

# EPIC

*A journey through the Gospel of Mark*

## **WEEK 8** **STUDY GUIDE**



**CENTRAL**  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH



## MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2022

**Read:** Mark 14:66-72

**Scripture Verse:** *“Right away the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had spoken to him. “The rooster will crow twice,” he had said. “Before it does, you will say three times that you don’t know me.” Peter broke down and sobbed.”* –Mark 14:72

### Today’s Thought:

It was only a week ago that Jesus and his disciples had returned to Jerusalem. It was Palm Sunday, the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. The people celebrated by waving palm branches and calling out, *“Hosanna, Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”* What a difference a week can make. The announcement of the triumphal entry had now turned to shouts of *“Crucify him, crucify him!”*

After returning to Jerusalem, the religious leaders were becoming more and more anxious about Jesus were ramping up their efforts to find a way to kill him. Meanwhile, it was the start of the holy week, and preparations were being made for the Passover meal in every Jewish home. Jesus wanted to eat the Passover meal with his disciples one last time before his journey to the cross. Judas had made his plan with the Sanhedrin and joined the other disciples and Jesus for the “Last Supper.”

While they were gathered around the table eating, Jesus announced that one of them would betray him to his enemies. The one who dips his bread in the bowl with mine will do it, and just then, Judas placed his hand in the bowl with Jesus. As they continued to eat together, Jesus took bread and broke it, and passed it around the table, asking them to take it as a representation of his body. He then took the cup, gave thanks, and passed it around the table, saying, *“this is my blood of the new covenant poured out for many.”* It was an extraordinary yet sorrowful moment as Jesus prepared for what was to come next.

Minus Judas, Jesus, and the disciples went to the Mount of Olives to pray in the garden. The Garden of Gethsemane was where they regularly went to be alone and pray. At the entrance to the garden, Jesus announced they would all turn away and scatter upon his arrest. Peter shot back, *“the others may turn away, but I will not.”* It was then Jesus told Peter that he would deny knowing Him three times before the rooster crowed twice that morning. Here Mark solidifies Jesus’ role as a prophet as we read that Peter does deny Christ three times, just as the rooster

crowed twice and Jesus was led away to stand trial.

What is ironic here is that as we see Jesus led off for His trial, Peter finds himself amid his own trial. Peter, the chief disciple, often representing the other eleven, as Jesus faced questions from the most influential religious elites and powerful political forces, was being deposed by a powerless little servant girl of the High Priest. All she could do was point and speak, and Peter failed test one. Following Jesus at a distance now, Peter stepped back from the fire light, hoping not to be seen. But the servant girl points to Peter again, calling out to the crowd that he is one who was with Jesus. Peter denies it. Strike two. After a few minutes, the bystanders recognize that Peter was Galilean and accused him again of being with Jesus. As Peter denied knowing Jesus for the third time and began to call down curses on himself, the rooster crowed a second time, the words of Christ fulfilled.

What can we learn from Judas' betrayal and Peter's denials? Why is Judas condemned but Peter forgiven and restored? The actions of Judas became a calculated change of allegiance from Jesus to the religious establishment and money. In Peter, we see the darkness of a sinful heart who intentionally ignored the predicted signs of Jesus, resulting in his rejection of Christ. How many times have we been guilty of the same? While Judas' heart remained calloused, Peter remembered the words of Jesus, the starting point of his redemption. Deafness and blindness to Jesus are the characteristics we find in a fallen person. Peter had ears to hear and eyes to see the miraculous grace and forgiveness provided by the gospel, and so do we. As Peter came to his senses, he broke down and cried. It was in his self-discovery of deep remorse that he wept out of control. None of the Gospels spell out why Judas' actions were final and Peter's temporary, but we can certainly see that Peter's failure came directly from his sincere attempt to follow Jesus, although from a distance. Like Peter, many of us find ourselves falling under the pressure of following Christ. Even Peter, one of the boldest and strongest disciples, wasn't immune to failure, and neither are we. When we fall short, with remorse, we repent, and Jesus is faithful to forgive us and restore us to right relationship with the Father. When we trust and obey, we find ourselves happy and safe in the arms of Jesus.

- **Why do you think Jesus and the disciples went to Gethsemane to pray?**
- **Why does Jesus take Peter, James, and John with him?**

- What are some of the reasons Peter struggled during his trial?
- What did you learn from Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial? How are their choices a lot like ours today?
- How is your life like Peters?

**Further Reading:** Matthew 26:69-75

## TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2022

**Read:** Mark 15:21-41

**Scripture Verse:** *“They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha. The word Golgotha means The Place of the Skull. Then they gave him wine mixed with spices. But he did not take it. They nailed him to the cross.”* –Mark 22-24a

### Today's Thought:

Upon His arrest in the garden, Jesus was led to the home of the High Priest, Caphius; it was early in the morning, around 6 A.M., when they arrived. Because the Jews split their day into two halves, 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. and 6 P.M. to 6 A.M., we can understand the three specific hours Mark mentions in the text. Mark points us to the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours of the day. However, before we get to those, we notice that it was the first hour of the morning that Jesus' trial began. It would be the longest day of Jesus' life on earth, or it had to seem that way.

The trial before the Sanhedrin only lasted a few minutes before they sent Jesus to Pilate, the Roman Procurator who could place final judgment on a prisoner. Although he found no guilt in Jesus, to appease the religious elites and the crowd they had gathered, Pilate turned Jesus over to the Roman officers for flogging. Thirty-nine lashes with the cat of nine tails. Severely beaten, the soldiers mocked Jesus, punched him, placed a crown of thrones on his head, and led him back to Pilate. Still not satisfied, the religious establishment and the crowd began to cry out, "crucify Him!" Pilate gave in to their demands.

It was now the third hour of the day, roughly 9 A.M., and according to law, the guilty victim had to carry his cross to the place of execution, and no accommodations were made for Jesus. Now literally bearing the weight of his cross, Jesus was led from Pilate's room. Exhausted from being up all night and from the massive loss of blood from his beating, Jesus was unable to continue to Golgotha, the place of the skull, where his execution would take place just outside the city walls. (Golgotha was the place David buried the head of the slain giant Goliath). A victim carried his cross because he was guilty, but Jesus was not guilty of anything. We are the ones who are guilty, so interestingly, the Roman soldiers grabbed a man out of the crowd to carry the cross for Jesus; his name was Simon from Cyrene. Simon carried the cross for you and me.

The parade of prisoners, the crowd, and Jesus finally arrived at the place of the skull. As was accustomed, the soldiers offered the victims a strong

drink that had a narcotic effect to lessen the pain of their suffering. When offered the drink, Jesus refused so he could be in complete control of His faculties to fulfill the will of the Father. Jesus is the example for us all to follow as we live out God's will and come to share in the fellowship of Christ's suffering. As Jesus laid himself down to be nailed on that cross, He entered it fully, not taking any shortcuts that would lessen the bitterness of drinking our cup of suffering and iniquity. The portrait of the cross becomes one of the most incredible displays of redeeming love ever to be taken. And while we were yet sinners, Christ died for you and me.

- What do you find most amazing about the day of Christ's trial?
- What perversion of justice do you see in his trial?
- Why do you think Jesus remained mostly silent through this entire episode?
- What are your reactions to what Jesus went through for us?
- At what point in your life did you ask Jesus to forgive your sins realizing He died as your substitute on the cross? If you haven't why not do it right now?

**Further Reading:** Matthew 27:26-38

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2022

**Read:** Mark 15:33–41

**Scripture Verse:** *“At noon, darkness covered the whole land. It lasted three hours. At three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” This means “My God, my God, why have you deserted me?” (Psalm 22:1) – Mark 15:33–34*

### Today’s Thought:

Jesus, up all night, trial at 6 a.m., is found guilty, beaten, and nailed to a cross all by 9 a.m. The rushed interrogation is over; the flogging is complete; Jesus, exhausted from the beating and loss of blood, made it to the execution site with the help of Simon of Cyrene. As today’s text opens, it is now noon, the sixth hour of the day. Jesus hung on the cross between two thieves for nearly three hours when suddenly the skies grew dark as night. Some believe this thick darkness was not just local but over the whole land, possibly the entire earth. The darkness fulfilled what the scriptures said in Amos 8:9, *“I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day;”* and Jer. 15:9, *“her sun is gone down while it is yet day.”* The Jews asked for a sign that Jesus was the Christ, and they got another one but missed it again, their eyes blinded.

Darkness had come upon the Jewish church and all the nation. The darkness of sin had temporarily blocked the Sun, the Light of righteousness, although now setting would soon emerge victoriously! It was a reminder to them of the grim darkness of Egypt, and it robbed them of their peace, now hidden from their eyes. The power of darkness consumed the world because they loved darkness more than the Light, and it was now sealing their doom. The darkness lasted until 3 o’clock and pictured for the world the cloud that Christ’s human soul was under as the offering for our sin. In this dark moment, Jesus faced the moment he dreaded most when the Father turned his face away from the Son, causing Him to cry out, *“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”*

Many onlookers who heard Jesus’ cry thought he was calling for Elijah to come and rescue Him. It was His cry of abandonment by the Father. It was then that the soldiers offered Jesus a sip of cheap wine. After refusing, Jesus made one last shout, *“it is finished,”* then took his last breath and died. The earth quaked, and the temple curtain was torn from the top down. Jesus had become our perfect sacrifice making way for us

to be in the presence of God. He was our savior and mediator, bringing reconciliation between the people and God!

- What kinds of people were typically crucified?
- How is Jesus like them?
- What aspect of the crucifixion was the worst for Jesus?
- What is the relationship between Jesus' cry of "it is finished" and the tearing of the curtain?
- What does Jesus' death mean to you? How has it changed your life?

**Further Reading:** Luke 23:39-45

## THURSDAY, APRIL 21, 2022

**Read:** Mark 15:42-47

**Scripture Verse:** *“Joseph went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. Joseph was from the town of Arimathea. He was a leading member of the Jewish Council. He was waiting for God’s kingdom.”* – Mark 15:43

### Today’s Thought:

It was Preparation Day, the day everything had to be prepared for the coming of Shabbat or Sabbath. It’s been a long three days for Jesus and the disciples, and now everything they had placed their hope on was over, at least that’s what they thought. The One they had left everything to follow had just died on a cross outside the city walls of Jerusalem. The Disciples had been with Jesus night and day for nearly three years, but now all seemed hopeless.

Mark lets us know that Jesus has died the day before the start of the Sabbath, which is our Friday and starts at sunset. John 19:31 explains the importance of what is about to happen now that Jesus has died, *“It was Preparation Day. The next day would be a special Sabbath. The Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath. So they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.”* As sunset was getting close, Mark tells us that a wealthy member of the Sanhedrin with high standing went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. The man’s name was Joseph, from Arimathea; we are told, *“he was waiting for God’s kingdom.”* How could it be that a member of the Jewish High Council would believe such a thing? I think Mark is letting us know that Joseph was a behind-the-scenes follower of Jesus and thought He was the Messiah they were waiting for, as foretold by the Prophets. As I researched this, I came across some further evidence that might just prove the case.

Joseph had to be a man of high stature even to dare to go before Pilate and ask for Jesus’ body. The Roman custom was to leave all bodies on the cross without burial to warn others who might think to break the law. Joseph, with boldness, asked Pilate to honor the Jewish request for burial before the start of their Sabbath. He did this in fulfillment of Deuteronomy 21:23, *“Then you must not leave the body on the pole all night. Make sure you bury it that same day. Everyone who is hung on a pole is under God’s curse. You must not make the land “unclean.” The Lord your God is giving it to you as your own.”* Here is where this case

gets interesting. When Joseph asked Pilate for the body of Jesus, he used the Greek word 'soma,' which means the living structure of an organism, animal, or human being. That's interesting. When Pilate agreed to release Jesus' body to Joseph, he used the Greek word 'toma,' which meant the dead body of a human being. It seems to me that Joseph not only believed that Jesus was the Messiah but that He would rise from the dead. Was he foreshadowing the resurrection of Christ three days before it happened?

Joseph provides us with a great example of reverence and respect for Jesus. In a race against time, Joseph, after receiving the body of Christ, wrapped His body in new fresh linens that he had purchased and placed Jesus' body in a brand-new tomb in a nearby garden. Running out of time before the Sabbath, Joseph rolled a large stone against the tomb's opening. Only Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where Jesus was laid. It was finished, or was it?

- Where do you think the disciples were at the time for Jesus' burial? Why?
- What kind of a man was Joseph of Arimathea?
- What do you think it means that Joseph was a man waiting on the kingdom of God?
- Why do you think the words Joseph and Pilate used for body is significant?
- Do you think Joseph was providing us a clue to the resurrection? Why or why not?

**Further Reading:** Matthew 27:57-60

## FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2022

**Read:** Mark 16:1-7, 16

**Scripture Verse:** *“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. But he has risen! He is not here! See the place where they had put him. Go! Tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him. It will be just as he told you.’”* – Mark 16:7

### Today’s Thought:

It’s now Friday, the Messiah is dead and buried, but Sunday’s coming. It’s only been a week, but we have seen a lot of history unfold—we have seen betrayal and denial, the arrest and trial of an innocent man, a brutal scourging followed by a gruesome crucifixion. The stunning reality of Jesus’ death had finally struck all that loved Him. Jesus was gone, really gone, and the stone they rolled over the tomb all but sealed their hopes. It was Friday, but Sunday was coming.

Early on Sunday morning, the Marys took their spices and fresh linens to the tomb where Jesus’ body had been lain to correctly prepare and anoint His body. Remember, they didn’t have time for regular preparation due to the onset of the Sabbath. Once the Sabbath restrictions were lifted, the women were on their way to Jesus’ tomb. Uncertain how they would move the sealed stone from in front of the grave, they continued to the garden.

The ladies were astonished when they arrived at the garden to see the massive stone rolled away from Jesus’ tomb! They became alarmed; what had they done with Jesus’ body? Curious, they immediately entered the tomb to find a young man sitting off to the right wearing a white robe, and it wasn’t Jesus. It was an angel, and he spoke to them. He said, *“do not be alarmed; Jesus is no longer here. He has risen. Go and tell his disciples and Peter.”* Can you imagine the stream of emotions that flowed through these ladies? Stunned, bewildered, and trembling, the women ran out of the tomb to give the guys the message they had heard! And I love that the angel told them to give Peter a special word of encouragement, who was probably still stinging from his denials. It provides hope for you and me.

Sunday had come! Jesus had died, for sure. But that was Friday, and now it’s Sunday, resurrection day, and Jesus is alive! The cross was never the end. It was only the beginning! The mission of the Messiah is com-

plete just as it was prophesied, Jesus came to save the world! He is the very Son of God who came into this world not to condemn it but to save it by shedding His blood on the cross, and whoever believes in Him shall have everlasting life!

- What do you think is going through the minds of these women as they made their way to the garden that morning? How about you?
- What can we learn about faith and allegiance from these faithful ladies?
- Why do you think it was women who were last to see Jesus and the first to see him after his resurrection?
- Why did the angel send special encouragement to Peter? How does that give us hope?
- Who did Jesus send to you to tell you He had risen? What did that mean to you?

**Further Reading:** Matthew 28:1-6

# NOTES





[centralwired.com](http://centralwired.com)