



Bible Study
2014-2015

Heart of a Servant

The Gospel of Mark

LESSON 16

“The Boy Who Cried Wolf” is a story that dates all the way back to the 15th century. It revolves around a shepherd boy who repeatedly tricks nearby villagers into believing a wolf is attacking his flock. When they responded to his cries for help, he would laugh and mock them as they arrived breathless on the hillside, only to discover that the boy had lied. When a wolf actually does appear, the villagers no longer trust the boy’s cries for help, and the flock is destroyed. The moral at the end of the Greek version states “this is how liars are rewarded: even if they tell the truth, no one believes them.”

As we now come to the last chapter of Jesus’ time here on earth, we see that He was the complete antithesis of the shepherd boy above. Our Great Shepherd only spoke the truth, walked in truth, and fulfilled the truth in every last detail of His days. He was also aware of the wolves that threatened His flock, so He sent out word to gather them together in the Galilee after He arose. Yet, circumstances reveal that none of the disciples actually believed Him about His resurrection nor did they believe the witnesses that He sent to tell of their personal encounters with Him.

There will be times in our lives when it may be easy to embrace the Word of God and walk in all of its power and life. But there will also be times when our faith will be tested and the Word of God seems to be powerless in contrast to the situations we face. “Impossible” is a word that the Lord wants to eliminate from every Christian’s vocabulary. He has said, “Nothing is impossible with God,” “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” and “All things are possible to him who believes.” There is only one Liar and Satan is his name.

As we go through this final chapter in our study, ask the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart to receive His Word afresh and to embrace the reality that every word of God is true and worthy to be received and believed.

**“Like a chain which depends upon its weakest link, if God’s Word
is not absolutely and completely true,
it is too weak a cable to fix our anchorage and guarantee our eternal peace.”**

~ A. B. Simpson

- b. In Luke 24:6, the angel says “Remember how He spoke to you...?” They remembered, but they did not believe, otherwise they would not have been there among the tombs. Thinking of your answer to the previous question, are there words that Jesus has spoken to you or promises written in His Word, that you still have not fully believed? You are still wandering among the graves and the dead in hopes of finding life?
- c. Read the angel’s proclamation in Mark 16:6. He pointed out that Jesus died but rose and now lives! The angel told the women to look and see and then do *what* in verse 7?
- d. When we have a revelation of the death and resurrection of Jesus, of the Savior Who is alive and dwells with us, we are to go and tell others and *BELIEVE* the words that He has spoken to us. What affect did one woman’s encounter with Jesus have in and through her life according to John 4:39-42.

“If lips and life do not agree, the testimony will not amount to much.”
~ H. A. Ironside

Read Mark 16:9-14

5. Three incredible accounts of Jesus’ resurrection appearances are summarized in only a few verses here. It may be that the Holy Spirit wanted Mark’s account to primarily focus on a significant problem written about in verses 11, 13, 14 and goes along with our previous discussion.
- a. If you notice the four words that are repeated in these three verses, what are they?

- b. Ask the Holy Spirit for help to recall if there was a time when you were walking in truth and speaking the truth to someone and yet they did not believe you. Briefly jot down how it affected you.
- c. There may or may not have been reason to doubt your words from someone else's perspective. But Jesus lived a sinless life and only spoke truth. He performed countless miracles in front of the disciples, as well as repeatedly demonstrated His power over hell itself. They had no reason not to believe Him. When He appears to His disciples in verse 14, what TWO things did He admonish them for?
- d. Jesus' heart and desire to be believed is the exact same as the Father's heart in the Old Testament. Look up Numbers 14:11 and re-write this verse in your own words.
6. Sometimes we forget that eternity is determined by every single person on the simple concept of what is believed in the heart and confessed before others. God made salvation so simple, while the strength of the will is oftentimes our fiercest adversary.
- a. The writer of Hebrews recalls a profound truth and exhortation for believers today. Read Hebrews 3:7-19. What is written about the "heart" in these verses?

- b. God calls a heart of unbelief “hard,” “in error,” and “evil.” Strong words, but so necessary for us to realize the grief it causes Him, as well as the provocation to anger since He is GOD! Oh, the pride that can be in a heart that does not believe what God says! It can even prevent us from entering into God’s rest (vs. 1, 3). What does Hebrews 4:2 tell us to mingle with the Word of God when we hear or read it?
- c. Use a Strong’s concordance or an online resource (like blueletterbible.org) to look at Mark 16:16 and write out the applicable definition of “believe.”
- d. Now use what we have covered about belief in God and His Word and finish the following sentence however you feel led:

“From the depths of my heart and soul, I believe...

*“It is the heart which perceives God and not the reason.
That is what faith is: God perceived by the heart, not by the reason.”
~ Blaise Pascal*

Read Mark 16:15-18

7. These words of Jesus’ have been most often referred to as the “Great Commission.” Two words that believers are commanded to embrace from the Lord are to “go” and “preach.” As a Jew, to even fathom leaving the comforts of home, to let go of the sense of security that came with staying close to family members, to even imagine going away from the promised land to Gentile nations and barbarians was nearly inconceivable. The roots of the Jews in Jesus’ day were deeply emotional, spiritual, and historical. Jesus’ command to go into all the world was not something anyone wanted to do and only occurred because they were forced by persecution.

a. If the Lord were to make it very clear to you that He wanted you to leave your home, family, friends, work, and the comforts of your country, to GO to a remote corner of the world where the name of Jesus has never been spoken, how easy or hard do you imagine it might be? Selah, then explain.

b. If your Great Shepherd made it very clear that He wanted you to leave your home and move across the country, then did NOT give you the reasons why, but encouraged you to trust Him, how easy or hard do you imagine this would be for you? Explain.

c. The Lord may not ever ask you to leave your home, family, or even your job. But He has called every Christian to be willing to “go into the world” and be lights in dark places, bringing the hope of Jesus and the gospel of salvation to people that are in our lives. How easy or hard is this for you? Explain.

- d. Refresh your memory of the promise Jesus gave in Mark 10:29-30, then read the sobering invitation He makes to each of us from Matthew 10:37-39. Though two separate statements from the Lord, they go hand-in-hand as a truth needing to be grasped by every disciple. The popular preacher and author A.W. Tozer said in his classic book *The Pursuit of God*, “If we are set upon the pursuit of God He will sooner or later bring us to this test.” He then ends a chapter in his book with this prayer to bring us closer to surrender and willingness to follow wherever He leads us. Read this prayer below and make it your own. The Lord understands where we are fearful, but He is ever more faithful.

*Father, I want to know Thee,
but my coward heart fears to give up its toys
and (insert that which would be hardest to let go of if asked).
I cannot part with them without inward bleeding,
and I do not try to hide from You the terror of the parting.*

I come trembling to You, but I do come.

Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that You may enter and dwell there without a rival.

Then shalt You make the place of Your feet glorious.

*Then shall my heart have no need of the sun to shine in it, for Thyself wilt be the light of it,
and there shall be no night there.*

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

8. Not only does the Lord send His people into the world and scatter us across the globe, but He commands us that we “*preach*” the gospel. The word “preach” requires no seminary, university, or specialized training in the ministry. It simply means to “proclaim openly.”
- a. What does the Lord say He does in Luke 12:8 as a response to our openly confessing belief in Jesus Christ to others?
- b. What does the Lord say He will do to those who honor Him before others from 1 Samuel 2:30?
- c. In regards to following the Lord, speaking about Him, honoring Him with our lives, think about what John 12:26 means to you. Imagine for just a moment, if Jesus were to stand in front of you and speak these words...then realize that He does right now by His Holy Spirit within you. Is there any area of resistance you feel? Any place you are tempted to say, “I’ll do anything Lord, just not _____.”?

9. The Lord knows us better than we know ourselves. It is always best to recognize our weaknesses, limitations, fears and hindrances. Acknowledging them to the Lord is half the battle. But it's important for us to remember that His commands never come to us without His equipping.
- a. For any Christian who truly believes in the Lord and His Word, there is a supernatural result that comes through that life. Signs that follow. Let's break them down by filling in the blanks from Mark 16:17-18.
- 1) "In _____ name, they will cast out _____." What does 1 John 4:4 say to further validate and explain the meaning of the authority a believer has in Christ?
- 2) "They will speak with _____" This is one of many gifts that are given by the Holy Spirit to strengthen and edify the believer and His church. Look at 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. There are MANY gifts that are given by the Holy Spirit, all according to His purpose within the church. Which of the gifts listed here sticks out to you the most? Why?
- 3) "They will take up _____; and if they _____ anything _____, it will by no means _____ them." As a familiar commentator writes, "This promise is to be understood in the context of the dangers inherent in the worldwide spread of the gospel, as Paul was bit by a snake and preserved on the island of Malta (Acts 28:1-6). Jesus never intended drinking poison or handling snakes to be a specific test or measure of faith." The Lord also knows the risks, dangers, and "weapons formed against us" in our days. And whatever attempt Satan makes to destroy the Christian's life, it will only succeed to the extent that it serves God's purposes. Job is a familiar example. Can you remember a time where the Lord supernaturally protected you from harm?

4) “They will lay _____ on the _____ and they will _____.”
This is another gift of the Holy Spirit we read about in 1 Corinthians 12:9, but it is also an injunction for the church in James 5:14-15. If someone is sick in the body, what does the Word say we are to do?

b. Looking back over these four areas, despite your personal experience, is there any area of unbelief on your part regarding how the Lord is able to work through His people? Briefly explain if you are able.

c. Note what happened to the disciples as they received the Lord’s words, believed in their heart, then obeyed His command in Mark 16:20. What did the Lord specifically do?

d. The Lord will always be faithful to confirm His word to us. He confirmed His instructions to Gideon (Judges 6), He confirmed His words to Mary (Luke 1:34-38) and to Peter in Acts 10:9-23. Turn to Hebrews 2:1-4. Write out verse 1 in entirety. Then fill in the blanks with the myriad of ways the Lord will confirm His word from verses 3 and 4.

Verse 1-

(vs 3-4) “...Was confirmed to us by _____ who _____ Him, God also bearing witness both with _____ and _____, with various _____, and _____ of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will”

Read Mark 16:19-20

10. Did you notice something wonderful about verses 19 and 20? The Lord ascends to heaven, sits down at the right hand of God, then continues to work WITH His people still living on the earth. This is the beauty of the trinity, the power of His Majesty, and the promise of His Presence.
 - a. We are still living in the possibilities and realities of Mark 16:20. We must believe in all of the Words of God and mingle them with faith in order to walk in their power. But what is a requirement from us in order to walk in the power of the Spirit according to Acts 5:32?

11. Turn to Acts 1 and read verses 9-11 which give us more detail about the Lord's ascension from the earth. Two angels appear once again, and just as in Luke 24:5, they ask the disciples a question about what they are doing.
 - a. Write out the specific question they ask from Acts 1:11.

 - b. A good place for us to end our lesson on is made by the angel's observation of the disciples. Don't linger too long gazing on the past, or solely focusing on your future in heaven. The Lord has given you a daily, present day commission and He has promised to give you all the power you need that pertains to this commission and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). As you reflect on where you were spiritually when you first began the study of this book, what do you think is one of the biggest changes the Lord has brought about within your life?

 - c. During the course of this study, you have set many prayers before the Lord. Is there a particular praise report or answer to prayer that you can record today?

“The Christian life is very much like climbing a hill of ice. You cannot slide up. You have to cut every step with an ice axe. Only with incessant labor in cutting and chipping can you make any progress. If you want to know how to backslide, leave off going forward. Cease going upward and you will go downward of necessity. You can never stand still.”

~ C. H. Spurgeon