

**Reading Together**  
**Year Long New Testament Bible Reading**  
**January 4 - 10**

**January 4 – Mark 3: 7 - 35**

As you read this account, notice, that along with the Pharisees, Jesus' own mother (that would be Mary), and his brothers think Jesus is either crazy or demon possessed. Notice Jesus' response to the Pharisees in verses 23-29. Jesus isn't part of Satan's house, he is the strong man who has bound Satan and is ransacking Satan's house. Now notice his response to his mother and brothers in verses 31-35. As hard as it may sound, Jesus is saying that those who do God's will are your true brothers and sisters. Those who stand opposed to God's will are not. Think about why what Jesus is saying is true. As a follower of Christ, you have become part of the family of God, brothers and sisters with everyone else who has professed faith in Christ. They are your true family. As meaningful and important as your biological family is, your spiritual family is even more important because it is the eternal kingdom of Christ.

**January 5 – Mark 4: 1 - 34**

In today's reading, Jesus tells parables (stories) that help to explain the Kingdom of God. The first parable is the parable of the sower. As you read this, think about how God's Word is growing in your life. Is your heart hard and dry, is it choked out by weeds, or are you receptive to hearing God's Word and applying it to your life? Notice the little explanation Jesus gives in verses 21 – 25. God's Word is given to us to bring light to our lives, so that we can bring light to those around us. We

receive the Gospel and it grows in our life, so that we can be fruitful, and bring the Gospel to the lives of others. The other two parables all deal with the subject of the Kingdom of God and how it grows. From a very small start (Jesus) the kingdom grows and spreads to fill the whole earth, as a follower of Christ you are part of that movement. Take time today to think about what you are doing, right now, with your life that is bearing fruit for the Kingdom of Christ and causing it to grow. If there is not much to show, go back to the cross, back to the gospel. And ask the Holy Spirit to break your heart, and clear out the weeds in your life, so that the Gospel can take root and grow.

### **January 6 – Mark 4: 35 – 5: 20**

At the end of chapter 4 notice the disciple's reaction as Jesus calms the storm. Notice their shock and awe at the power Jesus has. It is almost humorous that after Jesus calms the storm they are actually more afraid of him then they were of the storm. In chapter 5: 1- 20 we see Jesus drive a legion of demons from a man who is possessed. Notice the reaction of the people to Jesus in verses 14 -17 and again in verse 20. Jesus is unlike anyone or anything they have ever seen before, and they don't know how to process him. Even though Jesus has done something that they never thought was possible (return this man to his right senses), they are so frightened by his power that all they care about is getting Jesus to leave. How do these accounts from Mark's Gospel change your view of Jesus?

### **January 7 – Mark 5: 21 – 6: 6**

In this passage Mark intertwines two stories that show the amazing power Jesus has. As Jesus is on his way to heal a

little girl, a woman in desperation reaches out her hand to touch the hem of Jesus' robe. She is immediately healed of a disease that had afflicted her for years. While all of this is going on the little girl that Jesus was on his way to heal dies, but notice Jesus' words to the father in verse 36 "Don't be afraid, just believe." Again, notice in verse 42, everyone is astonished as Jesus brings the little girl back to life. As you read the first six verses of chapter 6 notice again people struggling to comprehend who Jesus is, but rather than proclaiming his greatness they dismiss him. It appears that Jesus' ability to do miracles is tied to people's faith, almost as if people can control Jesus by the amount of faith that they have, but this is not the case. The power to do miracles resides in Jesus alone, and he chooses to display that power only in the lives of those who believe. Salvation is a miracle, Jesus alone has the power to save, but that power is only manifested in the lives of those who by faith believe. That is why the Bible stresses over and over again that only those who believe will be saved. Ask the Holy Spirit to increase your faith.

### **January 8 – Mark 6: 7 – 6: 29**

In verses 7 -13 of today's reading, Jesus sends out the twelve disciples to spread the good news of the kingdom. In a sense they are starting the work they have been called to do. We also read that Herod has John the Baptist beheaded, but remember John the Baptist has done what he was sent to do—prepare the way for Jesus.

Think about John's the Baptist's words as Jesus began his ministry. **John 3:30** He must become greater; I must become less. Following Christ is all about making Christ great not

ourselves, and the way we do that is faithfully carry on the work he has given us to do until he comes again.

### **January 9 – Mark 6: 30 -56**

Chapter 6 closes with Jesus doing two astonishing miracles. Notice how the passage opens with Jesus and his disciples needing to rest and to eat. But there is so much going on, that they cannot. Even as they try to separate themselves from the crowd, the crowd finds them, but now it is in a deserted place with no food. Look at verse 34. What key words do you see that empowered Jesus' ministry here? He looked, he saw, he had compassion, and then he ministered. That is the model for us to follow as we seek to serve Christ and his Kingdom. After he feeds 5000 with just a few pieces of bread and fish, Jesus once again amazes his disciples by walking on water. Notice in verses 51 -52 that even the disciples are having a hard time believing, and are still amazed at what Jesus can do.

### **January 10 – Mark 7: 1- 23**

In today's reading Jesus points out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and shows how they are more worried about appearances than they are about their hearts. It is easy to get wrapped up in outward appearances and look religious even if you are not. Today is Sunday, a good day for us to think about this in our own lives. Why are we doing the religious things that we do? Is it out of duty, trying to look good before God and man, or delight in what God has done for us through Jesus Christ?