

Mark Bible Study #9

Mark 14:27 -72 - Our Motives and the Kingdom of God

Leader's Preparation

Read the passage over at least three times (perhaps in The Message or NASB versions). As you are reading the passage - mark down questions that you might have regarding the text, words you might not understand, concepts that seem foreign to you or may be foreign to your group. Write them down and look to some commentaries to help understand the passage more deeply. Pay attention to what the main point of the passage is.

Some time this week, read the parallel passage in the other Gospels:

- Mt. 26: 31-75
- Luke 22:39-71

Try reading a good commentary by: N.T. Wright or William Lane or David Garland.

Remember to read these verses with the idea of a broad theme coming out of the passage. There are so many details that it would be easy to get bogged down in the specifics of the passage. But there is so much wisdom and insight to be gained from seeing how all the passages link together. Ask yourselves why did Mark put these verses together.

It will help our understanding of the book of Mark and our Christian story to find out what theme and purpose arises from the passage as a whole.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine our motives in serving God and comparing them to Christ's utter obedience to the will of God, as seen in the garden of Gethsemane. In this long passage it is wise to focus on one theme that emerges for you. The theme that emerges for me is that of the disciples desertion and betrayal of Jesus and through it all, Christ's example of what a true disciple looks like. We truly see how Jesus prepared for his trial and his ability to stand strong amidst persecution vs how the disciples slept instead of prayed and how they were unable to stand alongside Christ during his crucifixion.

Get your group to talk about the times that they have struggled to follow Christ.

Discussion (read the passage)

1. In verse 27, Jesus predicts that his disciples will desert him under pressure. How do you empathize (or fail to empathize) with Peter's confidence in verses 29-31.

Mark Bible Study #9

Mark 14:27 -72 - Our Motives and the Kingdom of God

These disciples seemingly didn't hear the promise of verse 28 and instead focused on refuting Jesus' accusation of disloyalty. They did fall away because they didn't believe Jesus and admit to their vulnerability and frailty. Why is it important to honestly acknowledge our own sin and weakness as we seek to grow in spiritual strength and maturity? That Peter meant what he said isn't in doubt. His mistake however is that he assumed that he was invulnerable. He was overconfident in his abilities. Humility not self assertion is the path to spiritual growth. Here he attempts to remain loyal in his own strength and fails again. Allowing the work of God in us gives us the strength to do what we ought to do.

2. In the Garden of Gethsemane (vs 33-42), Jesus models for us what we need to do in moments of temptation.

- a) What prepared Jesus for what was to follow?
- b) Why weren't the disciples prepared for the trials?

Jesus goes to prayer. And he tells them to pray. They are to pray not for him, but for themselves that they might not fall into the temptation. The key is to draw on the strength that comes from God in prayer. Jesus does pray and finds the ability to remain faithful. The others fall asleep, fail to pray and fall into the temptation.

3. What is going on in the minds of Jesus and the disciples from vs 43-72?

This question is asked, hoping that the group naturally attempts to compare and contrast the motivations and actions of Jesus vs. the disciples. The larger theme of prayer and trust in God comes out when you can see both examples side by side.

4. What mix of motives brings Peter into the high priest's courtyard? What keeps him from acknowledging his relationship to Jesus (vs. 66-72)

Application

5. Have you ever been pressed to identify yourself as a Christian in a challenging or hostile situation? What did you do and say? How are your motives mixed in following Jesus?

6. **Note* Even if you don't have time for the other questions - it is important that you end with this one. It ends the study on an encouraging and hopeful note.*

As we see the anguish that Peter felt after having betrayed Christ - How can his bitter lesson be of encouragement to us as we reflect upon it? *You can read out the following answer to your group if you think it would help.*

Mark Bible Study #9

Mark 14:27 -72 - Our Motives and the Kingdom of God

One can take solace from the account of Peter's denials. Peter was the most prominent of Jesus' disciples, yet he was still a sinner in need of God's mercy. He thought he would die for Jesus, but he needed Jesus to die for him. His failure reveals the truth of Jesus' statement in Mark 2:17 "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Mark is the Gospel of the second chance. If Peter can be restored after denying his Lord and even cursing him, then there is hope for others who might be guilty of the same or worse. Peter's tears of remorse mark the beginning of that restoration.

Take time with your group to encourage each other and support one another in your walk with Christ. Take time and pray that God will strengthen you in times when we struggle to keep following him.