

May 5–July 5, 2015

# A Journey With Jesus



## The Gospel of Mark

Developed by Pastor Kevin Austin and the Elders of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, April 2015.

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# The Journey Continues

Over the last few months we have journeyed together through the book of John. John wrote his Gospel with the desire that the hearers may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Next we will turn to the book of Mark. Mark is the shortest of all the gospels and presents a quick portrait of the life of Jesus. Mark is grouped with gospels of Matthew and Luke as one of the synoptic gospels. The word synoptic means with the same eyes. This means that these three gospels have very similar vantage points on the life of Jesus, although each brings its own unique purpose and perspective to the story of Jesus.

Once again, as we journey through the book of Mark, we will be utilizing the three concepts that were introduced during the *Eat This Book* sermon series. Each day there will be a short section of the Bible to read, followed by something to do with prayer, meditation, and testing. In prayer, we ask God to help us as we read, to be our teacher, to help us to understand, to speak to us, and then to help us take what we have learned and put it into practice in our lives. In meditation, there will be a question or an exercise that helps us after we have read the text to reenter the text, think about it, chew on it, process it, in order that the message it gives might go from the page into us. Finally, in test, we will spend some time pondering how what we have just read interacts with our lives, whether it is reflecting back on experiences we have had or thinking about how we can put these things into action in our thinking, speaking, and living.

God's Blessings to you as journey with us through the book of Mark.

*Pastor Kevin and The Elders of Shepherd of the Hills*

## Mark 1:1-13

**Prayer-** "Teach me oh Lord the way of your statutes: and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart." (Psalm 119:33-34)

**Meditation-** How are baptism and repentance linked in the passage?

**Test-** Does God's grace lead you to a life of repentance or one content with worldliness, without discipleship, without the cross?

## Mark 1:14-28

**Prayer-** "The earth oh Lord, is full of your steadfast love, teach me your statutes!" (Psalm 119:64)

**Meditation-** After John's arrest Jesus called several disciples to "follow Him." Given John's circumstance, how difficult a decision might this have been? How did they respond?

**Test-** All of us face issues which challenge our ability to "follow Him." How do the disciples' responses challenge you?

## Mark 1:29-45

**Prayer-** "Heal me O lord, and I shall be healed; save me and I shall be saved for you are my praise, Where is the word of the Lord?" (Jeremiah 17:14)

**Meditation-** What is the unavoidable reaction(s) for those whom Jesus healed and those who witnessed the same ?

**Test-** How do those who were healed demonstrate the nature of true faith?

## Mark 2:1-12

**Prayer-** "It is good for me that I was afflicted that I might learn your statutes. The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces." (Psalm 119:71-72)

**Meditation-** What type of relationship did the four men and the paralytic have? What did they share in common and how can this be a picture of fellowship within the church?

**Test-** The four men and the paralytic were by Jesus' own estimation people with FAITH. Have you ever been the "paralytic" or carried one? What are the implications for one claiming faith who is on a solo journey?

**Mark 2:13-28**

**Prayer-** “Oh how I love your law, it is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies for it is ever with me.” (Psalm 119:97-98)

**Meditation-** What is the major focus of the Pharisees’ criticism of Jesus? What assumptions about the Pharisees are found in Jesus’ reply to their objections?

**Test-** When can a resistance to the legalism become a justification for sin? Do we ever use grace as a means to live as we please without repentance and so make ourselves out to be Pharisees in the end ?

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Review and reflect upon all you have read and heard this week.

## Mark 3:1-12

**Prayer-** "Our Father in Heaven, as we learn about Your Kingdom, please open our eyes to the work that You are doing around us today."

**Meditation-** Why was Jesus angry with the Pharisees? What is meant by their "hardness of heart?"

**Test-** Is it possible that envy or conflicting motives is causing you to despise the work of God?

## Mark 3:13-21

**Prayer-** "Thank you Jesus for choosing me to be your disciple. Please teach me today through your Word what it means to follow you."

**Meditation-** How do you think the twelve felt about being chosen by Jesus to be Apostles? How do you think they felt about being given special authority over demons? What about Judas? Why did Jesus choose the one who would betray Him?

**Test-** Paul told the church in Ephesus that they (and therefore, we also) were chosen in Christ before the creation of the world! How does it feel to be a chosen disciple? [See Ephesians 1:4-5]

## Mark 3:22-35

**Prayer-** "Holy Spirit, please teach us through the Scriptures and guide our meditation today."

**Meditation-** Who was the "strong man" that Jesus mentions? Was he "bound" while Jesus was in the desert (Mark 1:12)?

**Test-** Jesus said that whomever does the will of God is his brother, sister, and mother. Are you, or can you become, one of his close family?

## Mark 4:1-9

**Prayer-** "Father, please help us to have ears to hear, so that we may understand the teachings of our savior, Jesus."

**Meditation-** It seems like Jesus is speaking in code. Don't feel bad if you don't understand – the apostles were clueless and say as much in tomorrow's reading (feel free to read ahead if you want). Considering the political climate of the day, can you think of any reason He might not have wanted to speak plainly?

**Test-** Often times, reading the Scriptures can be confusing. Fortunately, in this instance Jesus clarifies for us. Are there times when you struggle with understanding other passages? When that happens, consider it a challenge to engage and learn more. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you, and consider asking a friend or Pastor to assist or recommend study material.



### Mark 4:10-25

**Prayer-** "Jesus, please help us to hear and accept and continue to hunger for your words."

**Meditation-** Can you think of people you know or have known who fit into each category?

**Test-** What thorns surround you in your life? Based on this parable, are they a serious problem?

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### Mark 4:26-41

**Prayer-** "Holy Spirit, please help us to understand the parables of Jesus, and to trust Him when life gets rough."

**Meditation-** Why were the disciples filled with great fear after Jesus calmed the storm? What must it have been like to go through that experience of a terrible storm and then see Jesus rebuke the wind and the sea?

**Test-** Are you prepared to see God do miraculous works? Even if they're alarming?

Sunday, May 17

Review and reflect upon all you have read and heard this week.

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*Mark 5:1-20*

**Prayer-** Before reading the passage, spend a few minutes to calm down and pray asking God to help you to see what you need to see in his word.

**Meditation-** Why were the people afraid of Jesus at the end of the story?

**Test-** How does Jesus incite fear in the lives of people today? In your life?

Monday, May 18

## Mark 5:21-43

**Prayer**– Spend some time preparing to read by giving thanks to God for his many gifts to you this week.

**Meditation**– What is similar and different between these two miracles? What do we learn about Jesus in these miracles?

**Test**– What does faith look like in your life? How does that compare with the faith of the woman?

## Mark 6:1-13

**Prayer**– As you prepare to read the text, spend some time thinking about all the things you are dealing with this week. Pray asking God to help you in those things.

**Meditation**– What does Jesus command the disciples who are sent out? What was the purpose of these commands?

**Test**– Jesus sent the disciples out in teams of two. How does this shape the way we look at serving others? Who are people in your life that you could partner with to do ministry?

## Mark 6:14-29

**Prayer-** Before reading the passage, pray this prayer: "O Lord our God, your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Give us grace to receive your truth in faith and love, that we may be obedient to your will and live always for your glory; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen."

**Meditation-** What does this story about the demise of John the Baptist teach us about human nature?

**Test-** As you think about the life and ministry of John the Baptist, what sticks out to you? What is one way that you can walk in the footsteps of John the Baptist today?

## Mark 6:30-44

**Prayer-** Take a time of silent reflection. Think of all the challenges people are facing the world. Pray that God may work in the world and through you to help people who are struggling.

**Meditation-** Read this story from the perspective of Jesus. What stands out to you about this story? Read this story again from the perspective of the disciples. What stands out to you this time? Read this story once again from the perspective of the crowds. How does this perspective differ from that of the disciples? What does this text reveal to us about Jesus?

**Test-** What are ways in your own life in which you have limited what you believe God is capable of doing? How is your view of God too small? How does this view of God affect your daily life?

## Mark 6:45-56

**Prayer-** As you prepare to read Mark 6, pray this prayer: "Living God, help us to hear your holy Word that we may truly understand; that, understanding, we may believe, and believing, we may follow in all faithfulness and obedience, seeking your honor and glory in all that we do; through Christ our Lord. Amen."

**Meditation-** Why was Jesus not with the disciples in the boat? How would you have reacted seeing Jesus walking on the water? How did these two stories challenge the disciples' view of Jesus?

**Test-** Jesus often spent time alone in prayer. Find a time today or tomorrow to have some quiet time alone with God.

Saturday, May 23

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Review and reflect upon all you have read and heard this week.

Sunday, May 24

*Mark 7:1-13*

**Prayer-** Spend some time praying and giving God the things in your life that distract you from what you are trying to do and even from God.

**Meditation-** What is the major problem for the Pharisees in this text? What is the major problem for Jesus in this text? What is Jesus teaching us about faith?

**Test-** What is a time in your life or in the world around you when you have seen something get in the way of what is most important? How do you keep the main thing the main thing in your life?

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*Mark 7:14-23*

**Prayer-** After you have read the text, spend some time in reflection and confession acknowledging the unclean things that come out of you.

**Meditation-** What important distinction is Jesus making in this text? Why is it so important?

**Test-** In what areas of your life are you challenged by the words of Jesus? How do these words of Jesus challenge you to look at life in a new way?

## Mark 7:24-37

**Prayer-** Before you read, pray this prayer: Blessed Lord, who caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Meditation-** Read this text once silently, then aloud, then one last time slowly and meditatively. What sticks out to you from your reading of this text? What questions do you have? What is most memorable? What does this teach you about Jesus?

**Test-** The people in the text couldn't be stopped from telling people about Jesus. Pray asking God to give you someone in your life you can share the story of Jesus then take the courage to actually do it. Spend some time preparing what you might say.

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## Mark 8:1-10

**Prayer-** As you approach today's reading, spend some time being honest with yourself about God and about the motivations and emotions you have about today's devotion, faith, and serving God/others?

**Meditation-** What was Jesus' motivation for feeding the people in this text?

**Test-** What is our motivation for helping and serving the people in our lives of faith?

**Mark 8:11-21**

**Prayer-** Pray this prayer from Thomas Aquinas before and after your devotion: "Creator of the universe, who has set the stars in the heavens and causes the sun to rise and set, shed the light of your wisdom into the darkness of my mind. Fill my thoughts with the loving knowledge of you, that I may bring your light to others. Just as you can make even babies speak your truth, instruct my tongue and guide my pen to convey the wonderful glory of the Gospel. Make my intellect sharp, my memory clear, and my words eloquent, so that I may faithfully interpret the mysteries which you have revealed. Amen."

**Meditation-** What is at the heart of Jesus' frustration in this story?

**Test-** In what areas of your life is it most difficult to trust Jesus? How have you seen God at work in your life? Make a list!

**Mark 8:22-30**

**Prayer-** Spend some time praying asking God to help you to read and understand His Word today and then close your time asking God to help you to live what you have just read.

**Meditation-** What were the popular theories about who Jesus was in the gospel of Mark? Who do people today say that Jesus is?

**Test-** Spend some time writing out a personal statement about what you believe about Jesus.



Review and reflect upon all you have read and heard this week.

Sunday, May 31

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*Mark 8:31-9:1*

**Prayer**– Prayer this prayer after reading the passage: “Lord, teach me your ways and help me to follow the Lord’s ways.”

**Meditation**– What does Jesus mean when he says “who ever will save his life will lose it and whoever loses his life shall save it”?

**Test**- What are the things of this world that you follow? What would it look like to change and follow Jesus more?

Monday, June 1

## Mark 9:2-13

**Prayer**– Prayer this before you read this passage. “Lord, help me to listen to you and become more like you every day.”

**Meditation**– Do Peter, James, and John have a clue as to what Jesus means by saying “tell no one what you saw until the son of man is raised from the dead”? Why would Jesus say this? How was their understanding of these events deficient? How does Easter add to their understanding?

**Test**– God says to listen to His Son. How do you listen to Jesus?

## Mark 9:14-29

**Prayer**– “Jesus cast out all my demons. Help me to believe. Strengthen my belief. Amen.”

**Meditation**– Why could the disciples not cast out the boy’s demons? Was it a lack of faith?

**Test**– Metaphorically speaking, what demons do you struggle with in your life? How does faith help us to deal with those?

*Mark 9:30-37*

**Prayer**– Ask God to help you to become a servant for all brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Meditation**– Why is it so important receive a little child in Jesus' name?

**Test**– How will eternity affect your relationship with Jesus?

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*Mark 9:38-50*

**Prayer**– Prayer this prayer: Lord help us to help others and encourage one another.

**Meditation**– What does Jesus mean when he says everyone will be "salted with fire?"

**Test**– Do you have salt in yourself so you are at peace? If not, how do you get it?

*Mark 10:1-16*

**Prayer**– Pray this prayer before reading. “Lord, help me to stay true to you first, then to my family.”

**Meditation**- Why are the Pharisees testing Jesus? What does Jesus answer them?

**Test**- Do we have the right to test Jesus? Have you tested him?

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Review and reflect upon all you have read and heard this week.

*Mark 10:17-31*

**Prayer-** "Lord thank you for the love that you bestow on us not for wealth or position we hold but for who we are."

**Meditation-** Why do you think Jesus said it is hard for the rich to enter into the kingdom of God?

**Test-** With God all things are possible, all we need to do is give up to God our concerns and believe that he will take care of them. What is one thing or one area of your life that you need to entrust to God this week?

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*Mark 10:32-45*

**Prayer-** When we pray, may we remember how Jesus came to serve not to be served. Spend some time asking God to help you to follow the example of Jesus.

**Meditation-** Were the disciples prepared for what Jesus was telling them about his future and outcome?

**Test-** When you have the opportunity to be of service to someone, how do you feel and what satisfaction do you receive from this deed?

## Mark 10:46-52

**Prayer-** As we pray may we remember that all things are possible through the Lord. All we need to do is ask and he will answer.

**Meditation-** As with Bartimaeus, all we need is faith, that what we ask for is possible through the Lord. We need to only ask and he will answer.

**Test-** Have there been times that you were at your wits end and did not know where to turn? How did you feel once you gave it up to the Lord?

## Mark 11:1-11

**Prayer-** "Lord God heavenly Father we are so blessed to know that Jesus came to us as a servant to man and not be served by man."

**Meditation-** We read here that Jesus is preparing to make his entry into Jerusalem on the back of a colt to the praises of the people shouting " Hosanna, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest" Even though Jesus entry into Jerusalem was a simple one, it was an everlasting one.

**Test-** We need to take time out and remember what this simple act of Jesus riding on the back of a colt meant then and what it means to us today as we walk with the Lord.

## Mark 11:12-26

**Prayer-** “Lord thank you for the many blessings that you have bestowed upon me knowing that through prayer they will be answered.”

**Meditation–** Jesus talks about the temple being a house of prayer. What point was Jesus making to the people in the text? How is the church today a house of prayer?

**Test-** No matter the challenges we face, know that we do not have to carry the burden alone but give it up to our Lord and see how relieve dyou maybe.

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## Mark 11:27-33

**Prayer-** “Jesus thank you for the blessings I have in my daily walk with you.”

**Meditation–** Why is authority such a big issue in this passage?

**Test–** What serves as the ultimate authority in your life? What difference does that make?

Sunday, June 14

Review and reflect upon all you have read and heard this week.

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*Mark 12:1-12*

**Prayer**– Spend some time praying asking God for wisdom and guidance to read these words of Jesus and to apply this message in your life.

**Meditation**– How does this parable of Jesus relate to the greater story of the Bible? What part does Jesus play in this story?

**Test**– How do we treat people whom God has sent to us?

Monday, June 15



## Mark 12:13-27

**Prayer**– Spend some time in silence before and after reading the text to prepare your heart and mind to hear God speak to you today.

**Meditation**– What does Jesus mean when he says, “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living?” How does this connect with other passages and stories from Scripture?

**Test**– In these words, Jesus talks about giving to Caesar what is Caesar's. How are we called to act as citizens of our great country? How is this a matter of faith? (See Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2:13-25)

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## Mark 12:28-34

**Prayer**– Spend some time giving thanks to God for the people whom He has placed in your life that have been great teachers and examples of faith and love.

**Meditation**– In these words, Jesus points back to the “Great Shema” of the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 6. How does what Jesus say here help us to better understand Deuteronomy 6? How does the longer discussion of Deuteronomy 6 help us to better understand these words of Jesus?

**Test**– How does your faith play into the way that you relate to the people you do life with every day?

## Mark 12:35-44

**Prayer**– Before you read pray this prayer: “Prepare our hearts, O God, to accept your Word. Silence in us any voice but your own, that hearing, we may also obey your will; though Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

**Meditation**– What point is Jesus making in these words about offerings to God? How does this relate to the words of Paul in Romans 12:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-15?

**Test**– How do you look at giving offerings? How is your entire life an offering to God?

## Mark 13:1-13

**Prayer**– Pray this simple prayer before and after you read and throughout your day: “Come Lord Jesus. Come quickly.”

**Meditation**– What does Jesus say is the job of his followers as they await his return?

**Test**– What are things in your life and world that serve to lead you astray? What can you do to deal with or avoid those things?

## Mark 13:14-27

**Prayer**– As you prepare to read pray this prayer: “O God, by your Spirit tell us what we need to hear, and show us what we ought to do, to obey Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.”

**Meditation**– There are a lot of things going on in these verses. What sticks out to you in these verses? What is confusing to you? What is the main point that Jesus is trying to make here?

**Test**– How can you live your life today not in fear, but in anticipation that one day Christ will return?

Saturday, June 20

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Review and reflect upon all you have read and heard this week.

Sunday, June 21

## Mark 13:28-37

**Prayer-** Go to God in prayer and ask for a continued yearning to study his word and renewed strength to obey his commandments. So that whenever Christ returns, you will be ready.

**Meditation-** What in the passage does Jesus say is eternal? How is it reassuring?

**Test-** After hearing Jesus say that no one knows the day or hour of his return except for the Father, does this statement give you anxiety or comfort? If the answer is anxiety, what can you do to change that feeling to comfort?

## Mark 14:1-11

**Prayer-** Say a prayer of thanksgiving for what Jesus has done for us. Thank him for the taking away the sins of the world by dying on the cross.

**Meditation-** The people who disapprove of what the woman is doing make a good point about selling the perfume and giving the money to the poor. Why does Jesus rebuke them? Why is it not selfish?

**Test-** The worth of what Jesus did on the cross is inestimable. There is nothing we can do or give to re-pay what Jesus has given us. So why do we even try? How will this make you look at your offerings differently?

## Mark 14:12-25

**Prayer-** Pray this prayer, "Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, you know all things. You knew you were to be betrayed, you knew what was going to happen, yet you still died on the cross for my sins, so that I may have eternal life with you. Thank you."

**Meditation-** When Jesus says to the disciples that one of them will betray him, they all doubt themselves and ask, "Is it I?" What does this say about how the disciples view Jesus?

**Test-** Do you think the disciples knew the significance of the first communion that Jesus instituted that night? Do you truly know the significance of the same communion we practice today?

## Mark 14:26-42

**Prayer-** Ask God to give you the strength to do His will and not your own. No matter how tough or uncomfortable the task may seem, pray that God's will would take precedence over our own selfish desires.

**Meditation-** Where in the text does it show that Jesus is not just 100% God but also 100% man? Where in the passage can you relate to him the most?

**Test-** Jesus says, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." When in your life have you been like the disciples and "fallen asleep" when Jesus has told us to "watch."

**Mark 14:43-52**

**Prayer-** Pray this prayer, "Lord, you know all things. You knew who would betray you, when it would happen, and how it would happen. Help me to trust in you when I go through trials and tribulations in my life."

**Meditation-** Why do you think Judas kissed Jesus as a sign to the Sanhedrin of whom to arrest? Why did he not just point Jesus out and say, "That's him."?

**Test-** What would you have done in the disciples place?

**Mark 14:53-65**

**Prayer-** Jesus showed incredible patience and control before the council with witnesses bearing false testimony about him and with the physical violence they did to him. Ask God in prayer for that same patience and control when you are in a hostile environment.

**Meditation-** Go back and read John 2:19. How did the false witnesses misunderstand what Jesus said?

**Test-** Jesus knew his answers would only anger the council, yet he still spoke the truth about himself and God. How can you apply that example to your own life when sharing Christ with others?

Review and reflect upon all you have read and heard this week.

Sunday, June 28

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*Mark 14:66-72*

**Prayer-** Say this prayer before reading the text: "God, help me to live my life so that you are visible in everything I do. Amen."

**Meditation-** Peter is frightened. Yet where is he physically located when he is confronted? How does that little testimony of how important Jesus is to him compare to the triple denial of even knowing Jesus?

**Test-** Where are there subtle things in your life that suggest God is not part of your life?

Monday, June 29

### *Mark 15:1-15*

**Prayer-** Ask God to guide you in your life and show you the direction to go.

**Meditation-** Read the text again paying attention to how the religious rulers and Pilate are trying to direct events in the way they want. In spite of their scheming, in the end who is really in control?

**Test-** Where do you think God is leading you?

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### *Mark 15:16-32*

**Prayer-** Say this prayer: "God, thank you for the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross to pay the penalty I deserved for my sins. In Jesus most precious name I pray. Amen."

**Meditation-** There was severe pain involved in a Roman crucifixion. Completely apart from that, how much ridicule and verbal abuse can you see in this reading?

**Test-** Rejoice in all the ways your life is different knowing that Jesus paid your penalty that day.



## Mark 15:33-47

**Prayer-** Ask God to refresh your understanding for the incredible significance of the death of Jesus.

**Meditation-** As you read the familiar text, watch for several testimonies that Jesus is God. Also look for clues that Jesus was really and truly dead.

**Test-** What difference does it make to your life that it was God dying on that cross?

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## Mark 16:1-8

**Prayer-** Pray this prayer: "Father God, help me remember the wonderful joy we feel when we declare on Easter morning that Jesus isn't in the tomb anymore but is indeed risen from the dead. Amen and Amen!"

**Meditation-** Watch for the surprise and shock and bewilderment and fear the women felt that Sunday morning. What else do you suppose they would have felt and thought as they walked away from the tomb after hearing this strange, fabulous, and unexpected news from the young man?

**Test-** What is your reaction when you hear yet again that "He has risen! He is not here"?

## Mark 16:9-20

**Prayer-** Pray this prayer: "God, help my faith to grow. Continue to change me into what you want me to be. Give me strength to live my life as a testimony to you. Amen."

**Meditation-** Why is "we don't believe you" the repeated reaction to the good news of Jesus' resurrection? What happened to the apostles after that good news sunk in?

**Test-** How has the incredibly wonderful good news of Jesus' resurrection changed your life?

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Review and reflect upon all you have read and heard this week.

# **Up Next**

## **The Gospel of**

### **Matthew**



*Connecting people to Christ, Others, and the World*

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