

Jesus Teaches His Followers: Part 2



SABBATH—AUGUST 17

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Mark 10:1–12; Mark 10:13–16; Mark 10:17–31; Mark 10:32–45; Mark 10:46–52.

MEMORY VERSE: “In the same way, the Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve. The Son of Man came to give his life to save many people” (Mark 10:45, ICB).



Mark talks about marriage, children, money, and the reward and cost of following Jesus.

THIS WEEK, we study Mark 10. In this chapter, Jesus finishes teaching His followers about His coming death on the cross. Half of the chapter is about the followers. The other half contains important lessons for Jesus' followers. We learn these lessons from Jesus' meetings with people. The Pharisees, a group of Jewish spiritual leaders, come to argue with Jesus about the topic of divorce. Parents bring their children to Jesus for Him to bless. A rich man asks Jesus about everlasting life. A blind man asks Jesus to heal him.

Mark 10 has important lessons about following Jesus and how we do that in everyday life. Mark talks about marriage, children, money, and the reward and cost of following Jesus. Jesus also heals another blind man (Mark 10:46–52; compare with Mark 8:22–26). Mark also gives us a beautiful example of what following Jesus costs us and what our following Him leads to (Mark 10:17–45).

These lessons help the followers of Jesus to become better followers. These lessons are not only for the followers 2,000 years ago. These lessons are also for us today.

GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE (Mark 10:1–12)

What question do the Pharisees, a group of Jewish spiritual leaders, use to “trap” Jesus? How did Jesus escape the trap? What does His answer teach us? Read Mark 10:1–12; Genesis 1:27; and Genesis 2:24 for the answer.

In Mark 10:1–12, the Pharisees ask Jesus if it is legal for a man to divorce his wife. The Pharisees taught that divorce was legal. But they didn't agree about the reasons for getting a divorce. One group of Pharisees was the School of Shammai. This group had strict rules about divorce. The School of Shammai taught that a man could only divorce his wife for certain reasons: (1) She couldn't give him a child. (2) She didn't take care of his needs. (3) He didn't love her. Or (4) she cheated on him. The School of Hillel allowed divorce for almost any reason.

So, we may think the Pharisees are strange for asking Jesus this question about divorce if they already teach that divorce is legal. But the Pharisees were really being sneaky. Their question was a trap. If Jesus said the wrong answer, then He could get in trouble with Herod Antipas. Herod Antipas controlled the area east of the Jordan River, where Jesus now was. Antipas divorced his wife and married Herodias, who was his brother's wife. Herod also cut off John the Baptist's head because John told Herod it was a sin to marry his brother's wife (read Matthew 14:1–12).

Jesus answers the question with a question. He asks the Pharisees what Moses said about divorce. The Pharisees talk about what Moses said in Deuteronomy 24:1–4. These verses talk about getting married after divorce. That's because the Israelites in Moses' day were already divorcing their wives. The laws in Deuteronomy 24 helped protect the woman in the marriage. But in Jesus' day, members of the School of Hillel used these laws to make it easier to get divorced for any reason. They used the law that protected a wife as an easy way to get rid of her.

Jesus doesn't try to argue about Deuteronomy 24 with the Pharisees. Jesus talks about God's first plan for marriage before sin (Genesis 1 and 2). Jesus says that in the beginning, God made a man and a woman (Genesis 1:27). Then Jesus talks about the Bible truth in Genesis 2:24. A man leaves his parents and joins himself to his wife. The two become one body, heart, and mind. So, Jesus teaches that what God joins together, people should not separate.



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JESUS AND CHILDREN (Mark 10:13–16)

What did Jesus do for parents who brought their children to Him? Read Mark 10:13–16.



Jesus insists that the followers must not stop the children from coming to Him.

In Jesus' time, people wanted to have children. But if a child was born with a missing or broken body part, parents often left the child to die on rocks or threw it into a river. People wanted sons more than daughters. Sometimes parents left girl babies to die in the sun or rain. At times, people saved these babies and sold them as slaves when they were older. So, while people wanted to have children, the adults weren't always fair to children. People behaved as if children were no better than slaves (Galatians 4:1, 2).

Jesus' followers did not really understand Jesus' teaching in Mark 9 about accepting God's kingdom with a child's trust and faith (Mark 9:33–37). Now the followers scold the people who bring their children to Jesus for a blessing. Maybe the followers think that Jesus doesn't have time for this small task.

The followers are wrong. Jesus is upset. In the Book of Mark, Jesus shows some strong feelings at times. One time, people tried to stop children from going to Jesus for a blessing. This experience teaches us that Jesus thinks children are very important.

Jesus insists that the followers must not stop the children from coming to Him. Why? Because God's kingdom belongs to the children. We must accept God's kingdom with the same faith and trust that a child has in his or her parents' love.

“Don't let your behavior give people a false picture of Jesus. Don't keep the little ones away from Jesus with your mean and nasty spirit. Give children a reason to feel that heaven would be a nice place if you were there. Don't talk about religion as something that children can't understand. Show children that you expect them to accept Jesus when they are young. Show them that Christianity is a religion of joy. Let them see from your own life that coming to Jesus is not the end of everything that makes life joyful.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, pages 43, 44, adapted.

How can you be a better example of Jesus to the children around you? How can you show them His love?

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED? (Mark 10:17–31)

Read Mark 10:17–31. What important lessons about faith and following Jesus do these verses teach us, both rich or poor?

The man in the story in Mark 10:17–31 approaches Jesus. The man shows how much he respects Jesus. The man runs to Him, kneels in front of Him, and asks an important question: “What must I do to have everlasting life?” Jesus talks about the last six commandments. The man answers that he has followed all these laws since he was a youth.

Mark is the only New Testament writer who tells us that Jesus loved the man. Jesus gives the man a test to show the man what is really in his heart. Jesus asks the man to sell everything he owns first and then come follow Him. The man feels very sad when he hears Jesus’ answer. The man turns away from Jesus and leaves because he owned many things. The man was not really following the commandments at all. He broke the first one. He put something above God in his life. The man’s riches were his god.

Jesus then explains that riches can trick us and cause us to reject God. Jesus said that it is hard for rich people to enter heaven.

The followers are surprised at Jesus’ words. The followers wonder who then can be saved? “Jesus looked at them and said, ‘That is something people cannot do, but God can. He can do anything’ ” (Mark 10:27, ERV).

Mark 10:27 is a beautiful verse. This verse contains an important Bible truth: you can’t make it to heaven on your own. You need God’s mercy to be saved. For sure, this idea is wonderful. We may think this verse is a powerful way to end the story. But the story is not over. Then Peter says that he and his friends left everything to follow Jesus. Jesus says that whatever we leave to follow Him is nothing compared to what we will get, now and later in heaven. This story teaches us an important lesson: only Jesus’ death removes our guilt. Only Jesus’ mercy; His resurrection, or waking up from the dead; and His life give us strength to obey His commandments.

Read Romans 6:1–11. How do these verses show God’s mercy in our lives? How does God’s mercy remove our guilt and sin? How does God’s mercy make us new people in Him?



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CAN YOU SUFFER WHAT I MUST SUFFER?

(Mark 10:32–45)



**In God's kingdom,
His followers always use
their gifts and strength
to bless other people.**

Read Mark 10:32–45. How do these verses show that Jesus' followers don't understand Jesus' work on earth and what it means to follow Him?

Jesus moves nearer to Jerusalem in His travels. On the way, He tells His followers what will happen to Him there. Jesus talks about His coming death and resurrection, or waking up from the dead. But Jesus' followers don't want to hear or believe this news. When you don't want to hear something, you can reject it very easily, right?

James and John seem to do this very thing when they come to ask Jesus for a favor. Jesus asks them for more information. James and John say they want to sit on Jesus' right side and left side when He is honored.

Jesus wants James and John to understand what they are really asking Him. So, Jesus asks them if they can suffer what He is about to suffer. Jesus will suffer in Gethsemane and on the cross (compare with Mark 14:36). Jesus will die and be buried in the grave (Mark 15:33–47) in the same way that He was buried under water when He was baptized (read Mark 1).

But James and John don't understand what Jesus is saying. They tell Jesus that, yes, they can suffer what He will suffer. Jesus then tells them that they will suffer for Him. James was the first one of the Twelve Followers who died because of his faith (Acts 12:2). John lived the longest of all Jesus' followers. He was sent to live on the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9). Jesus says that God will decide who will get the honor to sit next to Jesus in His kingdom.

How did the other followers feel when they heard what James and John asked? They were angry with James and John (Mark 10:41).

Jesus then gives His followers one of His most important teachings. Jesus tells them that non-Jewish leaders use their control to become more powerful and rich. But in God's kingdom, His followers always use their gifts and strength to bless other people. Jesus is the King of the kingdom of God. As the King, Jesus leads the way to the kingdom. He shows us how to get there. How? Jesus gave His own life as payment for our sins. This news is not what His followers expected or wanted to hear.

**WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU?
(Mark 10:46–52)**

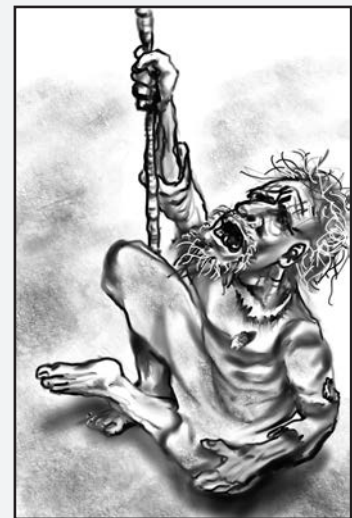
Read Mark 10:46–52. How did blind Bartimaeus act when Jesus came near him?

Until now in the Book of Mark, Jesus tells almost everyone He helps not to tell other people about His miracles and who He is. In the story in Mark 10:46–52, Jesus is about to leave Jericho when a blind man named Bartimaeus starts to shout. Bartimaeus is a beggar on the side of the road. “He heard that Jesus from Nazareth was walking by. So he began shouting, ‘Jesus, Son of David, please help me!’ ” (Mark 10:47, ERV).

“Many people scolded the blind man and told him to be quiet. But he shouted more and more, ‘Son of David, please help me!’ ” (Mark 10:48, ICB). Bartimaeus’s words show his faith in Jesus as the Savior. His words also show he trusts that Jesus can heal him. In Jesus’ day, the name ‘Son of David’ meant two things to the Jews. (1) They believe that the Son of David will sit on David’s throne and be king over all Israel (compare with Isaiah 11; Jeremiah 23:5, 6; Jeremiah 33:15; Ezekiel 34:23, 24; Ezekiel 37:24; Micah 5:2–4; Zechariah 3:8; Zechariah 6:12). (2) They also believe that the Son of David will be a healer and an exorcist. An exorcist is someone who commands demons to come out of people.

Jesus stops walking. He tells the people to invite Bartimaeus to come to Him. As Bartimaeus comes to Jesus, he throws off his coat. This action teaches us something very important about Bartimaeus. First, we must understand what people in Jesus’ day thought about blind people. Then we can better understand the lesson about Bartimaeus’s coat. In Jesus’ day, people thought that widows, orphans, and blind people were not very important. This group of people were often poor and needy. They were in danger of starving. They often had to beg for food. They did not have money for warm clothes. So, the coat was important. When Bartimaeus takes off the coat and leaves it behind, he shows his faith that Jesus will heal him.

Jesus doesn’t disappoint Bartimaeus. People who come to Jesus in the Book of Mark always get the help they need. Jesus asks Bartimaeus what he wants. The blind man asks Jesus to give him his sight. Right away Jesus heals him. The blind man follows Jesus on the road. This story shows us that being Jesus’ follower is about seeing life with new eyes. Then we will follow Jesus in the way that He leads.



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ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Blessing the Children,” and “ ‘One Thing Thou Lackest,’ ” in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 511–523.

“Jesus loved children. He accepted their love for Him. Their words of praise were the same as music to Jesus. Whenever Jesus met men who were sneaky and liars, the words of the children made Jesus’ heart happy. Wherever Jesus went, His loving face and words caused the children to love and trust Him.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 511, adapted.

“Many rich and powerful people may think that God asks too much from them. They are the same as the rich young ruler. They don’t want to give up everything they own to follow Jesus. But everyone who wants to follow Jesus must obey this important rule. We must obey Jesus. He will accept nothing less from us. Jesus teaches us that we must give ourselves fully to Him. Often Jesus uses very strong language to explain this teaching. Why does Jesus use strong language in His teaching? Often Jesus uses strong language because it is the only way He can save us. So, He commands us to give up those things that will destroy us if we continue to hold onto them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 523, adapted.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What are ways you can help children and young people stay connected to Jesus and the church? Why is it so important that we do this?
- ② Sometimes people say that they don’t care about money. That’s not true. Everyone cares about money. There’s nothing wrong with that. What, then, is the problem with money? Why must Christians, rich or poor, be careful with how they manage their money?
- ③ What if Jesus asked you, “What do you want Me to do for you?” What would be your answer?
- ④ Think some more about Jesus’ words in Mark 10:43–45. How do we follow Jesus’ example? How can we learn to serve other people in this way?

PART 5: A HOME THAT BECAME A CHURCH

Father kept his promise. He held Sabbath worship at home where he lived in Armenia. The week before, Father told Mother and their daughter Anush that they couldn't go to the Adventist church anymore. So, on Sabbath morning, Father told his wife and daughter to come to the living room. For Sabbath School, they studied the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* and prayed. Then Anush preached a short sermon.

The family continued to worship every Sabbath at home for many months. Father never visited an Adventist church before. But he was a loyal Sabbath keeper. If guests came to visit, Father invited them to the living room. He opened his Bible, and said, "Welcome to our worship program in our home. Today is the Sabbath. You may join us." Father's invitation surprised his guests. They wondered what was going on. That's because in Armenia, when someone has guests in his home, he puts his guests first. He stops everything to please his guests.

In Matthew 4, the family read about how Jesus won the fight against Satan with the words, "The Bible says." Father understood that he needed to know the Bible so that he would know when Satan was trying to get him to sin. From that day, Father started to read the Bible daily. As he read, he also found answers to his questions. He learned why he and his family worshiped on the seventh day, Saturday, while many Christians in Armenia worshiped on the first day of the week, Sunday.

Father promised that Anush and Mother would never attend the Adventist Church again. Father wanted to keep his promise. Anush very much missed church services. But she hid her feelings from Father. She understood that it was her duty to love her father and wait for God to give him a new heart.

Then Anush learned that the Adventist house church in their town was going to celebrate the Lord's Supper and wash each other's feet on Sabbath. Anush asked her Father for permission to go. In Armenia, fathers make the decisions for their family members.

Father said, "The Lord's Supper? You know, I can lead out in that part of worship, too." No one went to the house church that Sabbath. Then Father and Mother became grandparents. Anush's sister had a baby. Mother learned that the members of the Adventist home church were praying for them and the new baby. Mother told Father, "They prayed for our whole family in church. I want to take something sweet to them as a thank-you gift."

Father's heart was touched when he heard about the thoughtfulness of the church members. So, he allowed Anush and Mother to go back to church.

INSIDE Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**From that day,
Father started to read
the Bible every day.**