

SUNGAI WAY-SUBANG METHODIST CHURCH

# Being with Jesus

VOLUME 4: OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2024

**NAME:**

*Love God Love People*

MARK 12:29-31

*Make Disciples*

MATTHEW 28:19-20

# READING SCHEDULE, OCT – DEC 2024

BEING WITH JESUS | 2024

|     | OCTOBER |                | NOVEMBER |                 | DECEMBER |                    |
|-----|---------|----------------|----------|-----------------|----------|--------------------|
| FRI |         |                | 1        | Mark 10:13–16   |          |                    |
| SAT |         |                | 2        | Mark 10:17–31   |          |                    |
| SUN |         |                | 3        |                 | 1        |                    |
| MON |         |                | 4        | Mark 10:32–45   | 2        | 1 Samuel 1:1–8     |
| TUE | 1       | Mark 1:1–11    | 5        | Mark 10:46–52   | 3        | 1 Samuel 1:9–20    |
| WED | 2       | Mark 1:12–20   | 6        | Mark 11:1–11    | 4        | 1 Samuel 1:21–28   |
| THU | 3       | Mark 1:21–39   | 7        | Mark 11:12–26   | 5        | 1 Samuel 2:1–11    |
| FRI | 4       | Mark 1:40–2:12 | 8        | Mark 11:27–33   | 6        | 1 Samuel 2:12–26   |
| SAT | 5       | Mark 2:13–17   | 9        | Mark 12:1–12    | 7        | 1 Samuel 2:27–36   |
| SUN | 6       |                | 10       |                 | 8        |                    |
| MON | 7       | Mark 2:18–3:6  | 11       | Mark 12:13–27   | 9        | 1 Samuel 3:1–10    |
| TUE | 8       | Mark 3:7–19    | 12       | Mark 12:28–34   | 10       | 1 Samuel 3:11–21   |
| WED | 9       | Mark 3:20–35   | 13       | Mark 12:35–40   | 11       | 1 Samuel 4:1–11    |
| THU | 10      | Mark 4:1–20    | 14       | Mark 12:41–13:2 | 12       | 1 Samuel 4:12–22   |
| FRI | 11      | Mark 4:21–34   | 15       | Mark 13:3–27    | 13       | 1 Samuel 5:1–12    |
| SAT | 12      | Mark 4:35–41   | 16       | Mark 13:28–37   | 14       | 1 Samuel 6:1–12    |
| SUN | 13      |                | 17       |                 | 15       |                    |
| MON | 14      | Mark 5:1–20    | 18       | Mark 14:1–11    | 16       | 1 Samuel 6:13–20   |
| TUE | 15      | Mark 5:21–43   | 19       | Mark 14:12–26   | 17       | 1 Samuel 6:21–7:6  |
| WED | 16      | Mark 6:1–13    | 20       | Mark 14:27–31   | 18       | 1 Samuel 7:7–17    |
| THU | 17      | Mark 6:14–29   | 21       | Mark 14:32–42   | 19       | 1 Samuel 8:1–9     |
| FRI | 18      | Mark 6:30–44   | 22       | Mark 14:43–52   | 20       | 1 Samuel 8:10–22   |
| SAT | 19      | Mark 6:45–56   | 23       | Mark 14:53–65   | 21       | 1 Samuel 9:1–14    |
| SUN | 20      |                | 24       |                 | 22       |                    |
| MON | 21      | Mark 7:1–23    | 25       | Mark 14:66–72   | 23       | 1 Samuel 9:15–24   |
| TUE | 22      | Mark 7:24–37   | 26       | Mark 15:1–15    | 24       | 1 Samuel 9:25–10:8 |
| WED | 23      | Mark 8:1–21    | 27       | Mark 15:16–32   | 25       | 1 Samuel 10:9–27   |
| THU | 24      | Mark 8:22–30   | 28       | Mark 15:33–41   | 26       | 1 Samuel 11:1–11   |
| FRI | 25      | Mark 8:31–9:1  | 29       | Mark 15:42–47   | 27       | 1 Samuel 11:12–15  |
| SAT | 26      | Mark 9:2–13    | 30       | Mark 16:1–8     | 28       | 1 Samuel 12:1–12   |
| SUN | 27      |                |          |                 | 29       |                    |
| MON | 28      | Mark 9:14–29   |          |                 | 30       | 1 Samuel 12:13–25  |
| TUE | 29      | Mark 9:30–37   |          |                 | 31       | 1 Samuel 13:1–14   |
| WED | 30      | Mark 9:38–50   |          |                 |          |                    |
| THU | 31      | Mark 10:1–12   |          |                 |          |                    |

## PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Greetings in Jesus' name!

Let me begin with a story from Sadhu Sundar Singh (1889-1929?), an Indian missionary sent to reach the people in Northern India.

“While sitting on the bank of a river one day, I picked up a solid round stone from the water and broke it open. It was perfectly dry in spite of the fact that it had been immersed in the water for centuries. The same is true of many people in the Western world. For centuries they have been surrounded by Christianity; they live immersed in the waters of its benefits. And yet it has not penetrated their hearts; they do not love it. The fault is not in Christianity, but in men's hearts, which have been hardened by materialism and intellectualism.”

Recently, I was much impacted by this phrase, “the pursuit of the heart”. Anything that catches your heart, catches you! Jesus reinforces this truth, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:20. Simply put, your heart is always tied to things or people you love.

A few thoughts as I relate that to our BWJ readings:

1. We must allow our hearts to be pursued by the Holy Spirit with His truth. Failing to do so is like the round stone - though immersed in water for centuries, it is wet only on the outside, but caked utterly dry inside!
2. We must allow the Word to penetrate us and we must be willing to grapple with it. What is the Word saying about me? How am I to respond in this situation based on the Word? The Word convicts, reveals and tests us even as it speaks unto us (Hebrew 4:12), calling us to respond in humility and obedience.

**PASTOR'S MESSAGE**

3. Four powerful questions you can ask to allow the Holy Spirit to pursue your heart.
  - a) What are my thoughts?
  - b) How do I feel about it?
  - c) What are my deepest desire?
  - d) What choices do I need to make?
  
4. Respond to the Lord in prayer and supplication, asking Him for His grace and power to obey.

As we continue to read BWJ together, share your stories to encourage one another on how the Word has impacted and transformed you.

Love God, Love People, Make Disciples.

*Pastor Robin Liew and the Leadership Team*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE READINGS

This quarter, we cover the gospel of Mark, and then move on to 1 Samuel. Both these books are full of ‘action’, without much of a pause at any point. Christ’s ministry from baptism to crucifixion to resurrection includes healings and other miracles, authoritative teachings, hard-hitting parables, conflicts with the teachers of the law and between the disciples, and most of all a singular Good News for all who believe. As we read about Jesus repeatedly trying to tell the disciples what was about to happen to Him, may we be reminded not to take for granted what seems familiar and well-known. And as we pick up where we left off at the beginning of 2023 (when we read from Joshua, Judges, and Ruth), we will be reading about prophets, kings, and the ascension of God’s chosen people as a unified and increasingly powerful nation. And just as disobedience, sinfulness, and unfaithfulness remain evident in Israel, God’s faithfulness, grace, and justice are even more evident. May we remember Him today!

The provided questions for each day’s readings are intended to prompt reflection while providing some historical or scriptural context for better understanding. The pronouns “I”, “me”, and “my” are liberally used to reflect the personal nature of these reflections. We encourage those who are able to read Scripture communally (either in families or other gatherings of disciples) to substitute “we” and “our” pronouns where appropriate. The noun “faith communities” is used to represent the communal gathering of people of faith, otherwise traditionally referred to as the church. As always, Scripture reigns supreme, and none of the material provided here claims to that level of authority which belongs only to Him who is the Word made flesh.

May the Good News overflow in our lives and testimonies.

*Yours truly,*  
*Ng Oon-Ee (Christian Education)*

*This edition of Being With Jesus has seen significant contributions from various disciples in the body. Special thanks to the Christian Education team for their efforts and time in preparing this material, as well as to Rosalind for compiling and putting everything together. The artistic talent of Zachary Singkee is also much appreciated.*

An open book is shown from a top-down perspective, slightly angled. The left page is blank and white. The right page is also white and features the text 'GOSPEL OF MARK' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, centered on the page. The book's spine is visible in the center, and the pages have a slight shadow, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

**GOSPEL  
OF MARK**

1 OCT, TUESDAY

Mark 1:1–11

## John the Baptist Prepares the Way

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Julius Caesar was 'deified' in 42 BC, and his adopted son Augustus Caesar called himself Divi filius (meaning 'son of god'). What is the significance of Mark's usage of this term in Mark 1:1, written to an audience under the rule of Rome?</li> <li>2) Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 both refer to God's messenger. How did John the Baptist fulfil these (and other) prophecies?</li> <li>3) John preached a baptism of repentance, but pointed to a greater coming baptism of the Spirit. How does repentance prepare me for the One who baptises with the Holy Spirit?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

2 OCT, WEDNESDAY

Mark 1:12–20

## Jesus Begins His Public Ministry

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The temptation of Christ precedes His public ministry, and immediately follows the Father's public acknowledgement of His Son. How is Christ's temptation relevant to me in my own times of temptation (Hebrews 2:18)?</li> <li>2) Who are those whom Christ first calls? Is their occupation, education, or place in the social structure of 1st century Israel relevant to me today?</li> <li>3) What is the commonality between the responses of Simon and Andrew and those of James and John? Is my own obedience to Jesus similar to theirs?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |



3 OCT, THURSDAY

Mark 1:21–39

## Authority and Purpose

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What locations did Jesus go to in today's passage, and for what purpose? Was healing His initial plan?</li> <li>2) How much sleep did Jesus get that night? What does this tell me about His motivations and priorities?</li> <li>3) What can I learn from the contrast between the disciples' words in Mark 1:37 and Jesus' words in Mark 1:38?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

4 OCT, FRIDAY

Mark 1:40–2:12

## Healing and Forgiveness

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What faith did the man with leprosy have? What doubt did he have? How did Jesus respond to the man's doubt?</li> <li>2) Both healings in today's passage (as well as the healings in yesterday's passage) were the result of someone approaching Jesus. Do I need to approach Him today for healing (either for myself or for those I love)?</li> <li>3) Theologically, the forgiveness of sin is 'harder' than physical healing. Is it easier to 'say' that sins are forgiven, or that a physical ailment is healed? What proof was Jesus giving to the teachers of the law?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

5 OCT, SATURDAY

Mark 2:13-17

## Why Sinners?

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Jewish tax collectors were rich, almost certainly corrupt, and definitely greedy – making their wealth by extracting heavy taxes backed by unjust imperial state power. Who would be friends with a tax collector (according to Mark 2:15)?</li> <li>2) Levi was still a tax collector when Jesus said "follow me". What was his immediate response? Why did he respond in that way?</li> <li>3) The actions and reactions of Jesus and the Pharisees are in stark contrast. How does my faith community view fellowship with sinners? Are there certain sinners that I would avoid associating with due to social stigma? What did Jesus do?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

6 OCT, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER

7 OCT, MONDAY

Mark 2:18–3:6

## Why Law?

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <p>1) The Jews had built up traditions for observing the Law strictly – including additional days of fasting and codification of permitted and non-permitted Sabbath actions. Over time, obeying these traditions took on similar importance to obeying God's Law, because those observances elevated God's Law! What was Jesus' response to this?</p> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> | <p>2) Today's passage is sometimes seen as promoting a kind of 'originalism' – only God's actual Law should be taken as Law. Other times it is seen in terms of 1 Corinthians 10:23 (which says 'all things are lawful'). What is the purpose of the Law, according to Jesus?</p>                                                                      |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     | <p>3) Evangelical Christians today reject most of the traditions of the 'older' denominations. Has my faith community replaced these traditions with informally-codified traditions of our own? What would Jesus have to say about our worship, discipleship practice, and training up of the young (or young in the faith)?</p>                       |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

8 OCT, TUESDAY

Mark 3:7-19

## Jesus the Celebrity

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Jesus began his ministry (see Oct 2 and 3 reading) by proclaiming the good news and by teaching. What, instead, was it that drew crowds from around the region to Him?</li> <li>2) How did Jesus respond to being 'mobbed' by the crowds? How have modern day prominent believers and leaders handled similar circumstances?</li> <li>3) What was the purpose of the twelve according to Mark 3:14-15? How does that purpose compare to Jesus' own purpose that we read about last week? What can I learn here about discipleship?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

9 OCT, WEDNESDAY

Mark 3:20–35

## Crazy Talk

Context

*Questions*  
to ponder

- 1) Jesus' celebrity was so disruptive that his family staged an intervention. How does John 7:5 help me to understand Jesus' family's reaction?
- 2) The teachers of the law came to see Jesus (Mark 3:22), yet were convinced His healings were a trick. Why did they believe that, and how did Jesus' response expose their ulterior motives?
- 3) Jewish culture valued familial piety highly (as our own Asian cultures do) – how is Jesus' response in Mark 3:33–35 an affront to those values? Why would Jesus connect the doing of God's will with familial relationships?

*Head*

What can I  
understand?

*Heart*

How do I respond?

*Hands*

What must I do?

10 OCT, THURSDAY

Mark 4:1–20

## The Parable of the Sower

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) So far the book of Mark has only mentioned Jesus' teaching in passing, today's passage is the first narration of one of Jesus' teaching stories (also called parables). Why did Jesus speak in parables according to today's passage? Was His purpose to exclude?</li> <li>2) The parable of the sower is one of the more famous parables. A big reason for that is that Jesus' explanation of the parable was recorded in Mark 4:14–20. What is the main lesson of this parable?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) The gospel writers make it clear that most parables (including today's parable) were primarily 'aimed' at Jesus' disciples. Based on Mark 3:14–15, what character in this parable would Jesus have expected His disciples to model? What does this mean to me as a disciple of Jesus?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |



11 OCT, FRIDAY

Mark 4:21–34

## Kingdom Parables

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Today's passage collects teaching regarding the inexorable nature of the Kingdom of God. The first section both teaches and warns those who hear Jesus' teachings. What lesson does Jesus have for me from Mark 4:21–25?</li> <li>2) The two 'seed' parables continue the analogies introduced in yesterday's passage. What do these parables say about the Kingdom of God?</li> <li>3) Mark 4:33 provides more context to Jesus' use of parables. How does this verse help me understand Jesus' repeated refrain that 'if anyone has ears, let him hear' (for e.g. Mark 4:23)?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

12 OCT, SATURDAY

Mark 4:35–41

## Jesus' Power Over the Storm

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) In today's passage, what is the danger that Jesus and His disciples are facing? How do the disciples react to this danger (recall that some of them were experienced fishermen)?</li> <li>2) What is Jesus' approach to this danger?</li> <li>3) Jesus demonstrated divine power – how did the disciples react? What is my own response to Christ's power over His creation?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

13 OCT, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER

14 OCT, MONDAY

Mark 5:1–20

## Jesus' Power Over the Legion

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) In today's passage, what is the challenge that Jesus and His disciples are facing? How would the disciples have reacted to the demon–possessed man?</li> <li>2) What is Jesus' approach to this challenge?</li> <li>3) Jesus demonstrated divine power – how did the townspeople and the demon–possessed man react? What is my own response to spiritual warfare?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

15 OCT, TUESDAY

Mark 5:21–43

## Jesus' Power over Sickness and Death

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) In today's passage, what heart–felt pleas are brought to Jesus? When have I fallen at Jesus' feet over the health or demise of a loved one?</li> <li>2) What is Jesus' response to Jairus and the woman who had bled for twelve years?</li> <li>3) Jesus demonstrated divine power – how did the individuals and families affected react? What is my own response to divine healing?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

16 OCT, WEDNESDAY

Mark 6:1–13

## Different Soils

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Today's passage reads well together with the parable of the sower (Mark 4:1–8). Why did Jesus' own hometown turn out to be poor quality 'soil'?</li> <li>2) The twelve apostles were sent without provision. How were they received in the towns they passed through?</li> <li>3) The contrast between Jesus in Mark 6:5–6 and the twelve apostles in Mark 6:12–13 is stark. What similarities did the twelve apostles have with Jesus' on work of ministry? What caused the differences?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

17 OCT, THURSDAY

Mark 6:14–29

## John the Baptist Beheaded

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Today's passage is primarily a flashback to the circumstances surrounding John's arrest and eventual beheading. What does Scripture say regarding the reason for John's arrest?</li> <li>2) King Herod (perhaps in guilt) hears about Jesus and connects Him with the recently executed John. What other parallels can be seen in this account of the end of John's life and Jesus' own future crucifixion?</li> <li>3) King Herod hears about Jesus because 'His name had become well known' – presumably because of the work of the twelve apostles in yesterday's passage. Whose name is glorified in my own work and service to God?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

18 OCT, FRIDAY

Mark 6:30–44

## The Feeding of the Five Thousand

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) This incident is the only incident (other than the resurrection) which is described in all four gospels. Why do Jesus and the twelve withdraw to a solitary place (see also Matthew 14:13)?</li> <li>2) There is some irony in Jesus and the twelve going from 'not even having a chance to eat' (Mark 6:31) to 'giving them something to eat' (Mark 6:37). What prompts Jesus' patience with and provision for the large crowd (Mark 6:34)?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) God's provision in today's passage seems to have overflowed. What significance is there to the number of basketfuls of food left over? Who would this food have been meant for?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |



19 OCT, SATURDAY

Mark 6:45–56

## Jesus Walks on Water

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Why does Jesus send his disciples ahead? What is His priority?</li> <li>2) Mark says 'they had not understood about the loaves' regarding the apostles. What had they not understood?</li> <li>3) Are Jesus' words in Mark 6:50 relevant to me today?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

20 OCT, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER

21 OCT, MONDAY

Mark 7:1–23

## Holding to Human Traditions

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Today's passage revisits Jewish codifications of the Law (see reading on Oct 7). What is the specific criticism raised by the Pharisees and teachers of the law?</li> <li>2) Jesus denounces the legalistic traditions of the Pharisees, demonstrates that some of them nullify God's Law, and finally establishes a 'new' standard for defilement. Does this 'new' standard contradict the law of God as given in the Torah (first five books of the Old Testament)?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Is today's passage only applicable to the consumption of food? Do I and my faith community see defilement arising from other more modern external factors (such as style of clothing, body art, jewelry, and various forms of facial/bodily surgery)? What principle does Jesus give here?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

22 OCT, TUESDAY

Mark 7:24-37

## Two Different Healings

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Mark (and Jesus) make clear that the woman in Tyre was not a Jew, yet she had both heard of Jesus and discovered where He was staying. Did this matter to Jesus (see also Matthew 15:24)? Should this matter to me?</li> <li>2) The deaf and mute man is implied (by omission) to be Jewish. How are he and the people who bring him treated differently from the Greek woman? How are they treated the same?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) In both of today's healings, Jesus 'did not want anyone to know'. It is likely, given the context of the book of Mark so far, that He sought quiet places to teach rather than public recognition. Why then did Jesus not turn away the Greek woman and the deaf and mute man?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

23 OCT, WEDNESDAY

Mark 8:1–21

## Do You Still Not Understand?

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Faced with a very similar challenge as that described in Mark 6:30–44, the disciples respond with the question of Mark 8:4. Did this indicate a practical spirit, a lack of faith, or something else?</li> <li>2) In the midst of numerous miracles, the Pharisees ask for a sign. What sign would have convinced them? What does Jesus' response teach me about dealing with unbelief, especially from outside my faith community?</li> <li>3) In Mark 8:14–21, Jesus wants to teach, but the disciples cannot hear or understand Him. What is foremost on their minds? What is foremost on my mind when Jesus speaks to me? Do I need an increased faith in God's provision today?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

24 OCT, THURSDAY

Mark 8:22–30

## Don't Tell Anyone

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Yet again, someone in need of healing is brought to Jesus. Why does Jesus bring the man outside the village, and then tell him not to go into the village?</li> <li>2) While travelling, Peter declares explicitly the identity of Jesus Christ, over the assumptions of the crowds who repeatedly approached Him. What is Jesus' response to the disciples?</li> <li>3) Why does Jesus repeatedly command His disciples and those He healed not to tell anyone? Does this command extend to me, 2 millennia later (see also Mark 9:9)?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

25 OCT, FRIDAY

Mark 8:31–9:1

## Which Messiah?

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What did Peter and the twelve expect from the Messiah? How did Jesus' teaching in Mark 8:31 confound their expectation, leading to Peter's rebuke?</li> <li>2) Jesus then teaches the crowd and His disciples about the cost of discipleship. The cross was well known even before Christ's crucifixion, one of Rome's chief instruments of execution for rebels. What was Jesus calling His disciples to?</li> <li>3) Isaiah 52:13–53:12 describes the suffering servant, yet the disciples had difficulty understanding and accepting Jesus' teaching on this. How do I understand the necessity of Christ's suffering today, with the benefit of knowing 'the rest of the story'?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

26 OCT, SATURDAY

Mark 9:2-13

## The Transfiguration

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Why was it Elijah and Moses who appeared on the mount of transfiguration (refer to the reading of Aug 5 from Malachi 4:4-6)? What did these men represent?</li> <li>2) What purpose did the transfiguration serve for Peter, James, and John? What was God trying to show to them?</li> <li>3) Some parts of Scripture are firmly grounded and meant to be understood in the context of their time and history. Mark 9:7 is different, with divine instruction which is just as relevant today as it was two thousand years ago. How am I listening to Christ today?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |



27 OCT, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER

28 OCT, MONDAY

Mark 9:14–29

## Overcoming Unbelief

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What was the topic of the arguments between the teachers of the law and the disciples? Were these arguments fruitful?</li> <li>2) Jesus repeatedly mentions unbelief in today's passage. Can I conclude that the reason the boy was possessed was due to unbelief, either his own or that of his father or relative?</li> <li>3) The desperate father's cry in Mark 9:24 is familiar to us today. We believe, yet we do not. Do I need to call out to Jesus today for help in overcoming my unbelief? Is there a healing or deliverance that is still 'pending' in my life?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

29 OCT, TUESDAY

Mark 9:30–37

## Kingdom Hierarchy

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Why did the disciples remain quiet in the face of Jesus' question in Mark 9:33? What does this say about their conscience in discussing their ambitions and relative hierarchical placements?</li> <li>2) Does Mark 9:35–37 indicate that the Kingdom of God has an inversed hierarchy, where the only difference is that the master serves and the servants lord it over the master?</li> <li>3) Jesus the Son of God dying as a criminal on the cross (as he taught the disciples in today's passage) is the ultimate example of how the Kingdom of God is no respecter of our expected hierarchical systems. Jesus provides another profound example in Mark 9:36–37 – the little child is to be welcomed as the Son of God should be welcomed! How do I treat children and other 'less valuable' members of society?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

30 OCT, WEDNESDAY

Mark 9:38–50

## Those Who Belong to Jesus

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What was John's attitude in today's passage? What did Jesus tell John to do?</li> <li>2) Could John have caused the unnamed exorcist to stumble with his words? Who are the 'little ones' whom Jesus refers to in Mark 9:42?</li> <li>3) Most Christian discourse around 'stumbling' focuses on the outwardly visible (dressing, consumption of alcohol, and the like). This can lead to victim-blaming, and excuses being made for those who should pay more attention to Jesus' instructions in Mark 9:43–47. How can I lovingly support my brothers and sisters without perpetuating shaming or victim-blaming?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

31 OCT, THURSDAY

Mark 10:1–12

## Laws of Hard Hearts

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Pharisees' question is borne of their worldview which centers the lawfulness (or otherwise) of every action. Does Jesus respond within that worldview?</li> <li>2) The Pharisees quoted God's Law as given to Moses, but Jesus explains how the laws on divorce were an accommodation rather than prescriptive. Does this have broader implications for Old Testament Law as a whole – now that we are in the time of the New Covenant?</li> <li>3) Does Jesus' answer to the disciples in Mark 10:11–12 provide a new Law for those of us who follow Him?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

1 NOV, FRIDAY

Mark 10:13–16

## Like a Little Child

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Why did the disciples rebuke those bringing little children? What underlying attitude is revealed here?</li> <li>2) Jesus' words in Mark 10:14 are reminiscent of His words in Mark 9:37 – somehow the small, the immature, the unimportant are of chief importance ('belongs to such as these') in the Kingdom. What should those of us who are mature and wise in a worldly sense do with this teaching?</li> <li>3) Why did Jesus say that the kingdom of God must be received 'like a little child'? Could my own attitudes towards children and those who are younger be harmful to understanding what Jesus meant?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

2 NOV, SATURDAY

Mark 10:17-31

## With Man This Is Impossible

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What is positive about the young man in today's passage? Which of the ten commandments had he kept?</li> <li>2) What did the rich young man lack? Which of the ten commandments could he not keep? Do I also struggle with the same struggle faced by this young man?</li> <li>3) The world (and sometimes the church as well) has great appreciation for those with the successes demonstrated by this rich young man. God's Kingdom measures us by a different yardstick. What is the comfort and hope that Jesus provides in His words in today's passage?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

**3 NOV, SUNDAY**

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER



4 NOV, MONDAY

Mark 10:32–45

## In His Glory

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What prompted the reactions recorded in Mark 10:32? Did the disciples yet understand what was going to happen to Jesus (and to them)?</li> <li>2) Based on Mark 10:35–45, what did James, John, and the other disciples think about Jesus' coming glory (despite Jesus' repeated explanations)?</li> <li>3) Jesus repeats in greater detail his teaching from Mark 9:35. Is He repudiating the very existence of leadership, or is He challenging the disciple's understanding of what it means to be a leader? How do leaders in my faith community measure up to Jesus' standards and example?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

5 NOV, TUESDAY

Mark 10:46–52

## Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Blind Bartimaeus asks those around him what the commotion is, and is told it is Jesus of Nazareth. Why does he shout to the Son of David (see also 2 Samuel 7:12–16 and Mark 12:35)?</li> <li>2) Jesus hears Bartimaeus, but instead of approaching him, He asks the blind man to come. What would it have meant to a blind beggar to throw his cloak (likely containing the alms given to him as well) to the side? Do I approach Christ with such abandon?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Though blind, Bartimaeus was able to see what the sighted crowd could not regarding Jesus' identity. With his healing, Jesus tells Bartimaeus to go. What does he do instead? What would he have seen over the next week, with his miraculously cured eyes?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

6 NOV, WEDNESDAY

Mark 11:1–11

## Coming of the King

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The colt, the foal of a donkey, would bear the Christ into Jerusalem. Would the disciples and the crowd have connected this with the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9? What statement was Jesus making by entering Jerusalem in this way?</li> <li>2) What would the expectation of the crowd (chafing under the bondage of Imperial Rome) have been? Did Jesus fulfill their expectations? Where instead did he go upon entering Jerusalem?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) The gate through which Jesus entered is traditionally believed to be the East Gate (Ezekiel 44:1–3). Today it remains sealed, with some Jews believing it will only be reopened with the coming of the Messiah. What prayers can I raise for the lost sheep of Israel and the cycle of violence they suffer as well as perpetuate?</li> </ol>                                                                                                    |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

We greatly appreciate your faithful reading of God's Word, and hope that the Being With Jesus (BWJ) material has been helpful so far with that. Please make the time to answer this 3-section survey. For convenience, you may scan the provided QR code to do this digitally. If you prefer, you may also tear this survey out from your printed copy of BWJ and submit it to the church office staff. Thank you for your honest feedback.



*Christian Education team*

## **Please answer the questions below by checking the boxes**

### **How often have you used the BWJ material in 2024?**

- More than 5 times a week    At least once a month    I have not used it  
 At least once a week    A few times a year

### **How do you use the BWJ material (please check all that apply)?**

- I do not use the BWJ material regularly  
 My Discipleship Group uses the BWJ material for discussion  
 I use the BWJ material as a personal devotional  
 I discuss the BWJ material with at least one other personal regularly  
 I use the BWJ material during Sunday sermons

### **What material(s) do you use for your regular personal devotional time?**

- I do not have a regular personal devotional time  
 I do not use any materials for my regular personal devotional time  
 I use the BWJ material for most of my regular personal devotional time  
 I use other materials for most of my regular personal devotional time  
 I switch between BWJ and other materials for my regular personal devotional time

### **What material does your Discipleship Group use for most discussions (Word)?**

- BWJ material    Alternative material    I do not belong to or regularly  
 Sermon discussions    Topical discussions   attend a discipleship group

### **What church do you consider your home church?**

- I do not consider myself a member of any specific church congregation  
 I consider myself part of Sungai-Way Subang Methodist Church (SSMC)  
 I consider myself part of another Methodist church  
 I consider myself part of another church (non-Methodist)

## B – Opinions on Being With Jesus (BWJ) material

These questions are optional. Please circle your preferred option.

- 1. The daily readings for BWJ are ...** Too short 1 2 3 4 5 Too long
- 2. The current format for BWJ provides ...**  
Too little guidance 1 2 3 4 5 Too much guidance
- 3. The questions for BWJ are ...** Too short 1 2 3 4 5 Too long
- 4. The questions for BWJ are ...** Too simple 1 2 3 4 5 Too complex
- 5. I find the depth of the questions for BWJ to be ...**  
Too shallow 1 2 3 4 5 Too deep
- 6. I find the direction of the questions for BWJ to be...**  
Not academic enough 1 2 3 4 5 Too academic
- 7. I personally feel that, with respect to my life and what is happening around me, the BWJ questions are ...**  
Not relevant 1 2 3 4 5 Very relevant
- 8. I find that the theological foundations of the BWJ questions are ...** Questionable Solid

## C – Changes to Being With Jesus (BWJ) initiative

These questions are optional. Please circle your preferred option.

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1 - Strongly disagree |   |   |   | 5 - Strongly agree |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|---|--------------------|
| 1. I believe that the Being With Jesus initiative has been helpful for me individually and for SSMC as a whole.                                                                                    | 1                     | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                  |
| 2. I feel that the Being With Jesus materials are being holistically used by individuals, discipleship groups, and as a church.                                                                    | 1                     | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                  |
| 3. I believe that SSMC as a church should endeavour to follow a shared set of devotional or study materials.                                                                                       | 1                     | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                  |
| 4. I believe that individual believers and/or discipleship groups in SSMC should select and follow a set of devotional or study materials most suitable for their specific individualised context. | 1                     | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                  |
| 5. I believe SSMC should either provide or recommend devotional or study materials for members and/or discipleship groups.                                                                         | 1                     | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                  |
| 6. I believe it is the right season for substantial changes to the Being With Jesus material.                                                                                                      | 1                     | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5                  |

### What changes should be made to the Being With Jesus initiative (check all that apply).

- |                                                                         |                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain current practice                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Removal of questions (only readings provided) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Switch to existing established materials       | <input type="checkbox"/> Addition of background material               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Switch to a topical focus                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Phase out Being With Jesus entirely           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Switch to a chronological reading of Scripture |                                                                        |

7 NOV, THURSDAY

Mark 11:12–26

## Cleaning House

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The previous evening (Mark 11:11), Jesus had 'looked around at everything'. What action did take in the temple in today's passage?</li> <li>2) The image of Jesus engaging in property destruction and physical force can be upsetting, especially when such images are invoked in protests, riots, and revolutions around the world. Does my worldview place too high a value on property and commerce as opposed to the lives and worship of those who approach God?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Leaves on a fig tree normally grow after the fruit – the fig tree in today's passage had the appearance of fruitfulness but none of the actual produce. Perhaps this can be related to the Jewish (mis-)use of the temple grounds. Is my own life, or the faith life of my faith community, uncomfortably similar to this fig tree?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

8 NOV, FRIDAY

Mark 11:27–33

## Authority's Source?

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Earthly authority is hierarchical and conferred – hence the question 'who gave you authority' directed at Jesus. Did this question make sense when directed at the Son of God?</li> <li>2) Jesus would eventually answer this question plainly to His disciples (Matthew 28:18), but in today's passage He does not claim divine authority, scholarly qualifications, or the recognition and honour given to Him by the crowds. Would any of these claims have satisfied the priests, teachers of the law, and elders?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) The priests, teachers of the law, and elders were not themselves willing to clearly answer Jesus' question, out of fear of the people. What does this expose about their own authority?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

9 NOV, SATURDAY

Mark 12:1–12

## Jesus' Answer

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Today's passage contains Jesus' response to the question of Mark 11:28, though the audience would not have known it at first. In this parable, who do the owner, the servants, and the son represent?</li> <li>2) The tenants in this parable are clearly characterised by unfaithfulness, greed, and usurped authority. Who in the audience were these tenants meant to represent (Mark 12:12)? Why did these targets refuse to respond to Jesus' parable?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) The parable of the tenants was spoken in Jerusalem to Jewish leaders. How should I, one of those 'others' to whom the vineyard has been given (see Romans 11:17–21), react to this parable?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



10 NOV, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER

11 NOV, MONDAY

Mark 12:13–27

## Trick Questions

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <p>1) The two questions in today's passage were meant to endanger or trap Jesus. Both rest on faulty assumptions. How can Jesus' wisdom and insight in uncovering the rotten root of these questions teach me to properly handle scripture, theology, and the exploration of difficult topics?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> | <p>2) Taxes will never be popular, regardless of the authority or time period. What is Jesus' principle regarding the taxation of material produce and wealth, and what does He consider more important than the matter of taxation?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     | <p>3) The afterlife (as with other non-material beliefs) being referred to here by the Sadducees is not possible to prove using logic and physical evidence. Because of this, paradoxical questions such as the one in Mark 12:19–23 are meant to expose the 'ridiculous' nature of such beliefs. Jesus' answer does not operate in the physical realm, but is grounded in fundamental truths of Scripture. How can this help me when I wrestle with other non-material beliefs within my faith?</p> |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

12 NOV, TUESDAY

Mark 12:28–34

## Honest Question

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) In today's passage, another teacher of the law ask a question. What is the motivation behind this question? Is he also trying to endanger or trap Jesus?</li> <li>2) Unlike with the two previous questions, Jesus answers this question. He affirms the authority of Scripture, the Lordship of God the Father, and the importance of other men. How does this most important commandment drive my life and faith—walk?</li> <li>3) Should I question Jesus? Will He answer my questions? What does the contrast between yesterday's questions and today's questions teach me about asking of Jesus?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

13 NOV, WEDNESDAY

Mark 12:35–40

## Reversed Question

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Jesus Himself now asks a question. In a sense, this question is also a trap for the teachers of the law – who should be expected to know the law well enough to be able to answer! Why couldn't these teachers answer Jesus?</li> <li>2) Jesus then follows up His question with a blunt warning for the crowd there. He directly calls out the teachers of the law, without euphemism or parable. Would the crowd have already known of the wrongdoings Jesus announces in Mark 12:39–40?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Is the church currently facing a crisis of holiness, especially with charismatic and popular leaders? How many examples of abuse or sin have been exposed in recent times? What would Jesus have me (and us) do in today's church?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

14 NOV, THURSDAY

Mark 12:41–13:2

## What is Giving For?

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The temple offering was done by tossing metal coins (paper notes and e-wallets didn't yet exist) – a noisy and attention-grabbing action. How do I imagine the rich would have conducted themselves while giving offering?</li> <li>2) Jesus speaks to His disciples and calls their attention to someone not many would have noticed. Are His words complementary to her? Does He intend her conduct to provide an example to the disciples?</li> <li>3) This short passage follows Mark 12:40 (where the teachers of the law devoured widows' houses) and precedes Mark 13:2 (where the temple, for whom these offerings were being collected, is prophesied to be thrown down). Does this context change my understanding of Jesus' focus in today's passage?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

15 NOV, FRIDAY

Mark 13:3–27

## When? What Signs?

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The disciples' questions in today's passage shows that they are beginning to understand (though not fully) what Jesus is saying about what is about to happen. What is their primary concern with both their questions?</li> <li>2) Jesus begins His reply by warning (Mark 13:5–7) rather than answering. Why is this crucially important? How have world events in my lifetime prompted some Christians to forget Jesus' words in these verses?</li> <li>3) The rest of today's passage is filled with dire descriptions of apocalyptic conditions. Yet in the midst of the horrors and suffering, there are assurances – of the Spirit's aid, of salvation, and most important of all, that those days would be shortened. What instruction does Jesus leave for His disciples (and us) in today's passage? And what hope does He give?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

16 NOV, SATURDAY

Mark 13:28–37

## Jesus Doesn't Say When

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Jesus has only answered the second question (regarding the signs) from Mark 13:4. Why does He do this, according to Mark 13:28–31)?</li> <li>2) Mark 13:30 is a difficult passage because the generation mentioned has definitely long passed. Most theologians believe that the initial fulfilment happened in AD70 with the sacking of Jerusalem. Yet the Son of Man has not returned! Why do we continue to wait?</li> <li>3) Jesus leaves the first question unanswered, but emphasizes what this means for the disciples. What is the instruction that He gives? How does this apply to me, 2000 years later? Am I prone to being impatient for fantastical 'prophecies' instead of standing a firm watch based on Jesus' words?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

17 NOV, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER



18 NOV, MONDAY

Mark 14:1–11

## Jesus Anointed

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Jesus had been teaching his disciples about what was about to happen, though most of them did not yet understand. However, one woman among them (probably Mary based on John 12:1–8) seems to have understood His words more clearly. What did this prompt her to do (Mark 14:8)?</li> <li>2) The other disciples (and even Mark in his recording of these events) focus on the expensive perfume and what its exchange value would have been. Contrast this with Jesus, who did not once mention the cost. What does this teach me about Jesus' value system as opposed to those of most of us who follow Him?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) The gospel of John tells us that Judas Iscariot was among those who were indignant at the 'waste' of expensive perfume. Mark records that Judas went to the chief priests after the incident in today's passage. What would have motivated Judas – who along with the other twelve had seen Jesus' miracles and heard His teaching for years – to betray his Master?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

19 NOV, TUESDAY

Mark 14:12–26

## The Last Supper

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Every church practices a form of communion or Eucharist (as instructed by Jesus and recorded in 1 Corinthians 11:23–25). What meaning does Jesus assign to the bread and the cup? Did the disciples yet understand this?</li> <li>2) Jesus had made preparations for this Passover meal (presumably in secret, since the disciples were not aware of it). At this last supper, He reveals that He is to be betrayed by one of them. How do the disciples' response contrast with Jesus' own response in Mark 14:21?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) The Last Supper is built on the structure of the Jewish Passover, but points to a future feast in the Kingdom of God together with the risen Christ (Revelations 9:9). How can I look forward to this promise as I regularly break the bread and share the cup with my brethren?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

20 NOV, WEDNESDAY

Mark 14:27–31

## You Will All Fall Away

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Jesus predicts His abandonment by all the disciples, but includes a hopeful promise (Mark 14:28). How has Jesus held out hope even in the face of my own faithlessness?</li> <li>2) Peter (followed by the rest of the disciples) declares his intended faithfulness in no uncertain terms. How does the proud individuality of Mark 14:29 compare with the community-focused restorative instruction of Jesus in John 21:15–17? Can any of us remain faithful alone?</li> <li>3) Despite Peter saying 'even if I have to die with you', it appears the disciples are still not fully prepared for what is to come. While they had heard Jesus talk about His coming suffering, and were even able to speak about it (as in today's passage), the real test was soon to come. Have I made rash and boastful commitments to Jesus? How did He respond?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

21 NOV, THURSDAY

Mark 14:32–42

## Prayer at Gethsemane

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Gethsemane (meaning 'olive press', where olives were crushed) was where Jesus chose to make His final preparations before His arrest. What form did these preparations take?</li> <li>2) Jesus chose Peter, James, and John out of the disciples to accompany Him. What was their task (see also Mark 13:36–37 in the Nov 16 reading)? Were they able to fulfil this task? Am I fulfilling my own duties of prayerful watchfulness today?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) What plea did Jesus raise to His heavenly Father (three times!)? Were His prayers answered?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

22 NOV, FRIDAY

Mark 14:43–52

## Jesus Betrayed

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) An armed crowd, led by Judas the betrayer, came to seize Jesus. Did the brash Peter, who had just recently promised not to fall away (Mark 14:29), rise to the occasion (John 18:10)?</li> <li>2) Till this point, Peter (and probably the rest of the disciples) still harboured hope that Jesus would be the Messiah – that He would rally the Jews to defeat their overlords much as the Maccabees had successfully done a hundred years earlier. What did Jesus have to say on the matter?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) The disciples all fled. Both because of fear, and perhaps because the image they had built up of a victorious Messiah had been shattered by Jesus' words. Mark 14:51–52 records a very specific detail – traditionally assumed to be John Mark writing about his own conduct that night. Am I able to humbly recount my own failings and faithlessness before God?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

23 NOV, SATURDAY

Mark 14:53–65

## An Unjust Trial

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Today's passage makes it clear that the 'trial' is only for show. What characteristics of this trial betray its' unjust nature?</li> <li>2) Mark records that 'many testified falsely' against Jesus, without going into detail about those testimonies. Was the testimony in Mark 14:58 true (see John 2:19)? Why does Mark choose to record this specific testimony?</li> <li>3) After remaining silent throughout the unjust trial, Jesus answers a very specific question with the truth (Mark 14:62). Finally the Sanhedrin had the 'evidence' that they needed. Why did Jesus choose to answer this very question?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

24 NOV, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER

25 NOV, MONDAY

Mark 14:66–72

## Peter Denies Jesus Three Times

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Peter would not completely abandon Jesus, and he had snuck in to the high priest's courtyard to see what would happen (Mark 14:54). Where did he choose to wait?</li> <li>2) The warm fire also provided light, and a passing servant girl recognised Peter. Why did Peter deny knowing Jesus? What did he then do to avoid further scrutiny?</li> <li>3) The same servant girl notices Peter again, and this prompts further scrutiny by those nearby. How does Peter react to being identified? How does he then react to realising how he had failed Jesus?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |



26 NOV, TUESDAY

Mark 15:1–15

## Pilate's Trial

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Why did the Sanhedrin require the agreement and cooperation of Pilate (see also John 18:31)?</li> <li>2) Was Pilate convinced by the accusations of the chief priests? What part of today's passage makes it clear that he realised that Jesus was innocent?</li> <li>3) A crowd had already gathered for Pilate's annual 'pardoning', and Pilate saw an opportunity there. Instead, the chief priests instigated a 'cancellation' of Jesus, in favour of a condemned criminal. How does this obvious miscarriage of justice reflect my own salvation and forgiveness?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

27 NOV, WEDNESDAY

Mark 15:16–32

## Jesus Crucified

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) All the gospels are careful to point out how Jesus was treated even prior to His crucifixion. By His stripes, we are healed. How do I process these passages regarding the passion of the Christ?</li> <li>2) Simon of Cyrene is forced by a Roman soldier to carry the crossbar Jesus is by this point too weak to bear. Recalling Jesus' words from Mark 8:34 – how would this experience have affected Simon and his family (see also Romans 16:13)? What cross am I called to bear?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Mark records the insults of both passers-by and the chief priests and teachers of the law. What was it that all of them failed to understand regarding the nature of the cross and the 'saving' that Jesus was trying to accomplish?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

28 NOV, THURSDAY

Mark 15:33–41

## Jesus' Death

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Jesus' cry of abandonment in Mark 15:34 echos Psalm 22:1. Those standing near assume He is calling for deliverance. Why does God forsake Jesus?</li> <li>2) Mark records the tearing of the curtain to the Most Holy Place being torn in two from top to bottom. The Most Holy Place represents the presence of God among His people (Exodus 26:33–34). What does the tearing of this curtain signify (Hebrews 10:19–20)?</li> <li>3) Some among the disciples (noticeably John in John 19:25–27) were present at some point during Jesus' crucifixion, but Mark only records the faithful presence of 'many women' in Mark 15:40–41. To this day, faithful obedience to Jesus' call to 'watch' (especially in prayer) seems overwhelmingly practiced by women. How can I learn to 'watch' as faithfully as these early disciples did?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

29 NOV, FRIDAY

Mark 15:42–47

## Jesus' Burial

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Jewish burial must take place before sundown, and Joseph of Arimathea boldly honours Jesus (at risk to his own reputation) by asking for Jesus' body to be buried. How does Joseph's conduct compare with that of the other teachers of the law (Mark 12:12) and Pilate himself (Mark 15:15)?</li> <li>2) Joseph (and Nicodemus, according to John 19:39–40) hurriedly bury Jesus' body in a new tomb belonging to him (fulfilling Isaiah 53:9, since Joseph was very rich). Understandably, in their haste Jesus' body was not anointed. How does this give more significance to Mary's actions in Mark 14:3–9)?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) As the stone is rolled against the entrance of the tomb, it seemed to Joseph (and probably Jesus' disciples) that the story has come to an end. But Mark knows better, and Mark 15:47 point towards what is about to occur, with the women taking note of where Jesus was buried. What can I learn from the conduct of Joseph and the women on that first Good Friday?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

30 NOV, SATURDAY

Mark 16:1-8

## He Has Risen!

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Jesus was buried the day before the Sabbath, and his disciples (women included) faithfully observed the Sabbath. Now on the third day, the same women who watched with Him till the end went to honour Him again. What did they expect to find?</li> <li>2) Mark uses the words 'alarmed', 'trembling', 'bewildered', and 'afraid'. How would I have reacted to finding my Lord's tomb empty?</li> <li>3) The 'young man' in the tomb reassures the women, but also gives them instructions (based on what Jesus had already taught them in Mark 14:28). Do the women obey his instruction? How do I, today, respond when told to 'go and tell' about the risen Christ?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

1 DEC, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER

An open book is shown from a top-down perspective, slightly angled. The pages are white and appear to be made of a textured paper. The right page is open to a blank space where the text '1st SAMUEL' is printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The left page is partially visible, showing a similar texture and color. The book is set against a plain white background.

1<sup>st</sup> SAMUEL

2 DEC, MONDAY

1 Samuel 1:1–8

## Elkanah, Peninnah, and Hannah

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The book of Samuel (originally a singular book) primarily covers Saul and David, and hence the establishment of the Israelite monarchy. Yet today's passage focuses on the lineage and family of Samuel. What can I glean from today's passage about the faithfulness of Samuel's family?</li> <li>2) Elkanah had two wives (an acceptable practice at the time). What does today's passage demonstrate about the downsides of polygamy?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Why did Hannah continue to weep and avoid food despite Elkanah's professions of love (and loving acts)? What blessing did she desire that she still lacked?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |



3 DEC, TUESDAY

1 Samuel 1:9–20

## I Asked the Lord for Him

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Eli jumps to conclusions and reprimands Hannah. How does Hannah respond to this?</li> <li>2) Despite Eli's initial harshness, 1 Samuel 1:17 brings hope to Hannah, as evidenced by her immediate reaction to it. When did I last receive a word of hope in response to my pleadings before God?</li> <li>3) Hannah becomes pregnant by Elkanah, bearing a baby boy from her previously closed womb. Even before Hannah sees that God has heard her, she and Elkanah had worshipped before Him. What does this tell me about their hearts?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

4 DEC, WEDNESDAY

1 Samuel 1:21–28

## I Give Him to the Lord

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Hannah did not forget her vow in 1 Samuel 1:11. Yet she waited till the boy was weaned (roughly 2–3 years of age), that he may be able to live in the temple without his mother. How does Elkanah's response in 1 Samuel 1:23 demonstrate the faithfulness of this entire family?</li> <li>2) Elkanah and Hannah bring their offerings (including Samuel) after he is weaned, to be presented before the Lord. How do Hannah's words reflect her acknowledgement of God's faithfulness as well as her own obedience?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) 1 Samuel 1:28 records that the (still very young) Samuel 'worshipped the Lord' there. Where would he have learnt to do that (see also verse 3 and verse 19)? Am I raising my children (or the children in my faith community) to worship the true and living God?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

5 DEC, THURSDAY

1 Samuel 2:1–11

## Hannah's Prayer

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Hannah's prayer (or poem) here begins by exalting God, but also with triumphal proclamation of victory over 'my enemies'. Who could she be referring to here?</li> <li>2) Hannah's prayer emphasizes the reversal of fortunes which God brings about (verse 4–8), and associates that with the faithfulness of His servants, just as she had lived. What testimony of God's faithfulness reversing fortunes do I have to share?</li> <li>3) 1 Samuel 2:8–10 are interesting verses because Hannah mentions kings and princes even before Israel has a monarchy. What future is looked forward to here?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

6 DEC, FRIDAY

1 Samuel 2:12–26

## Eli's Sons

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What sins were Eli's sons guilty of? And who were they sinning against?</li> <li>2) 1 Samuel 2:18–21 provides a short and refreshing contrast to the rest of today's passage. What is the significance of Samuel's attire (see Exodus 39:27–29)? And how had God honoured the obedience demonstrated by Hannah in keeping to her vow?</li> <li>3) Eli's reprimand of his sons falls on deaf ears. What could the reason for that be? Is a parent responsible for the wilful sinning of a child (or multiple children)?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

7 DEC, SATURDAY

1 Samuel 2:27–36

## Prophecy Against the House of Eli

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) An unnamed man of God prophesies punishment on to Eli and his line of descendants. Why is this prophecy and reprimand directed at Eli rather than his (adult) sons (see especially 1 Samuel 2:29)?</li> <li>2) 1 Samuel 2:30 describes God removing the promised priesthood from Eli's line (but not from Aaron's line) forever (this is eventually fulfilled in 1 Kings 2:27). Is God being fickle or unreliable in His promises?</li> <li>3) God's prophecy includes a sign to demonstrate its trustworthiness, the death of both the offending sons on the same day. It is then followed with a promise – though not one which is good for Eli and his descendants. Why is Eli not recorded as having responded to the prophecies of today's passage?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

8 DEC, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER

9 DEC, MONDAY

1 Samuel 3:1–10

## Parental Guidance

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) How does Samuel's initial answer to God's call (1 Samuel 3:4) compare to those of other Scriptural heroes (Genesis 22:1, Genesis 46:2, Exodus 3:4, Isaiah 6:8, Acts 9:10)?</li> <li>2) The young Samuel, being unable to identify the voice of God yet, goes straight to Eli. What does this say about their relationship? Have Eli's failings as a parent rubbed off on to the raising of Samuel?</li> <li>3) 1 Samuel 3:8 says that 'Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy'. Eli therefore gives wise guidance to Samuel. How does Samuel respond to this instruction? What does this say about his heart?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

10 DEC, TUESDAY

1 Samuel 3:11–21

## God's Message to Samuel

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Samuel is believed to have been about 12 years old in this passage. How would God's message have affected him?</li> <li>2) Eli's response to God's message reflects a tired (and perhaps defeated) old man, worn out by age and disappointments. Have I responded to God in a similar manner?</li> <li>3) Contrast the sparsity of 1 Samuel 3:1 of the word of the Lord with 1 Samuel 3:21. What had changed over the course of this chapter? How much difference does a faithful man of God make?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |



11 DEC, WEDNESDAY

1 Samuel 4:1–11

## Israel's Superstition

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) In response to a lost battle, the Israelites correctly surmise that the Lord had not been on their side. What was their solution?</li> <li>2) The coming of the ark was met with great faith (but no indication of true faithfulness) – such loud shouting that the enemy camp was also aroused. Was there any real substance to the confidence and joy of the Israelites? How was the morale of the Philistines affected?</li> <li>3) Israel's second loss is much greater than the first, both in number of men as well as in the loss of the object of their superstitious and idolatrous behaviour. What did Israel's 'use' of the ark show regarding their attitude towards God? What warning can I take from this?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

12 DEC, THURSDAY

1 Samuel 4:12–22

## The Glory has Departed

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Eli, still judge of Israel even in his old age, is fearful in his heart. What is the source and object of his fear?</li> <li>2) The young Benjamite soldier runs roughly 20 miles carrying the evil news – military defeat, numerous casualties, the death of Eli's sons, and the capture of the ark. Why was it the last piece of news which kills Eli?</li> <li>3) 1 Samuel 4:19–22 provides a despondent addendum to the news, as Eli's daughter-in-law dies in childbirth while naming her son according to the dire circumstances of Israel. Had the glory of God departed because of the loss of the ark, or had the ark been lost because the glory of God had departed due to Israel's unfaithfulness?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

13 DEC, FRIDAY

1 Samuel 5:1–12

## God's Glory Over the Philistines

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Why was the ark first placed in the temple of Dagon? What confidence did the Philistines have in the superiority of their god over the God of the defeated Israelites?</li> <li>2) Immediately, God demonstrates His glory. The idol of Dagon bows down before the ark repeatedly. How could the priests of Dagon (and the Philistines) continue to worship a god so thoroughly humbled by the Lord?</li> <li>3) The ark is sent from city to city in a large-scale game of 'hot potato', instilling fear even in cities which had not yet been affected. What did the Philistines decide to do with the ark? Did they have any other options?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

14 DEC, SATURDAY

1 Samuel 6:1–12

## The Ark Returns

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) When the Philistines could bear the plagues no longer, plans are made for the return of the ark. Why is the guilt offering suggested and provided? What guilt did the Philistines believe they had?</li> <li>2) Despite the clear evidence of the past seven months, the crafty priests and diviners propose another test for the God of Israel – with weighted scales. Two unbroken cows, yearning for their calves, were to be used. Why do they do this?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Unsurprisingly, the cows proceed towards Israel despite lowing with anguish from separation for their calves. The Lord of the universe would not allow the games of men to confound His intentions. Why then did the rulers of the Philistines continue to follow the ark?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

15 DEC, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER

16 DEC, MONDAY

1 Samuel 6:13–20

## The Ark at Beth Shemesh

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Israelites of Beth Shemesh could not have expected the ark (presumed lost for good) to appear unaccompanied in their town. How would I have reacted to such a surprise?</li> <li>2) The local Levites take charge of the immediate thanksgiving offerings and sacrifices to the Lord. What would the ceremony have looked like? How would the watching rulers of the Philistines have felt, looking on from afar?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Despite the initial joy and thanksgiving, the heart of Israel (including the people of Beth Shemesh) still refused to honour the Lord fully, resulting in many of them perishing. What does it say when God's holy presence has a similar effect among His chosen people as among the pagan Philistines? How does God's holiness affect my faith community?</li> </ol>                                                           |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

17 DEC, TUESDAY

1 Samuel 6:21–7:6

## Israel Returns to the Lord

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Beth Shemesh responds to God's holiness by distancing the visible sign of God's presence from themselves. But the men of Kiriath Jearim take in the ark and treat it with the honour and reverence it deserves. When will it next be moved (2 Samuel 6:4)?</li> <li>2) With the return of the ark, the people of Israel desire to turn back to the Lord. What are Samuel's instructions to them? Have I similarly consecrated myself before God?</li> <li>3) Israel's return is marked by fasting and confession, as well as the acknowledgement of the leadership (as the final judge) of Samuel. What outcome do I expect when I and my faith community get serious about confession, repentance, and returning to the Lord?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

18 DEC, WEDNESDAY

1 Samuel 7:7-17

## Philistines Defeated

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Israel's gathering in repentance provoked attack from the Philistines. Perhaps the Philistines saw weakness and an opportunity to take advantage. How is the attitude of the Israelites in today's passage, compared to their attitude in 1 Samuel 4:5?</li> <li>2) Many judges were military as well as spiritual leaders, renowned for their battlefield exploits and leadership. What role did Samuel play as Israel's judge? Who, then, was leading the fighting men of Israel?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Despite Samuel lacking any military role, Israel's military successes under him were comparable to any of the great generals who had judged Israel. What does this tell me about the true source of Israel's strength and victories?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |



19 DEC, THURSDAY

1 Samuel 8:1–9

## Israel Asks for a King

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Despite Samuel's strengths and spiritual sensitivity, his parenting skills appear to have been learnt from Eli rather than Hannah. Is Israel justified in rejecting his corrupt sons as leaders?</li> <li>2) What is Israel's primary reason for desiring a king, according to 1 Samuel 8:5? What is the underlying reason according to God's word in 1 Samuel 8:7?</li> <li>3) Part of the reason that Samuel felt rejected by the people was because, in appointing his sons as leaders, he was behaving more like a king than as a judge (a non-hereditary position). But most of all, Samuel heard God's voice clearly. What did God think about Israel's request for a king?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

20 DEC, FRIDAY

1 Samuel 8:10–22

## Israel Insists on a King

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Samuel speaks the word of the Lord to Israel, warning them to consider carefully what they were asking for. How accurate are the words of 1 Samuel 8:11–17 in describing the behaviour of kings and other rulers with absolute power?</li> <li>2) Israel is not only warned about what having a king would be like, they are also warned prophetically about their future reaction to the king they have chosen. Does this make the people reconsider? Why not?</li> <li>3) Samuel passes on the words of the people to the Lord. What is God's answer to him? How does God deal with me when I insist on having my own way?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

21 DEC, SATURDAY

1 Samuel 9:1–14

## Saul Looks for His Father's Donkeys

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 1 Samuel 9:1–2 introduces Saul and his lineage. A respected and wealthy family line, most handsome young man in Israel, of greater physical stature than 'anyone else'. What important characteristics are missing from this description?</li> <li>2) The account in 1 Samuel 9:3–14 is almost comedic, with a fruitless search for donkeys leading to a multi-step search for a 'man of God'. Who was it who ordained that Kish's donkeys would be lost, and that Saul would be sent to find them – specifically on the day of sacrifice?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Samuel's great reputation in Israel is evident in multiple parts of today's passage. What is Saul's attitude (at this point in his life) when approaching this man of God?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

22 DEC, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER

23 DEC, MONDAY

1 Samuel 9:15–24

## Samuel Meets Saul

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Did Saul believe his meeting with Samuel was a coincidence? Did Samuel believe that? What was the difference between both men?</li> <li>2) God confirms Saul's identity to Samuel, after having told Samuel the previous day what was to come. How does Saul respond to Samuel's overwhelming words in 1 Samuel 9:19–20? What does this say about Saul's attitude and self-confidence?</li> <li>3) Samuel brought Saul to the feast and gave him the place and food of the most honoured guest. Why would he have done this (by surprise) to the young Benjamite?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

24 DEC, TUESDAY

1 Samuel 9:25–10:8

## Samuel Anoints Saul

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) After long conversation, Samuel and Saul leave Samuel's house. In private, Samuel anoints Saul's head with oil. What does this anointing represent, according to today's passage?</li> <li>2) Samuel then gives Saul very specific descriptions of what would happen as Saul left on his journey home. Why were these descriptions so specific? What was Samuel hoping to teach Saul?</li> <li>3) Samuel ends his briefing of the newly anointed king with clear instructions. Do kings receive and obey instructions (in other nations)? What lesson was Samuel trying to teach Saul in this?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

25 DEC, WEDNESDAY

1 Samuel 10:9–27

## Saul is Made King

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Saul must have been amazed when everything Samuel prophesied happened (including the spiritual anointing among the procession of prophets). What effect (if any) did this have on him?</li> <li>2) Both before his uncle (1 Samuel 10:16) and before the people of Israel and Mizpah (1 Samuel 10:22), Saul hides instead of leading. How does this attitude align with Saul's own words in 1 Samuel 9:21? Is Saul being humble, or is his behaviour indicative of another motivation?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Many of the people of Israel rejoice in God's appointed king (including an honour guard of fighting men), but some do not. What does Saul's silence here indicate?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

26 DEC, THURSDAY

1 Samuel 11:1-11

## Saul's First Battle

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Raider attacks on Israelite cities were common, as were calls for assistance between Israelite cities and clans during the time of the judges. Jabesh Gilead sent for aid. What was different this time in Israel?</li> <li>2) What was Saul doing when the messengers reached Gibeah? Do kings work the fields with their oxen? Was Saul not yet king of Israel?</li> <li>3) The Spirit of God came powerfully upon Saul, and he acted with a fury and strength not yet seen by any in Israel (and perhaps by Saul himself). How did Israel react to Saul's command to follow him and Samuel? What was the result for the army of Nahash the Ammonite?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |



27 DEC, FRIDAY

1 Samuel 11:12–15

## Saul's Kingship Renewed

|                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><i>Questions</i><br/>to ponder</p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Israel had asked (1 Samuel 8:20) for a king 'to go out before us and fight our battles'. How did Saul's victory over the Ammonites affect his stature in the eyes of Israel?</li> <li>2) Saul shows mercy to prevent division in Israel. Samuel shows wisdom in taking advantage of the moment to have the people again recognise Saul as king. What does this say about the nature of leadership and its relationship with those who are led?</li> </ol> |
| <p><i>Head</i><br/>What can I understand?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) 1 Samuel 11:15 shows the Israelites and Saul sacrificing to the Lord and celebrating. Saul had not merely won a military victory, but the hearts of his subjects and (for now) the experience of wise and level-headed leadership. How promising was Saul's kingship at this point?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><i>Heart</i><br/>How do I respond?</p>     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><i>Hands</i><br/>What must I do?</p>       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

28 DEC, SATURDAY

1 Samuel 12:1–12

## Samuel's History Lesson

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Samuel speaks to Israel as an old judge, calling for any who had quarrel with him to speak up. Have I conducted myself with such integrity that those around me would testify as Israel did regarding Samuel?</li> <li>2) Samuel then recounts the history of God's dealings with Israel, from slavery in Egypt to the time of the judges. What clear pattern can be seen in the history recounted here?</li> <li>3) Samuel ends the history lesson with the current threat which inspired the demand for a king, the recently defeated king Nahash. What comparison was Samuel trying to draw between this threat and the others that God had already delivered Israel from?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

29 DEC, SUNDAY

*Sunday Worship Celebration*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

PREACHER

30 DEC, MONDAY

1 Samuel 12:13–25

## Actions Have Consequences

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Samuel places responsibility with Israel for their demands for a king. However, 1 Samuel 12:13 specifically says 'the Lord has set a king over you'. How does this statement make clear the relationship between the sovereign Lord and his chosen people?</li> <li>2) The miraculous sign of 1 Samuel 12:18 strikes fear in the hearts of the people. Do they only realise the evil of their request at this point in time, after repeated warnings from Samuel?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Samuel ends with a note of hope, promising his prayers and teaching will continue. Yet full responsibility is still on the people of Israel. What are they required to do? Is the same required of me?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

31 DEC, TUESDAY

1 Samuel 13:1–14

## You Have Done a Foolish Thing

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Context                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Questions</i><br>to ponder         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Saul begins establishing an army, and his son Jonathan attacks a Philistine fortress. Why does Saul proclaim this news throughout Israel? How does this differ from the hiding/silent Saul in earlier readings?</li> <li>2) The Philistines assemble a huge army, sparking fear in the Israelite ranks. When Samuel does not come on time, Saul impatiently and presumptively assumes the role of priest. What does this reveal about Saul's heart (see also 1 Samuel 13:14)?</li> </ol> |
| <i>Head</i><br>What can I understand? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) Saul compounded his error by his words in 1 Samuel 13:11–12. Have I tried to excuse my disobedience in similar manner?</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <i>Heart</i><br>How do I respond?     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <i>Hands</i><br>What must I do?       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

*Notes*



*Notes*



*Notes*





*Notes*



*Notes*



# SSMC

# | 2024

Updated April 2024

## key dates.

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>January</b>                                                                                                                                         | <b>February</b><br><b>18 Feb</b><br>A date with Ross Paterson,<br>Antioch Missions                                              | <b>March</b><br><b>16 &amp; 17 Mar</b><br>Equipping Weekend #1:<br>RAK Ministry<br><b>29 Mar</b> Good Friday<br><b>31 Mar</b> Easter Sunday |
| <b>April</b><br><b>28 Apr</b><br>Journeying with Loss<br>& Grief Seminar                                                                               | <b>May</b><br><b>25 - 26 May</b><br>49th Anniversary Gift Day<br>for Missions<br><b>25 - 28 May</b><br>SUPA Camp (8-12 yrs old) | <b>June</b>                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>July</b><br><b>5 - 8 Jul</b><br>Silent Retreat<br><b>6 - 8 Jul</b><br>Youth Camp<br><b>27 &amp; 28 Jul</b><br>Equipping Weekend #2:<br>RAK Ministry | <b>August</b><br><b>3 Aug</b><br>SSMC Family Day<br><b>25 Aug</b><br>DG Sunday                                                  | <b>September</b><br><b>14 - 16 Sep</b><br>Birds & Bees Camp<br><b>22 Sep</b><br>Social Concerns Sunday<br><b>29 Sep</b> Youth Sunday        |
| <b>October</b><br><b>13 Oct</b><br>MSF Sunday<br><b>27 Oct</b><br>Children's Church Sunday                                                             | <b>November</b><br><b>24 Nov</b><br>Baptism & Membership<br>Service                                                             | <b>December</b><br><b>25 Dec</b><br>Christmas Service<br><b>31 Dec</b><br>Covenant Watchnight<br>Service                                    |


Dates may be subjected to changes. Please refer to our website / church announcements for updates & more info.

[ssmc.com.my](http://ssmc.com.my)



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