



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

MARK
Week 2

DAY 8

The Exorcist Visits the Tombs

Mark 4:35–5:20

OPENING
up to the Word

What is your most terrifying experience with bad weather? (a) lightning storm, (b) flood, (c) tornado, (d) hurricane, (e) hail.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Why were these disciples, most of them fishermen, so afraid of the squall (4:35-41)? What did they lack? Why the word “still” (v. 40)?

2. Follow Jesus through the graveyard in gentile territory (5:1-20). Where did the man who lived in the tombs get his great strength?

3. Follow Legion from the tombs to the pigs. Why did Legion want to stay in that area (v. 10; see Lk 8:31; Rev 9:1; 20:1, 3)?

4. Consider the attitude of the townspeople (vs. 14-17). What were they afraid of? (a) loss of their graveyard caretaker, (b) loss of their pigs, (c) contaminated lake, (d) loss of income, (e) supernatural power.

LIVING
out the Word

1. When was your last stormy day? What did you do? (a) woke Jesus up, (b) let him sleep, (c) blamed Jesus, (d) thanked Jesus for his help.

2. Do you thank the Lord for what he has done for you in his great mercy (v. 19)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Mark turns from the parables of Jesus to his movement through the country, demonstrating his **authority over his creation** (4:35-9:1). He holds power over wind and waves, demons, sickness and death, the townspeople, his disciples, Herod's life, traditions of the Pharisees, the evil spirit in the gentile woman, deafness, hunger, blindness and ignorance.*



“He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to the disciples, ‘Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?’ They were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’”

DAY 9

The Healer Visits the Sick and the Dead

Mark 5:21-43

OPENING
up to the Word

When did you last visit (a) an invalid, (b) a sick person in the hospital, (c) a dying person, (d) a graveyard?

DIGGING
into the Word

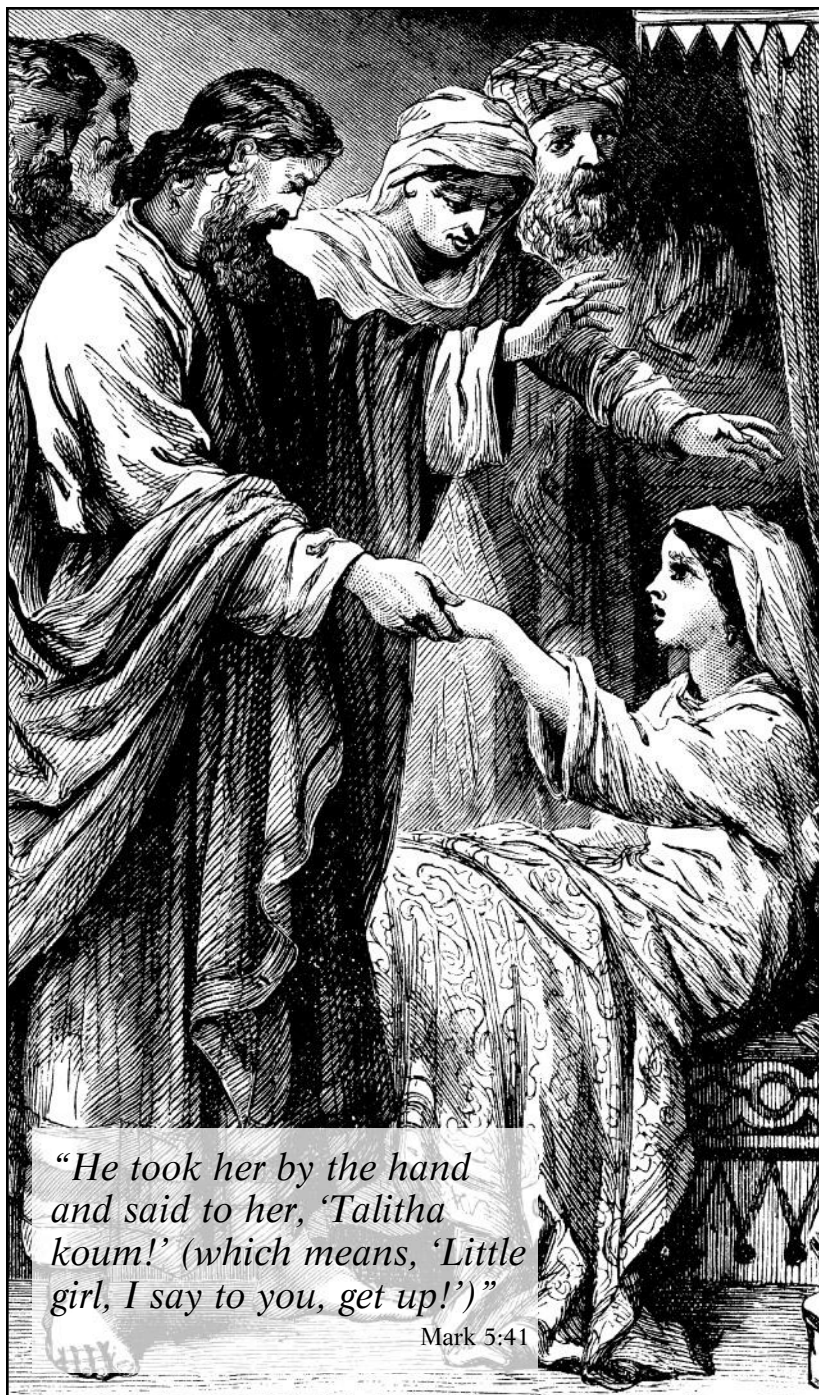
1. Follow Jairus, the synagogue ruler, as he seeks Jesus to heal his daughter (vs. 21-24). How unusual was it for this leader to ask Jesus for help?
 2. Before they could reach the dying daughter, a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years touched Jesus (vs. 25-34).
 3. How did the woman demonstrate fear (v. 33)? And faith (v. 34)? How brave was she to approach Jesus as she did?
 4. In this long passage (vs. 21-43), how is fear and faith contrasted? What about belief (v. 36) and ridicule (v. 40)? Why did Jesus put the laughing mourners out of the room?
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LIVING
out the Word

1. What do you fear the most? Disease? Poverty? Rejection? Death? Face your fear with faith. Believe Jesus (v. 36)!
 2. How quick are you to ridicule what you don't understand? Ask God for understanding.
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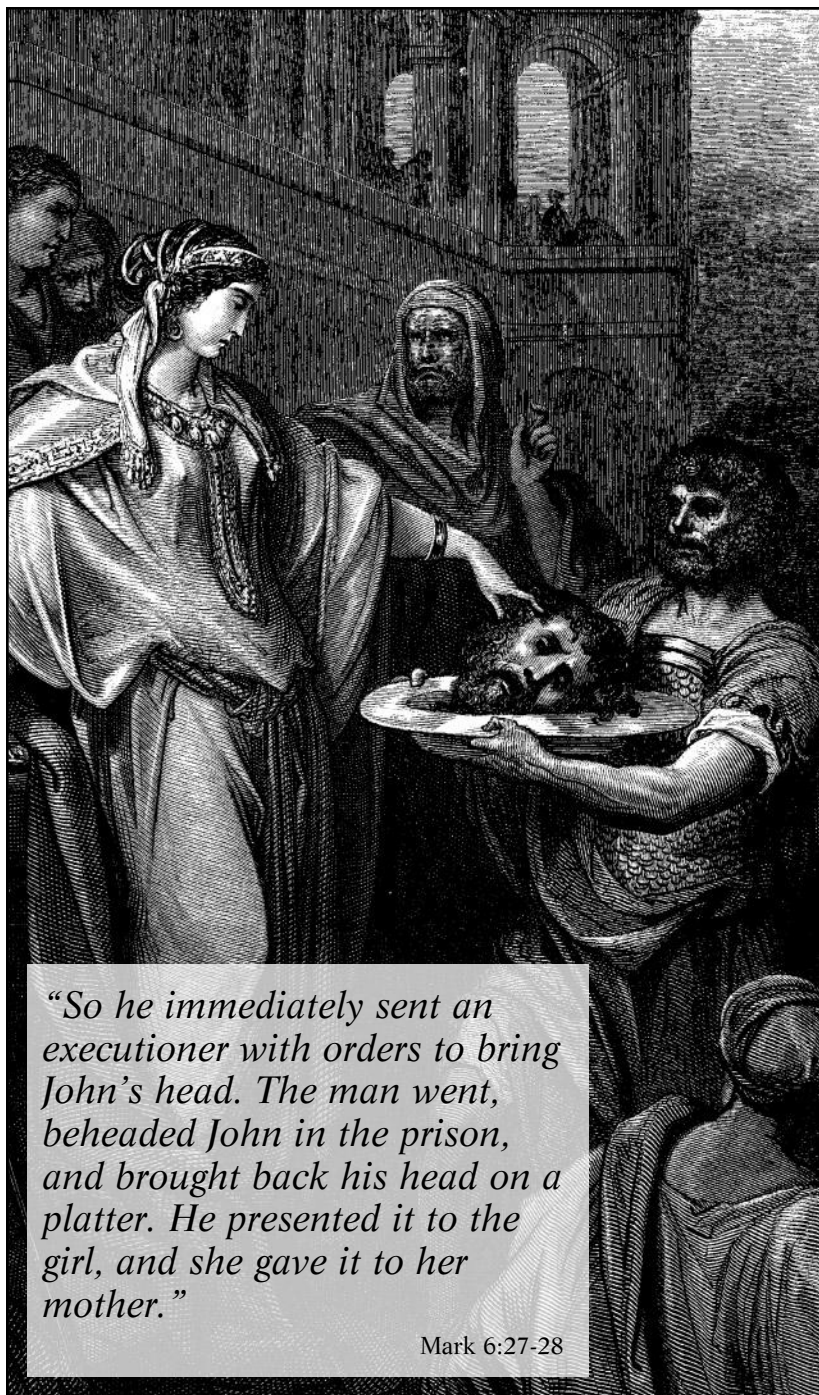
WINDOW
on the Word

Mark gives us two accounts of **sleeping**. In the storm, while the disciples feared for their lives, Jesus peacefully slept in the stern of the boat, only to be awakened by his followers (4:36-38). Next, in the face of death, Jesus came to the daughter of Jairus, only to be disturbed by the loud weeping and wailing of professional mourners (5:35-38). Jesus told them she was only asleep, for her death was only temporary. In both accounts he showed that fear can be the enemy of faith (4:40; 5:39), and that he himself is the source, origin, cause and object of faith.



*“He took her by the hand
and said to her, ‘Talitha
koum!’ (which means, ‘Little
girl, I say to you, get up!’)”*

Mark 5:41



“So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John’s head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother.”

Mark 6:27-28

The Rejected Prophet and the Beheaded Prophet

Mark 6:1-29

How are those who proclaim the gospel rejected and ridiculed today?

1. Why did Jesus meet such strong resistance in his home town of Nazareth (vs. 1-6)? How does his amazement (v. 6) continue the theme of the previous passage?

2. What was the mission given by Jesus to the twelve disciples (vs. 7-11)? How tough would that be? How did they do (vs. 12-13)?

3. Herod was puzzled by the preaching of Jesus, for it seemed to echo the words of John the Baptist. Why did Herod hate John the Baptist so fiercely (vs. 14-29)? How important to the Christian story is John the Baptist? Consider Matthew 11:11-15.

1. Where is your home town? How well received and respected are you there?

2. Do you respect individuals you grew up with?

3. If you were in John the Baptist's sandals, would you have spoken so brazenly of Herod's sins?

Herod Antipas, a son of Herod the Great, was ruling over Galilee. His brother Philip, generally respected as a decent leader, ruled north of Galilee. Philip's wife Herodias divorced him to marry his brother Antipas. This second marriage violated Jewish law (Lev 18:16).

DAY 10

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

DAY 11

Power Over Hunger, Wind and Disease

Mark 6:30-56

OPENING
up to the Word

If God gave you absolute power, what would you immediately eliminate? (a) disease, (b) cataclysmic events, (c) premature death, (d) slavery, (e) Christ-less religion.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How important was solitude and rest for Jesus and the disciples (vs. 30-32)? How illusive was it (v. 33)?

2. Leadership demands some flexibility with one's plans. How did Jesus react to the people interfering with his plan (vs. 34-38)? How did the disciples react?

3. How did Jesus satisfy their physical hunger (vs. 38-44)? And their intellectual hunger (v. 34)? Which came first?

4. The fourth watch (v. 48) is about three in the morning. Why were the disciples so terrified (vs. 45-50)? Then, why were they so amazed about Jesus' power over nature (vs. 51-52)?

5. How did the reaction of the crowd at the sea of Galilee (vs. 53-56) contrast with that at the start of the chapter in Nazareth (vs. 1-6)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How often do you need quiet solitude and rest? How often do you get it? Make time today.

WINDOW
on the Word

The **fish** has been an important symbol for Christians. Jesus Christ called fishermen in Galilee to become "fishers of men" (1:17). Here Jesus feeds 5000 men with fish (6:44). The Greek word for fish is ΙΧΘΥΣ (ichthus). Its five Greek letters begin the Greek words for **Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior** (ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΣ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΟΤΗΡ). A symbol of a fish was often placed with the body of Christians at their burials. Today, the symbol of a fish, symbolic of the owner's faith, can often be found on automobiles.

“Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied.”

Mark 6:41-42



Artwork by Gustav Doré

DAY 12

Tradition, Tradition!

Mark 7:1-23

OPENING
up to the Word

Remember Tevya in *Fiddler on the Roof*? What traditions are important to your family?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Mark had to explain Jewish customs to his gentile readers. What tradition of the Pharisees did some of the disciples ignore (vs. 1-5)? Did these disciples break cultural norms?
2. Did Jesus directly answer the question of the Pharisees (vs. 5-8)? Whose conduct did he address?
3. In Leviticus 19:2, the people of Israel are called a holy people. How did these Pharisees miss the purpose of God's law (Mk 7:9-13)? How had their traditions become so important to them?
4. What makes a person "unclean" (vs. 14-23)? How did Jesus contrast the heart (vs. 19-21) with the hand (v. 5)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How important is physical cleanliness for you? (a) next to godliness, (b) a compulsion, (c) okay in moderation, (d) essential.
2. How do you understand spiritual purity? (a) essential for salvation, (b) essential for friendship, (c) nice but not essential, (d) an undeserved gift of God's grace.
3. Can you identify any traditions or rituals that are counterproductive in your life?

WINDOW
on the Word

***The Pharisees** were an established sect of the Jews. The Jewish historian Josephus claimed there were about 8,000 Pharisees in the first century. They held the oral traditions of their fathers as important as the written law in the Old Testament. Although their intentions were to worship God and uphold his standards, some got carried away into a legalistic approach that excluded even other Jews. In verse 11, **corban** means "gift to God." The Jews believed that if an asset was declared corban, although this asset could continue to be used for personal benefit, it could be denied for use by parents, how ever needy they might be.*

Power to the Marginalized

Mark 7:24-37

Is cleanliness really next to godliness? When can cleanliness counter disease? When does it become an obsession?

1. In this passage, Jesus had travelled far north (v. 24). What was his intent in leaving Galilee?

2. Why did the Greek woman need to beg Jesus to heal her (vs. 25-29)? Was Jesus testing her belief? Her humility? What was the result (v. 30)?

3. Decapolis was east of Galilee and was populated mostly by gentiles (v. 31). What was their attitude toward Jesus (vs. 32-37)?

4. Jesus healed the girl without seeing her (v. 30). He healed the deaf mute after touching him (v. 33). How important were the gentiles to Jesus' mission? Why did they need to be patient (v. 27)?

1. Do you have goals in life that demand that you prioritize what can be done for various groups, as did Christ (v. 27)? Do you need to let some people know so they won't be upset?

2. Is there anyone you need to encourage but you cannot do it in person? How do you handle it? (a) wait until you can be there, (b) pray for them, (c) call them, (d) e-mail them, (e) fax them.

*Mark moves from the **uncleanliness** of the evil intentions of the heart in verses 1-23 to the uncleanliness of a demonic spirit who had possessed the heart of a child in verses 24-30. **Evil** was understood as resulting from the influence of Satan and his demons. See 2 Corinthians 4:3-6.*

DAY 13

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

DAY 14

Passion of Compassion

Mark 8:1-26

OPENING
up to the Word

Does your passion motivate you to greater joy?
Does your *compassion* motivate you to help others to greater joy?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. This event occurred after the people had been with Jesus for three days (vs. 1-3). What had been happening? Compare this passage with Matthew's account in Matthew 15:32-39.

2. The Greek text indicates that the baskets of leftovers in Mark 8:8 were even larger than those in 6:43. How did Jesus apply miracles to compassionate ministry (8:4-10)?

3. Why did the Pharisees want a sign from Jesus (vs. 11-15)? What did this lack of vision indicate about the attitude of the Pharisees (vs. 14-15)? Compare this with Luke 12:1.

4. Yeast is the agent that spreads through bread dough, causing it to rise and become fluffy. Why did the disciples not understand about the yeast of the Pharisees (Mk 8:14-21)? How does the story of the healing of physical blindness (vs. 22-26) compare with the blindness of the Pharisees and disciples (vs. 14-21)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. When have you had compassion on the needy? What did you do? (a) feed them, (b) give them money, (c) shelter them, (d) pay a debt, (e) pray for them.

2. Do you think you need a sign from Jesus to believe him? Why not? How do you live by faith?

3. How has Jesus opened your eyes? How miraculous is the healing of spiritual blindness?

WINDOW
on the Word

***The Pharisees** were typical of those of the Jewish nation who expected a Messiah to reestablish the peace the nation had experienced under the Maccabees in 142 B.C. Before they would consider supporting Jesus and his teaching, they wanted a miraculous sign done just for them. Yet they ignored the many miracles Mark records.*

Watch out for Yeast . . .

In Mark 8:15, Jesus' disciples were confused about his comments regarding Herod and the Pharisees.

What could Jesus have meant? What did leaven have to do with Herod and the Pharisees?

Jesus reminded his followers of his miracles of feeding the five thousand and the four thousand. The Pharisees responded by disputing with Jesus and by refusing to believe in the miracles that Jesus was doing. Jesus was warning his disciples against *unbelief*.

Like yeast in dough, lack of trust and belief can grow until it breaks into open rebellion against God. No wonder Jesus was displeased with his disciples' lack of perception. The yeast of unbelief was already working in them.

Jesus was concerned about his followers' faith because he knew that serious trouble lay ahead. Powerful enemies would take Jesus away, and the disciples would be tested.

As Christians, we don't know what lies ahead. We may face severe and painful difficulties in the future.

Is our relationship with God—our trust in Jesus—ready to face those trials and challenges? Or has the yeast of unbelief taken hold, filling our lives with emptiness and pushing out our trust in the Lord?