Jesus heard his Father's voice. God declared his love for Jesus. The Holy Spirit, like a dove, came to be with Jesus.

Our baptism is also a message to people. It tells people that we have

left an old sinful way to join Jesus' way. Baptism shows people we have chosen Jesus.

JESUS' TEMPTATION

Read Mark 1:12-13. The spirit took Jesus to a terrible and lonely place. Wild animals roamed there. Jesus suffered hunger and thirst. It was a place of battle. The battle was between Jesus and Satan. It was between good and evil.

Satan tried many tricks to get Jesus on his side. He promised reward if Jesus obeyed him. Jesus defeated Satan in every temptation. Jesus used Scripture to prove that Satan was a liar.

Satan is our enemy today. He promises us riches if we steal. He promises us joy if we cheat our wives or husbands. Satan lies. There is no reward or joy with Satan.

JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST HELPERS

Read Mark 1:16-20. Jesus continued to prepare for his work. Jesus knew that one day he would return to heaven. He chose some men who would prepare to do his work. He chose hard-working men. Jesus first chose Peter, Andrew, James and John. They were in the fishing business. They left everything and went with Jesus. Jesus would teach them and train them.

Jesus calls each of us to put him first. He is to be first before family,

friends and business. The fishermen obeyed Jesus. Jesus needs helpers today. Are you willing to put Jesus first?

JESUS PREACHES THE GOOD NEWS

Read Mark 1:14-15. Jesus was ready! He began to preach. He told people to repent, to turn away from sin. He told them to believe in the Good News. The Good News of Jesus is the same message we preach today. Jesus is the way to new life and to eternal life. Let us preach with our lips and our lives.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

All of his life, Jesus prepared for the great work God sent him to do. Jesus was growing and preparing from Nazareth to the cross.

We must also continue to grow and prepare so we can do God's work. How can you do this?

Every day we must obey Jesus. We must ask Jesus, "Show me today how to live for you." We need to begin each day with prayer and Scripture.

Baptism is a witness to people. Jesus was baptized as an example to us all. He was not a sinner. His baptism showed people that Jesus was beginning his work. Baptism is an act of obedience. Also, we have learned that Jesus needed helpers. What can you do for Jesus? Continue in his Word and in prayer, and he will show you work to do.

CHAPTER TWO

JESUS BEGINS HIS WORK

AIM: I will learn about Jesus' power and purpose.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 1; Matthew 9:35-38

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 1:21-45; Matthew 9:35-38

MEMORY VERSE: "And he said to them, 'Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also; for that is why I came out'" (Mark 1:38).

One day a Baptist choir went to witness in their area. The pastor and other adults went along to help. They came to a house where an old woman stood outside. She was not happy to see them. She agreed to let them stay and sing because she liked music.

The pastor got out his Bible. The old woman got very angry. She shouted, "Put away that book!" Each time he said the words Jesus or God or held up the Bible, the old woman shouted, "No, No!" Her son came out and told them that his mother practised witchcraft. "She is afraid of the power of Christ."

Today we will see that Jesus came with great power to do his work. He came with purpose because he loved and cared for all people. His power is still working in our lives in the world today.

JESUS TEACHES

Read Mark 1:21-22. The first work Jesus did was teaching at Capernaum.

He was a great teacher because he knew the Holy Word of God. He taught with authority. This means that people listened and believed his words. They knew Jesus had wisdom. Jesus taught in the synagogue. It was a special place in every town and village. People gathered there to study the Scriptures and to pray. It was the perfect place for Jesus to begin his work.

JESUS HEALS

1. In the synagogue. Read Mark 1:24-28.

There was a great noise while Jesus was teaching. A man shouted because he had an unclean spirit. The spirit controlled the man so that he did not know what he said or did. Jesus took control. The man was healed at once! People went away that day talking about Jesus. People in that whole area soon heard about Jesus' great power.

2. In a home. Read Mark 1:29-31.

Simon Peter's house was in Capernaum. Peter took Jesus and his helpers to his home. When they got there Peter's, mother-in-law was very sick. By this time Peter knew that Jesus had great power. He also saw Jesus caring for people who hurt. They were not afraid to ask Jesus for help.

Jesus touched her and lifted her up. She was well at once. A fever makes people weak. It takes many

days to get strong enough to work. Peter's mother-in-law was strong enough to work then, so she served her guests. Jesus' power was great and complete.

3. In the street. Read Mark 1:32-35.

Crowds gathered at Peter's door in the evening. They brought the sick, the blind and the lame. They brought those with evil spirits and those with diseases. Was any work too hard for Jesus? No! He came with power. His power was God's power. His purpose was to to make people whole and well. Jesus worked long hours in the street at Capernaum.

4. A leper. Read Mark 1:40-42.

Lepers in those days always died. There was no cure for that disease. They were lonely, sad people. No one would get near them or touch them because they were afraid they would get leprosy. There was a law that Lepers must warn people by saying, "Unclean! Unclean!" People ran away from them because lepers smelled bad. Their noses, fingers and toes were rotting. This leper found a friend. Jesus was not afraid. He touched the leper, and the man was whole, clean and well. He went away with great joy. He could not stop talking about Jesus! Jesus' power was for all people, even lepers.

JESUS PREACHES

Read Mark 1:38-39. Jesus' purpose is clear. He wanted all to hear the Good News. He walked all over Galilee to preach to people. Read Matthew 9:35-38. These verses tell us more about Jesus' ministry of preaching and healing.

Read Mark 1:38 again.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

We who believe in Jesus are called Christians, so we want to follow Jesus' example. We want our lives to be like his life. In today's lesson we learned these facts about Jesus' life.

1. He came with purpose in his life.
2. He had God's great power in his life and work.
3. He loved and cared for all people.
4. He kept on serving people even when he was tired.

Can we be like Jesus? Can we have power and purpose in our daily lives? Yes, we can. Jesus must be first in our lives then he will fill our lives with purpose and power. We will see the needs of others with eyes of love. We will not be afraid of the person dying with leprosy or AIDS. In his power we can teach and witness. We can walk to another house, to another village to tell them of Jesus. We can be like Jesus!

CHAPTER THREE

JESUS MEETS HIS ENEMIES

AIM: I will learn that Jesus continued his work even when people opposed him.

BACKGROUND **SCRIPTURE:**
Mark 2; 3:1-6

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 2:1-12, 13-17; Mark 3:1-6

MEMORY VERSE: "But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27).

Joseph, a young Baptist man, and his family decided to leave the city. They wanted to go home. Joseph wanted to start a church in his home village. He knew old customs were strong there. Elders met in the grove of trees to pray for rain. They killed a goat and drank a lot of beer. They followed the old ways of worship.

Joseph was not afraid to go home and start a church. He and his family began to witness about Jesus' love and power. Soon neighbours joined them for worship. Many people were saved.

The elders grew angry and opposed the new church. They told Joseph: "Your God cannot bring rain!"

"Yes, he can. He has all power," Joseph said. The church prayed and God sent rain to their area. Then some of the elders became Christians.

Now, many years later, the church is big and strong. No one prays in the grove any more. Our customs must

not oppose Jesus. Jesus' way is the only way to eternal life.

JESUS FORGIVES SIN

Read Mark 2:1-5. Last week we had a lesson full of joy. People were happy! Jesus healed many sick people. Many people came to hear him preach and teach.

Today our lesson is not like that. Jewish religious leaders began to oppose Jesus. They went where he went but not to learn. They went to spy on him and to accuse him. They were against him. Four men brought a crippled friend to Jesus. A large crowd of people were around Jesus. The men could not even get into the house. So, they took their friend to the roof. They made a big hole in the roof and slowly lowered their friend into the room. Jesus knew the man's heart. He saw the faith of his friends.

Jesus knew that sin was the biggest problem in the man's life. He forgave his sins. His enemies were quiet, but in their hearts they accused Jesus. Jesus knew their hearts were hard.

JESUS MEETS HIS ENEMIES

Read Mark 2:6-9. The Jewish leaders were jealous of Jesus. All the people loved Jesus. They crowded around him. They listened to every word he said. The Jewish leaders thought they were the holy ones. People should listen to them, not to Jesus.

They thought Jesus was breaking God's laws. They did not care about the good things he did. They did not open their hearts to him. They hardened their hearts against him. They believed what they wanted to believe about him. They did not believe that Jesus was God's Son.

JESUS HEALS THE PARALYTIC

Read Mark 2:10-12. Jesus also wanted to heal the crippled man's body. He knew this act would show that his power was from God. Jesus had power to forgive sins and power to heal. Neither was hard for Jesus.

The crippled man could not walk. Jesus told him to get up, and he did! Strength came to his body. He picked up his pallet and went home. The people praised God. The religious leaders grew very angry.

JESUS CALLS A SINNER

Read Mark 2:13-17. There was so much work to do! Jesus had a few helpers but he needed more. He saw a tax-collector named Levi (Matthew). People did not like such men. They tricked people and got rich. Jesus knew Matthew's heart so he asked him to come with him. Matthew left his work and went to help Jesus.

Matthew gave up a good paying job to serve Jesus. His life was changed because he obeyed Jesus. He invited Jesus to his house to meet other tax-men. Other people would not be Matthew's friends, but Jesus loved him. The religious leaders came to spy on Jesus. They found fault with him

because he ate with sinners. Jesus came to earth to save sinners.

JESUS CONTINUES TO HEAL

Read Mark 3:1-6. Enemies were always there, but Jesus did not stop his work. He healed a man in the synagogue. His enemies had no love or concern for the sick and sinful. They cared only for rules and customs. They decided to kill Jesus. Does that show true faith in God? Does true faith bring hate and anger? No, true faith in God produces lives of love and service.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Jesus, God's Son, had enemies. We Christians might also have enemies. Those who refuse Christ might also refuse to be our friends. Christians often suffer because some people oppose Christ and his church. The Christian life can be hard. Neighbours and family may try to make us miss going to church. We must stand firm for our faith. The Christian way of life is being loyal to Jesus and his church.

Four men carried their friend to Jesus. Let us urge our friends to come to Jesus and accept him. Jesus is our example. Friends need our help. We must listen to people's problems and pray with them. We must witness to them. They need our love.

Jesus cares about our pain and illness. He is the great doctor of our bodies. He expects us to take care of our health and live clean lives. He will forgive us and take care of us.

CHAPTER FOUR

PEOPLE DO NOT UNDERSTAND JESUS

AIM: I will learn to carry on where people do not understand me like Jesus carried on his work.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 3

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 3:7-35

MEMORY VERSE: "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters" (Matthew 12:30).

Jesus was faithful to God, although few people understood who he was.

Daniel was a good student at school. He passed his exams with high marks. He was a good Christian and served in his church.

Daniel's parents were Christians, too. They were very proud of their son. They had great plans for him: He would attend college and get a big job in the city. Then life would be easier for the family. Daniel would bring home a lot of money.

One day Daniel came to his parents and said, "God wants me to be a preacher. I want to go to seminary to learn to serve the church." His parents were shocked! "No!" they said, "You can not do that!" Daniel tried to tell his parents about God's call to his life, but they did not understand. His friends thought he was crazy. They said, "Why are you

doing this? You will not make a lot of money if you do this!"

Today we find out in our lesson that Jesus himself faced problems like Daniel. Those who knew Jesus did not understand him and his work.

GREAT CROWDS FOLLOW JESUS

Read Mark 3:7-12. People from far away districts heard of Jesus. They walked many miles to see Jesus and touch him. Jesus went to the lakeshore because the crowds could not get into the synagogue.

People no longer waited for Jesus to touch them. They pushed each other and touched Jesus. Jesus' life was in danger as they shoved. People did not know Jesus was God's Son. They did not understand his power, but they knew Jesus would help them.

Those under Satan's power knew God's Son. Those unclean spirits cried out, "...You are the Son of God" (Mark 3:11). Darkness knew light. The unclean spirits saw God's power in Jesus. But the people did not know who Jesus was.

JESUS APPOINTS TWELVE HELPERS

Read Mark 3:13-19. Jesus' work increased. Peter, Andrew, James, John and Matthew (Levi) were his helpers. They were not enough. How was Jesus to get his message to all the

people. There were no cars or buses to carry his workers. Jesus needed more helpers. He needed men who would learn.

He chose 12, a small group, to be his helpers. Read Mark 3:16-19 again. Say the names of these chosen men aloud. They came from varied backgrounds. Some had fished for a living. One was rich. A few had studied. Two things they shared: They obeyed Jesus' call to serve him, and they were brave men. They knew Jesus had enemies. They decided to be with Jesus and learn from him. They became like a church. They were the first body of believers.

JESUS' FAMILY DID NOT UNDERSTAND HIM

Read Mark 3:20 and 31-35. Jesus' family came to see him. They saw the crowds pushing and shoving Jesus. They saw that he had no time to eat. They knew the religious leaders accused Jesus. They met the 12 men with Jesus, but they did not know them. They did not understand why Jesus left his home in Nazareth.

They called Jesus to come with them. Jesus could not go with them. He had to do the work of God, his heavenly Father. He had a new family, those who believed and obeyed him. He loved his Nazareth family, but he could not obey them. We must all obey the heavenly Father first.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS DID NOT UNDERSTAND JESUS

Read Mark 3:22-27. Jesus' enemies also came from far places. Temple

lawyers from Jerusalem came to hear Jesus. They called him a sinner because he did not keep their laws. Jesus obeyed God's laws. Jesus' way brings change and new life to people. God's laws are better than man's customs.

These men also accused Jesus of working for Satan. God can not forgive anyone who speaks evil of the Holy Spirit. That person will die and go to hell. Such a person sees no sin in his own life, so he can not repent. He will never understand Jesus, so he can not be saved. Jesus cast out evil because he was holy and good.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Many people did not understand Jesus. Jesus' life was not easy. Christians may not have an easy life. Even friends and family may oppose us. Some people may be against our church. Jesus is our strength. He enables us to stand firm in our faith.

The church is Jesus' family today. We are called to serve him as the 12 were called. Jesus taught the 12 helpers. The Bible is Jesus' guidebook for us. We can learn about Jesus better than the crowds who followed him.

Jesus is the holy Son of God. The Holy Spirit is his presence in us Christians. No one can be saved who calls the Holy Spirit evil or of Satan.

We do not understand all about Jesus and God. But we know Jesus is our Saviour. He will give us power and victory over Satan.

CHAPTER FIVE

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD

AIM: This lesson will help me understand that the kingdom of God is in the lives of those who believe in Jesus.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 4

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 4:1-24; 26-34

MEMORY VERSE: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matthew 6:33).

A woman dug a pit in which to throw the garbage. She threw used tea leaves and rotten fruit there. Seeds and skins from food went in the pit. Soil slid down into the hole. Rain fell and the sun shone on it.

One day she got a bit surprise. She saw a small papaya tree growing in the pit! She also saw some tomato plants growing there. Each day the tree grew until it was big. One day she ate papaya from that tree. She ate tomatoes from those vines.

so it is with the kingdom of God. God's Word enters sinful hearts (like the garbage pit). If the heart is ready, a Christian is born. He grows and matures in faith. He produces fruit for the kingdom. That fruit is other Christians who hear the Word.

JESUS TEACHES IN PARABLES

Read Mark 4:1-2, 10-13, and 33-34. Today's lesson is full of Jesus' stories

about the kingdom of God. We call these stories parables. The stories are about common daily life, but they explain God's kingdom.

Jesus did not teach students. Jesus taught people like us. He taught outside by the sea or on a mountain. He used stories so people would listen and understand. The religious leaders were there, but they did not want to learn. They were proud of their wisdom. They did not listen to Jesus' stories. Pride made them deaf and lazy. The people heard and repeated the stories to each other. Jesus was a wise teacher.

THE STORY OF THE SEED AND THE SOIL

Read Mark 4:1-9. At the lake Jesus got in a boat so the crowd could see and hear. Jesus told them a story about a farmer, seed and soil. Most of the people were farmers. They knew about sowing seed. Jesus said that seed falls on four kinds of soil: 1. on a hard path, 2. on rocky soil, 3. on soil full of thorns and 4. on good soil. Jesus explained that the seed grew well only on good, fertile soil.

THE MEANING OF THE STORY

Read Mark 4:14-20. Later, Jesus' helpers asked him to explain the story. Jesus said that the seed is like the Word of God. People receive the message in four ways: 1. Some people never believe. Satan takes away the

message as a bird eats the seed on the path. 2. Some people say they believe the Word, but they quickly give up when trouble comes. This is like roots hitting rocks. 3. Some people say they believe, but they keep on loving the world and money. They are like plants choked by thorns. 4) Some people believe and accept Jesus with faith. They grow as they study the Word and pray. Some Christians grow more than others. It depends on the person. Some put Jesus and his kingdom first. Other people do not.

THE STORY OF THE LAMP

Read Mark 4:21-24. In Jesus' land, as in our land, people lit a lamp at dark. They put it on a shelf. The light shone in all the room. Jesus asked the people, "Do you light a lamp and put it under a bed?" The people laughed. Perhaps they shouted, "No, no!"

Jesus later explained that Christians are like light. They must be full of light and truth so that others will see Jesus in their lives. Sin will dull our light. People notice our lives.

THE STORY OF THE GROWING SEED

Read Mark 4:26-29. Can we hear seed sprouting? Can we really see a plant grow? No, we plant, but we do not make things grow. Only God can do that. He creates. We use and manage what he creates. Seeds have power and life. This is like the kingdom of God. Jesus' story of the seed quietly growing is like his kingdom growing. Each one who

hears the Good News and believes is a part of the kingdom. God gives the harvest as Christians give Jesus' message. People can tell that good things are at work in our lives.

THE STORY OF THE MUSTARD SEED

Read Mark 4:30-32. A mustard seed like those in Jesus' time was very small. It made a very large plant. Jesus said the kingdom of the God is like a mustard seed. He meant that kingdom truths begin small, but they will grow in our lives. Our faith may begin small. It grows when we let God work in our lives. His truth must rule in our hearts. Jesus expects Christians to put him first in their lives. Read Matthew 6:33.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Jesus parables teach many things about God's kingdom. The kingdom of God is in the lives of those who believe the Word.

Good soil means that faith will grow and bear fruit. God promises that truth will grow as we learn more and use it.

We should tell God's truth to others. Our lives should show that Jesus lives in our hearts. Our lives must be like bright, clean lamps. We want to show people the way to Jesus.

God's kingdom lives in people all over the world. At first there were only a few Christians. Now God's kingdom is world-wide. The seed fell on good soil.

CHAPTER SIX

THE MIGHTY POWER OF JESUS

AIM: I will understand that Jesus used his mighty power to help people.

BACKGROUND **SCRIPTURE:**
Mark 4-6

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 4:35-41; Mark 5:21-43; Mark 6:1-6

MEMORY VERSE: "And all were astonished at the majesty of God..." (Luke 9:43a).

Christians went to witness in the village of a witch-doctor. People there prayed in the old ways of worship. Soon, many people accepted Christ including the witch-doctor's elder son. They built a church, and people began to worship together.

One day a young woman in the village died. Those not yet Christians began to say, "It is because of these people who left the old ways." A few weeks later a young woman gave birth and was near death. There was no doctor near. Christians prayed that God would spare the young woman's life - for her sake and for the sake of the Gospel. They began the long journey to find a doctor. Christians kept on praying. The woman lived! People in that village saw that Christians cared and helped. They learned that Jesus can do mighty works. The church grew stronger.

In today's lesson we will learn of miracles Jesus did in Galilee.

JESUS' POWER OVER THE STORM

Read Mark 4:35-41. Jesus and his helpers decided to cross the lake. There were people on the other side wanting to see Jesus. He had taught all day so he quickly fell asleep.

A storm began to blow the boat. The men knew how bad a lake storm could be. They thought the boat would sink. They were afraid. They thought Jesus did not care about their safety. They woke Jesus and accused him. Jesus spoke to the storm. The wind and the waves became calm. Jesus has power over all things.

Jesus saw that his helpers did not have faith in him. He was sad to see their fear. The helpers were amazed at Jesus' power. They knew he could heal, but they now saw he had other kinds of power. Jesus has power to calm our fears today.

JESUS' POWER OVER DISEASE

Read Mark 5:25-34. A crowd of people was with Jesus. They pushed and shoved to get nearer. A poor, sick woman was in that crowd. She had a woman's disease which no doctor could cure. Her sickness made her unclean. She could not attend any holy rites. She was lonely, like a leper. She believed that Jesus could heal her.

She kept on pushing to get nearer to Jesus. At last, she touched his long

coat! Her bleeding stopped at once. She was well!

Jesus knew someone touched him. The woman told Jesus that she was healed. Jesus was pleased to see such faith. He announced for all to hear that this woman was clean and whole. He spoke to her of peace as he also spoke to the storm. Jesus wants us to have peace in our lives. Faith in Jesus brings peace.

JESUS' POWER OVER DEATH

Read Mark 5:21-24, 35-43. Death comes to all families, rich and poor. Jairus was an honoured elder, but his daughter was near death. Jairus knew of Jesus' great work. He had great faith that Jesus could heal his little girl. He joined the crowd and asked Jesus to heal her.

Jesus' journey to Jairus' house was slow. Bad news came to Jairus, "Your daughter is dead." Jesus went on to the house. There was loud noise with people weeping and yelling. People played flutes, tore their clothes and put ashes on their bodies. This was their custom at death.

Jesus went to the room where the little girl lay. People laughed at him, they had no faith in him. Jesus spoke to her and lifted her up. At once, she got up and walked. Jesus' power was great! Jesus gave hope and life to people there. We also hope and live because of Jesus' power.

NAZARETH REJECTS JESUS

Read Mark 6:1-6. Jesus returned to his home-town. People there did not

welcome him. They refused to accept him and to believe in his power. They knew of his miracles. They had heard him teach, but they had no faith in him. Jesus healed only a few people then he left.

Jesus was amazed at their scorn and doubt. He could not do great work among them because they had no faith. It is the same today. In some areas and in some countries most people refuse Jesus. Some families do not trust in Jesus. They are left in darkness. They have no eternal hope. Some people refuse to believe in Jesus' mighty power.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Jesus' mighty power is amazing! His power over disease and death shows his concern for all of us. We should have faith in Jesus' power to help us. He will forgive our sins. He will help us live the way he wants us to. We can live holy lives.

Jesus wants to help us be calm. We can have peace in our hearts. Jesus will help us through the storms of life. He will help us when we are sick or in trouble. He will give us power over Satan.

Jesus could do more in our lives if we would let him. He waits for us to welcome him. He is amazed when we struggle to solve our problems alone.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HELPERS IN JESUS' MINISTRY

AIM: I will learn that Jesus helpers were empowered by Jesus to begin their work.

BACKGROUND **SCRIPTURE:**
Mark 6

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 6:7-13, 30-44, 53-56

MEMORY VERSE: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).

Mr. Stephen was a good tailor. He had a lot of work to do. People came to him from many villages. People praised his work.

Paul, his son, passed his exams with high marks. But he could not study more as there was no money for his fees. Younger brothers and sisters were still in school. Mr. Stephen asked his son to help him in his work. At first, Paul did the errands. He brought supplies to his father. He delivered finished clothes to people. One day his father taught Paul how to measure for a suit. Each day Paul learned new ways to help his father.

Mr. Stephen got very ill and died. His family were in great sorrow. Then they began to worry. "How will we live with no one to work for us?"

Paul said, "Mama, I will do all the work just as my father taught me." His family were amazed. More and more people came to Paul for their sewing

and mending. Paul had learned well and was able to do the work.

In today's lesson we will see how Jesus' 12 disciples were ready to begin their work. We will also think about how we can work for Jesus.

JESUS' HELPERS GO TO WORK

Read Mark 6:7-13. Jesus chose 12 men to train for his work. They were called disciples. This means "learner." They learned from Jesus every day, they watched him work and they listened to him teach. Jesus decided they were ready to go out without him. They were then called apostles. This means a person sent out to do a special work.

Jesus made a good plan. He sent them out two by two. This made six teams going all over Galilee. Jesus gave them orders to follow. Their clothes were to be their usual daily dress. They were not to carry extra supplies. The apostles were to get food and lodging in the villages. It was a Jewish custom to welcome most strangers. However, sometimes people rejected guests. Jesus told the disciples to shake the dust off their feet and leave such a place. People knew this was a sign that there could be no friendship between them. Jesus' helpers were to serve people who received them.

Jesus gave them a special message. It was Jesus' message: repent of your

sins and believe the Good News. Jesus gave them special work to do. He also gave them power to do it. God calls every Christian to work for him. He promised to be with us as we do his work.

JESUS' HELPERS RETURN

Read Mark 6:30-34. The men obeyed Jesus. They worked hard preaching and healing. Then they returned to Jesus to tell him about it. They were very tired, but there was no time to rest. More and more people came to Jesus for help. Jesus and his helpers had no time to rest or eat.

They decided to go away to rest. They got in a boat to cross the lake to a quiet place. But the people knew where Jesus was going. The boat was slow, but the people were fast. They ran around the lake and greeted Jesus as he came to shore.

Jesus did not get angry. He knew the people had great needs. Jesus came into the world to help such people. They were like sheep without a shepherd. They were lost. No one really cared for them like Jesus. He began to teach them for they came to learn from him.

JESUS FEEDS HUNGRY PEOPLE

Read Mark 6:35-44. Jesus taught until it was late. They were all hungry. The disciples seemed not to care about the people. "Send them away,..." (Mark 6:36), they said. Jesus told his disciples to feed the people. They were shocked. Could they feed thousands of people? They failed to see that Jesus would help them.

Jesus sent them to look for food. They found five small loaves of bread and 2 tiny fish. Jesus divided the bread and fish until every person ate enough. The disciples carried food to more than 5,000 people. They, they collected 12 baskets full of extra food. The disciples were learning to serve people. They were to be servants among needy people. Our work today is like theirs. Jesus calls us to serve needy people.

JESUS AND HIS HELPERS KEEP WORKING

Read Mark 6:53-56. There was no time to stop learning. There was no time to stop working. Jesus' helpers were busy men. As they worked with Jesus they thought of his miracles. They were amazed that he could feed thousands of people. They saw Jesus' love and pity for the crowds who came. The disciples were learning that God's work is never finished.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Jesus chose and trained helpers for his work. He gave them power to do his work. He gave them a message to preach.

Jesus left work for Christians to do today. We need to preach the Good News to every person.

Jesus had great love and pity for people. He grew tired and hungry, but he kept on serving people.

We are to do more than listen, learn and worship. We are to do his work. He will be with us to help us.

CHAPTER EIGHT

JESUS CALLS FOR TRUE RELIGION

AIM: I will obey what Jesus teaches, that true religion is obeying God's laws not man's rules.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 7; Matthew 22:34-40

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 7:1-23; Matthew 22:34-40

MEMORY VERSE: "...This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mark 7:6b).

John burned his witchcraft things the day he was baptized. He began to seve the church. He preached and helped build churches. People trusted him. They gave him building money because John worked hard. He went to many churches and witnessed about his changed life.

One day John ran away. He left with a lot of building money. He left his wife and children with no money at all. No one of that area ever saw John again. People were sad and hurt. John betrayed Jesus and the church. People called John a hypocrite. He played a role as in a drama. He lived a lie. His mouth spoke words which his heart did not believe.

Today's lesson is about religious leaders who lived like John. Let us think about our own lives as we read this lesson.

THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS

Read Mark 7:1-5. Jesus' enemies became bold. They accused him of breaking their rules. These rules were those handed down from long ago. They called them the tradition of the elders. They ruled every area of Jewish life. These rules made life hard for the people. They were not God's laws. In fact, people used them to break God's laws.

Rules about washing hands and plates were not about being clean. These rules were about customs and ceremony. Those who did not wash in these ways were called sinners. Jesus kept God's laws but not man's rules. He came to give new meaning to God's law. Read Matthew 5:17.

JESUS ANSWERS THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Read Mark 7:6-8

Jesus saw into the hearts of his enemies. He saw their pride. He did not see true faith. Jesus knew the Scripture better than anyone. He used the prophet Isaiah's words to answer. Read Mark 7:6 again. Jesus called them hypocrites. This word describes a person who lives a lie. His inner life is not like his words. The Pharisees and scribes were such men. They

obeyed man's rules and customs but broke God's laws.

AN EXAMPLE OF FALSE RELIGION

Read Mark 7:9-13. All Jews knew God's command, "Honour your father and your mother,..." (Exodus 20:21). They believed it was a sacred duty to take care of one's parents.

These religious enemies of Jesus used their rules to break this sacred law of God. They called things Corban, a gift for God. They told their parents that they could not help them because of Corban. They lied to God, and they lied to their parents. They used holy things for their own profit. They broke many commandments in this way.

JESUS DESCRIBES SIN

Read Mark 7:14-23. Many rules of the Jews concerned food. Certain foods were unclean by their rules. Jesus told these leaders that unclean food did not cause people to sin. Sin comes from inside a person. Sin begins in the heart. Sin comes from unclean thoughts not from unclean food. Satan corrupts the mind.

Jesus named 13 sins. These sins cover all evil. Evil starts in our minds, but it brings sorrow and trouble to

many lives. Jesus' list includes murder and theft. Most of us will never be guilty of those sins. He also includes pride, deceit, envy, coveting and slander. Many of us need to confess those sins. Jesus named three kind of sexual sin. Such sins tempt many people.

Each of us must face God. We must answer the question honestly. Am I a hypocrite, living a lie? Or is my religion true and real to me and to others?

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Our actions, not just our words, show that we love the Lord. We show our love by our deeds. A hypocrite lives a lie.

We must not let customs and habits keep us too busy to serve the Lord. Some customs are good, but we must obey God's laws.

Our souls are unclean because of evil thoughts. Jesus came to cleanse us from our sins. We can be clean and pure in God's sight because of Jesus.

Jesus knows our hearts. We can not trick him. He sees us as we really are. True religion means that we follow the Lord and obey him. True religion is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER NINE

JESUS, THE CHRIST, GOD'S BELOVED SON

AIM: I will understand that Jesus is the Christ, God's beloved Son. He came to die and save all men from sin and death.

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:
Mark 8; 9:1-13

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 8:27-38; 9:2-8

MEMORY VERSE: "Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'" (Matthew 16:16).

In a large city in Africa Christians were giving a strong witness for Jesus to Hindus (Asians). Some young people confessed Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Many adults of that religion were angry. They did not want their children to become Christians.

One day these adults sent small children to the church. The service was over, and no one was there. The adults told the children to throw stones inside the building. The children climbed on the roof and threw many small stones inside. They opened windows and threw in bigger stones.

That evening people returned to worship. All were shocked at the damage. The new, young Christians were very sad. One young man went and stood on the stones.

He said, "Before this, I never gave a witness for Jesus. Tonight I stand

before you to say, Jesus is the Christ, my Lord and my God."

In today's lesson Mark tells us more about Jesus, the Christ, God's beloved Son. Only he can change people's lives completely.

JESUS GIVES SOME TESTS

Read Mark 8:27-30. Jesus and his disciples went away from Galilee and the crowds. The disciples needed more training. Jesus knew his days and on earth were few. His disciples must do his work. They must give his message without him.

Tests follow learning. So, Jesus asked some questions. First, he asked them what people said about him. The disciples said people thought he was John risen from the dead. Some thought Jesus was a prophet.

Next, Jesus asked the biggest question of all. He asked his helpers what they themselves believed about him. Each of them must have searched his heart to find an answer. Peter gave the right answer. He confessed before all the others, "...You are the Christ" (Mark 8:30). They believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. The words Messiah and Christ mean the anointed king.

Jesus was pleased with Peter's answer. He told them not to preach about it yet. He wanted to teach them the real meaning of his coming to earth.

JESUS GIVES BAD NEWS

Read Mark 8:31-33. The time had come for Jesus to tell them about his coming death. He told them that his enemies would kill him. His disciples were shocked and puzzled. They thought Jesus would be an earthly king. They found it hard to believe that people would murder Jesus.

Satan used Peter to tempt Jesus. Satan wanted Jesus to give up the cross and join him. Peter, the disciple, rebuked Jesus, his Lord. Jesus declared that Peter's rebuke was from Satan. Jesus would not give in to Satan's test. His purpose was to live and to die for people's sins.

THE PRICE OF FOLLOWING JESUS

Read Mark 8:34-38. These verses are the central teaching about the Christian life. Jesus stressed four main points: 1. Deny oneself, and say 'no' to one's selfish desires, 2. Take up the cross as Jesus did. Be ready to live and die for Jesus and his work, 3. Follow him. Put him first before our earthly goals, 4. Confess him before people.

Jesus blesses our efforts. He takes our work for him and gives it meaning. Money and worldly honour quickly pass away. Those who always plan for ease and pleasure will lose the joy of living for Jesus. In the end nothing really counts except Jesus and what he thinks of us.

JESUS, GOD'S BELOVED SON

Read Mark 9:2-8. Jesus went to a quiet place to meet God, his Father. In God's presence Jesus was changed into a shining figure. His clothes were brilliant white. Moses and Elijah came to talk to Jesus. This showed that Jesus' death would fulfil the Law and the words of the prophets. God spoke to his Son again. He declared Jesus was his beloved Son. This great miracle prepared Jesus to suffer and die.

Peter, James and John were with Jesus. They needed this miracle to help them later. Moses and Elijah came from heaven to be with Jesus. This is proof of eternal life.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

A Christian is a person who confesses that Jesus is the Christ, God's beloved Son. Jesus expects us to confess him before people, like the young man did in the story at the beginning of our lesson. We must also say no to selfish desires.

Our soul is worth more than all the things in the world. It is foolish to gain worldly things and let our soul be lost.

Jesus came to pay a great price for our sins. He expects us to follow his example. We, too, must be willing to suffer for the sake of the Gospel. We can not live just for ourselves.

Jesus will come back one day. He will come to get those who confess him in this world.

CHAPTER TEN

THE WAY OF THE SERVANT

AIM: I will learn that Jesus came to serve and to give his life for us all.

BACKGROUND STUDY: Mark 10

SCRIPTURE IN TODAY'S LESSON: Mark 10:13-16, 32-45

MEMORY VERSE: "For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

The Baptist church was a new and growing church in a market town. People liked to worship there. Many people had been saved. There was a spirit of love among them.

One day they met to choose a new elder. Two men spoke to the group. Each proposed the name of a friend. Each one told the kind deeds of his friend. They told about offerings and gifts to fund raising. Each man wanted his friend elected. They got people to be on their side.

The church voted, and the vote was spilt. For many weeks these two men kept up their efforts. This caused much hard feeling in the church. Soon people began to leave the church. They went to other churches where there was peace and love. The Baptist church became weak and small. Why? Because two men wanted to be chosen first.

In today's lesson we will learn what Jesus taught about the way of the

servant. He shows us the danger of wanting power over people.

He is the example of a willing servant.

JESUS BLESSES THE CHILDREN

Read Mark 10:13-16. Jesus and his disciples were on a sad journey. They were on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus knew that he must die there.

At this time Jewish mothers brought their children to Jesus. They wanted Jesus to bless them. The disciples knew that Jesus had a lot to think about. They tried to keep the children from Jesus, but Jesus loved children. He received them and held them. In this way he showed his disciples how to serve.

In this way he also taught them another lesson about the kingdom of God. He said that all of us would enter just like a child. That means we will 1. be humble, 2. trusting, and 3. obedient. A child is like that with his earthly father. We must be like that with our Father in heaven.

JESUS WALKS ALONE

Read Mark 10:32-34. Jesus continued his sad journey walking alone. The disciples walked behind him. They were afraid. Perhaps they thought about leaving Jesus. They were amazed that Jesus was going to Jerusalem. His enemies were there.

Jesus called them to come and listen to him. He told them that his enemies would arrest him. He said the Gentiles (Romans) would spit on him and laugh at him. They would beat him and kill him.

He also told them a truth of great joy. Jesus said that he would rise from the dead. His disciples did not seem to hear this message of hope. They were still afraid. They were no help to Jesus at all. Jesus came to suffer and serve. He had to do this alone.

JAMES AND JOHN ASK FOR HONOUR

Read Mark 10:35-45. Did the disciples truly believe Jesus' words about his death? It seems they did not listen. They kept on believing that Jesus would be a king on earth. So, James and John decided to try for big positions. They went to Jesus and asked to be his chief men. They asked for places of power and honour. They wanted to sit at his right and left hands in his glory. They did know what they were asking? Who was at Jesus' right and left sides when he came into his glory? It was the thieves who were crucified by him. James and John did not want to be crucified. They did not think of Jesus' suffering. They thought of themselves. They did not think of helping others. They thought of power over people.

Jesus warned them that his followers must suffer. His followers must serve. Jesus spoke of the 'cup' and 'baptism.' In the Bible these words mean being filled with sorrow and trouble. In fact, Jesus knew that

James and John would later die for their faith.

Jesus reminded them that only God can give rewards. God sees us and our deeds. God punishes or rewards.

THE WAY OF THE SERVANT

Read Mark 10:41-45. The ten other disciples were full of envy. They were angry and upset with James and John. They also wanted places of power and honour in Jesus' kingdom.

Jesus knew his disciples' hearts. They were not yet able to forget themselves. Right now they were acting like Romans. Romans had power over people. Jesus said his disciples could not be like that. True greatness is in serving others. Jesus' kingdom is to be filled with loving, caring people. People become like this by being like Jesus. He was the true servant. His whole life and death were gifts of service. He showed us the way of the servant. Read Mark 10:45 again.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

We enter God's kingdom as little children. This means we are humble, trusting and obedient to Jesus. The Christian life is a serving life. Christians must not seek power over other Christians. Christians should follow Jesus' example of serving others.

Jesus gave his life for my sins. His death was a great price to pay, but he paid for my freedom from sin.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

AIM: I will understand that Jesus has authority over all which comes from God.

BACKGROUND **SCRIPTURE:**
Mark 11; 12

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 11:15-19, 27-33; Mark 12:13-17, 28-34

MEMORY VERSE: "...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18).

Jonah hated authority. At home Jonah did not obey his parents. He did not honour his grandparents. He only went to church when his parents forced him. At school he did not obey the teachers. He broke rules every day. The headmaster caned him, but Jonah did not seem to care. He left school early.

In the city young men gave Jonah drugs and liquor. He helped them steal cars and rob people. Jonah started drinking more and more liquor. Some days he only lay in his room and drank.

One night the police caught Jonah and took him to jail. No one came to see him. His "friends" did not care. His family did not know where he was. Jonah scorned authority all his life. He broke God's laws and man's laws.

Religious leaders scorned Jesus' authority. Jesus had authority over all

things. God gave him this power. Jesus used his authority to serve God and people. He did not use it for selfish reasons. He never used his power to gain anything for himself.

JESUS' AUTHORITY OVER THE TEMPLE

Read Mark 11:15-19. In Jerusalem Jesus went to the temple. This temple was the most holy place of God. Jews from many lands came to the temple. The temple had several areas. One was called the Court of the Gentiles. This was built as a place where non-Jews could pray. People of any nation could enter this place.

Jesus saw that a wicked thing had happened. This area was now a market. People changed money, paid taxes and bought animals there. People shouted. Animal noises and smells filled the air. People cheated and bribed each other. It was corrupt in every way, but the religious leaders allowed it. They got a lot of money from the sales and taxes.

No one could pray there. Jesus decided to clean up God's house. He drove out the merchants, he upset the tables of money and he forbade travel through the temple. Jesus quoted from the Bible. "...My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isaiah 56:7).

The crowds were amazed at all Jesus did. His enemies were afraid of

him. Jesus had authority to clean up the holy place of prayer.

Our church is to be a place of worship. We gather in our church to pray to Almighty God. We want our church to be as Jesus said, "a house of prayer."

JESUS' AUTHORITY CHALLENGED

The Jewish leaders wanted to arrest Jesus. They needed to prove their actions were legal. So, they came to Jesus with trick questions.

1. The first question. Read Mark 11:27-33.

"...Who gave you this authority...?" (Mark 11:28). This was not a sincere question. This kind of question did not deserve an answer. Jesus asked them a question about John, the baptizer. They could not answer. That trick failed.

2. The second question. Read Mark 12:13-17.

"...Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar...?" (Mark 12:14). These religious leaders wanted the Romans to arrest Jesus. They asked this question hoping Jesus would speak against the king (Caesar). Jesus told them to give to the government as required. He also told them to give to God as required.

3. Another question. Read Mark 12:28-34

"...Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus combined two of God's laws: 1. Love God first and 2. Love

your neighbour. These go together. Jesus said that we must love God with our whole being. We must put God first in every area of our lives. Then, we will be able to show love to our neighbours. We can be an example of love in action.

The scribe agreed with Jesus' answer. He saw that love was better than needless sacrifices. This man was near the kingdom of God.

After this, there were no more questions. Jesus finished his public work. He used his last days of freedom to teach his disciples. His time on earth was nearly over.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Jesus has authority over all matters in heaven and on earth. He has authority over all persons. God gave him this right of control and power.

Jesus cleaned up God's temple. He intends for God's house to be a place of worship and prayer.

Religious men challenged Jesus' authority. Jesus escaped their traps to arrest him. His answers guide us today.

The government has authority over us too. We must obey and support our government.

We must not let customs or habits, like drink, control us. The best way to live is to obey God's laws and our country's laws.

Jesus said we are to love God first and to love our neighbour. These are the two greatest laws.

CHAPTER TWELVE

JESUS PREPARES FOR HIS DEATH

AIM: I will understand that Jesus was willing to suffer and die for our sins.

BACKGROUND **SCRIPTURE:**
Mark 14

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 14

MEMORY VERSE: "...Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:36).

Erastus' family were not Christians. They were of another religion. They were very strict in all rules and rites of their religion. They opposed all Christians in their country.

One day Erastus picked up a piece of paper on the path. It told the story of Jesus. It told about his love and his death. There was an address on the paper. Erastus went to that place and asked about Jesus. Christians welcomed him. They taught him the Bible. Erastus accepted Jesus as his Saviour.

One day Erastus' brother came looking for him. He had a gun. He had bullets strapped across his chest. He demanded that Erastus leave the Christian faith. He forced Erastus to go home.

At home they tied Erastus to a tree. They beat him. Always Erastus prayed Jesus' prayer, "not my will but thine be done, O Lord." They tried many ways to force Erastus to leave

his Christian faith. Erastus kept on praying as Jesus prayed. Many days later Erastus returned to his Christian friends. The Lord called him to preach. He serves Jesus today. He let God's will rule in his life.

Today's lesson helps us see how Jesus prepared to die. He was willing to do God's will and die for our sins. Jesus spent these last free days with his disciples.

A WOMAN MINISTERS TO JESUS

Read Mark 14:3-9. As Jesus faced his final days, he wanted to be with his friends. He ate with his friend, Simon, in Bethany. While he was there a woman came in and poured costly perfume on his feet. Jesus was happy that she showed her love for him in this way.

Some people criticized the woman. "She should have sold the perfume," they said. "She could have bought a lot of food for the poor with the money."

Jesus said no. It was more important at that time to minister to the Saviour. He was thankful for her love and adoration. It helped him face the cross.

JESUS LOSES A FRIEND

Read Mark 14:17-21. Jesus wanted to eat his last meal with his closest friends. The 12 disciples had been with Jesus for three years. They met

together to eat the Passover meal. It was a time of great sorrow for Jesus. He faced a painful death. He faced shame. He knew his disciples were weak and afraid. All of them would fail him. One would betray him.

Judas loved money. He was the treasurer of the group. He wanted more money so he went to Jesus' enemies. He got 30 pieces of silver to betray his Lord. Jesus never stopped loving Judas. He loves and forgives us when we fail him.

JESUS OBSERVES THE PASSOVER

Read Mark 14:22-25. Passover was a special, holy day to all Jews. Every Jew ate the Passover meal. It reminded them that God spared Jewish lives in Egypt. Their fore-fathers put blood on the door. In this way God spared their lives. Death passed over them but entered every other house in Egypt. The blood of sacrifices was the old way of salvation.

God made a new promise with his people. Jesus' blood would save mankind from sin. Jesus' death on the cross was to be God's way to eternal life.

Jesus ate the Passover meal with his disciples. He gave the Christians a new meal. It replaced the Passover meal. We call the new one the Lord's Supper. The wine (juice) reminds us of Jesus' shed blood. The broken bread reminds us of his broken body.

We drink and eat this meal humbly. We recall Jesus' sacrifice for us. We are reminded also that he will come again.

JESUS ACCEPTS THE CROSS

Read Mark 14:32-42. Jesus and his disciples went to a garden to pray. Jesus prayed alone. He was God and man. His human side was weak. He asked God to take the 'cup' from him. The 'cup' was suffering and death. But Jesus wanted God's will to be done, not his own will.

God could not save us any other way. Jesus had to die for our sins. He was willing to die.

Jesus found the disciples sleeping. They were weak. They failed to help Jesus. They failed to prepare for the trials that were coming.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Jesus faced death alone. Judas betrayed him, and the other disciples slept while Jesus prayed in agony. They fled at his arrest. We need to be strong when testing comes.

Jews observe Passover. Christians observe the Lord's Supper. It reminds us of Jesus' sacrifice for our sins. God gave a new promise to his children. We have eternal life. Jesus will come again.

Jesus accepted God's will for his life. We need to do God's will every day.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

JESUS REJECTED AND CRUCIFIED

AIM: I will thank God because Jesus suffered a painful death for my sake.

BACKGROUND STUDY: Mark 15

VERSES IN TODAY'S LESSON:
Mark 15:24-34, 37-38

MEMORY VERSE: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness..." (1 Peter 2:24).

When Jesus began his work, people saw the power of God. Some began to wonder if he was the promised one of God. Maybe he was the one who would save them from the rule of foreigners, the one who would rule on the throne like King David. Even Jesus' disciples, who had lived with him and learned from him, expected this. Two asked if they could sit on his left and right when he ruled. Others asked, "Are you going to begin your kingdom now?" Jesus tried to show them that his kingdom would not come in that way. They heard his words, but did not really understand.

While Jesus prayed for strength for his coming trial and crucifixion, his disciples slept. Perhaps they thought they were preparing for battle. When his accusers came, they drew their swords and were ready to fight!

JESUS IS FORSAKEN

Judas was the first to forsake Jesus when he took 30 pieces of silver to

betray him. He completed it with a kiss, the usual greeting in those days.

The other disciples were not much more faithful. When they saw that Jesus was caught, they ran.

Peter lasted a bit longer. He followed Jesus and the soldiers who held him from a distance. He sat by the fire in the courtyard while Jesus was tried. But when someone recognized him, he denied that he ever knew Jesus. With this desertion, Jesus faced his death alone.

JESUS' TRIAL

Jesus' trial was a lie. The chief priests had hired false witnesses. Their stories did not agree. But when Jesus admitted that he was the son of God, they found him guilty of blasphemy. He had said he was equal to God! They took him to Pilate to get permission to kill him.

Pilate was not happy with their case. He did not see Jesus as a criminal. He could not see that he had done anything wrong. He tried to set Jesus free, but the people cried for his death. Pilate had Jesus beaten and then let the people have him.

JESUS IS MOCKED

Jesus' disciples had been surprised when he told them he would be beaten and mocked. Now everything he told them came true. People spat on him, hit him, mocked him and beat

him. They put a robe and a crown of thorns on him and knelt before him. They laughed at him as they called him, "King of the Jews."

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

Read Mark 15:24-33. Jesus was put to death by crucifixion. It was the way the worst criminals were killed. He was nailed to "T" shaped pieces of wood and was left there to die. It was a terrible and painful way to die. It was also very slow. Hunger and thirst grew worse as the hours passed. He wore no clothes so had no protection against cold, heat and insects. His muscles cramped and he had a hard time drawing breath.

People watched the prisoners as they suffered. The government wanted people to see so they would obey to law. Cruel people laughed at Jesus as he died.

Jesus had extra pain as he hung on the cross. He carried the burden of your sins. He carried the sins of all people for all time. It was this pain which killed Jesus quickly.

JESUS IS THE CHRIST

Read Mark 15:34, 37-38. When Jesus had been on the cross for about three hours, darkness came. It was not night-time. It was noon! The death of the Son of God caused darkness to come at midday.

When Jesus neared death, he cried out to God. He was alone because of

the sin he bore. God could not look on so much sin! Jesus felt great sorrow as he realized God had left him. He took one last breath and died.

When he died an amazing thing happened. In the temple was a thick curtain which separated the most holy place from the rest of the temple. On special days the High Priest would enter alone to speak to God for the people. The moment Jesus died, that curtain tore from top to bottom. Now all men had the right to come to God freely. They did not have to use a High Priest. All men could be saved. Jesus became the High Priest for us all.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO ME

Jesus had the power to come down from the cross. But he knew that God wanted him to die as the perfect sacrifice for man's sin. Because he obeyed God, we can live. Our sins are forgiven when we put our faith in him.

When Jesus hung on the cross, he suffered because of your sins. He died in your place. Just as Jesus freely offered his life for you, so he freely offers salvation. If we invite him into our hearts to live and to rule, all our sins are forgiven. What a wonderful Saviour we have! What a wonderful gift he offers! Have you accepted this gift? Won't you do so today?