



Bible Study
2014-2015

Heart of a Servant

The Gospel of Mark

LESSON 6

The Wizard of Oz is a musical fantasy film from 1939, where the central character, an orphaned girl named Dorothy, is seemingly swept up by a tornado while in her home in Kansas, and carried her off to a mystical land named Oz. The story follows Dorothy and her little dog on their manifold adventure to return home. The most oft quoted line from this movie is, “There’s no place like home.”

In only thirty-one verses of this chapter, we will see that indeed, there was no place like home for Jesus, His disciples and John the Baptist. For Jesus, it was a place where His words were rejected, hated, and stirred rage to the point where people tried to kill Him. For John the Baptist, another heaven-sent messenger, his words were rejected and hated, to the point of imprisonment, as well as death by beheading. Home; the place where truth was attacked, the miraculous disavowed, and the divine disbelieved. For Jesus, we can see a fulfillment of the old adage that “familiarity breeds contempt.”

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ and have experienced His forgiveness, grace and mercy, I am sure that you desire the same salvation to come to your family, friends and loved ones. Patrick Henry, one of our nation’s founding fathers, spent his entire life doing what he could to leave his family wealthy after he passed away. He said “This is all the inheritance I give to my dear family. The religion of Christ will give them one which will make them rich indeed.” But “home” can be the most difficult place for us to share our faith and the truth of the scriptures (John 15:20).

And as we will see, if Jesus was attacked, Christ in you might be challenged as well. It is so important for us to know what we believe and why we believe it. But even more so, we must grow in our relationship with the Lord steadily, so we know WHO we believe in. Belief in Jesus and His Word are as keys that swing wide open the infinite door of all possibilities. Hear the exhortation given to us from Hebrews 10:23, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”

Read Mark 6:1-6

Further details of what happened in the synagogue are recorded for us in Luke 4:16-30. On the Sabbath, seven men were normally chosen to read and expound the scriptures for those in attendance in the synagogue. So when Jesus is handed the scrolls, He purposefully reads the prophecy about His identity and mission from Isaiah 61:1-2.

1. What was the first response of every person regarding the words that Jesus spoke from Luke 4:22?

- a. Fill in the blanks from Mark 6:2 regarding further reflections the hearers made regarding Jesus' teaching.

“And what _____ is this which is given to Him, that such
_____ are performed by His hands!”

- b. Initially, the people marvel as they experience the effects of spoken grace and divine wisdom. They ascribe to Jesus miraculous works done through carpenter hands. As this door of opportunity opens, Jesus proceeds past their surface reflections and speaks truth to reveal the underlying condition of their hearts (Luke 4:23-27). Summarize what follows from verses 28-30.

- c. Have you ever been told the truth about who you are or how you act and gotten angry? Hearing that we have faults or having our beliefs about God challenged can tempt us to respond in the flesh and be defensive. What does Proverbs 15:18 say?

- d. What two blessings come to one who is slow to get angry from Proverbs 14:29 and 16:32?

- e. Proverbs 13:10 NIV reads, “Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.” Have you ever thought about the fact that within every argument or conflict, there is at least one person who is filled with pride? What does James 4:6 say?

- f. In lieu of this, take a moment to write down anything you may possibly need to repent of before the Lord and make right with another person. Then in loving obedience, take whatever steps you can with the other person to make things right. What does Romans 12:18 say?

***“Understand [this], my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear [a ready listener], slow to speak, slow to take offense and to get angry. For man’s anger does not promote the righteousness God [wishes and requires].”
James 1:19-20 Amp***

2. Another observation of what happened in these first six verses of Mark 6, reveals the possibility that a person can be moved spiritually by hearing the Lord one minute, yet judge outwardly and disregard the Spirit the next. Because the people knew Jesus’ natural family, they disbelieved the supernatural revelation He was sharing with them.
- a. A prophet, defined by the dictionary, is “A person who speaks by divine inspiration or as the interpreter through whom the will of God is expressed.” What did Jesus say about any person who speaks the Word of God to others in Mark 6:4?
- b. As a result of the people’s response, what does Matthew 13:58 say?

- c. Compare that verse with Mark 6:5. These verses do not contradict each other, but rather enhance. Prayerfully reflect on this with the Lord and write out what it means to you personally.

***“Christ never failed to distinguish between doubt and unbelief.
Doubt is can’t believe. Unbelief is won’t believe.
Doubt is honesty. Unbelief is obstinacy.
Doubt is looking for light. Unbelief is content with darkness.”
~ Henry Drummond***

3. In our last chapter, there were people that disbelieved what Jesus had to say about their circumstances (Mark 5).
- a. What did He do to those who did not believe Him from verse 40?

 - b. Regardless of what the people saw and their final judgment of “death” in the situation, Jesus re-defined the circumstance as “lifeless,” but not final. When the people chose not to believe Him and mock His words, Jesus removed them from the scene. We have nothing indicating He reproved them for their unbelief or corrected their wrong response. But those people DID miss out on witnessing God bring glory through His miraculous intervention. Is there any place in your own life that seems “dead” or lifeless to you, yet the Lord has sent you His promises that you’ve wrestled to believe? Reflect on Hebrews 4:2 and write a brief prayer to the Lord concerning these things below.

***“Beware in your prayers, above everything else,
of limiting God, not only by unbelief,
but by fancying that you know what He can do.”
~ Andrew Murray***

Read Mark 6:7-13, 30-32

4. Now we come to the place where Jesus gives His own disciples spiritual authority and power, with a valuable opportunity to experience both acceptance and rejection of the ministry.

a. He didn't send them out alone (vs.7). Jesus said that they were being sent out as sheep among wolves (Matthew 10:16). Being a Good Shepherd and looking out for them, what does Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12 say about the benefit of ministering with another?

b. In Mark 6: 8-9, what two things were they to take with them?

Optional question: Moses led God's people out of Egypt and his staff was called the "rod of God." Throughout the Old Testament, it was a symbol of power and support. What did the Lord also do for forty years for the people as they traveled hard terrain according to Deuteronomy 8:4?

c. Why do you think Jesus specifically told them what NOT to take? Use scripture, if possible, to defend your answer.

***“When you obediently care for God’s people,
God takes care of you.”
~ Rosemary Gallatin***

5. Time now passes and the disciples return from their short-term missions trip. Re-read Mark 6:30-32.
- a. Can you picture the disciples return to Jesus? Like children running to a parent rehearsing the joy of their adventure, they recount all of the ministry opportunities they were enabled to be a part of. Yet, in spite of their rich experience and training for ministry, Jesus sees two greater needs. Can you see and write them down from verses 31 and 32?

 - b. Hopefully, you were able to see that Jesus knew His disciples needed both to eat and to rest. We can get so busy “feeding others” or tending to their needs, that we neglect eating the spiritual food we require. What was Job’s perspective of God’s Word from Job 23:12?

 - c. Jesus, making a spiritual application, said what about Himself, His Word and fellowship with Him from John 6:51, 57?
6. In 1 Kings 18, Elijah had just gone through a very stressful, intense confrontation with 450 false prophets on top of Mount Carmel. God used him powerfully and he spoke with divine authority as the Lord proved that He was God over all creation. But soon after this great victory, God’s prophet lay exhausted, fearful, discouraged and physically weak. Read 1 Kings 19:4-8 and rehearse what happened in your own words.

- a. Hebrews 1:14 says that angels are sent to minister and serve the saints. One is dispatched from heaven for Elijah as he rested, ate and drank to recuperate. What “came to” Elijah after he regained his spiritual and physical strength (1 Kings 19:9)?

- b. After Jesus had fasted forty days in the wilderness, battled Satan’s lies and temptations with the scriptures, an angel was sent to help minister to Him in His human weakness. Look up these scriptures that God has written to those of us who are spiritually weak and hungry. Choose which one speaks to you most today and write it here. Ezekiel 34:15, Psalm 23:2, Matthew 11:28, John 6:27a and Song of Songs 1:7.

***“Jesus said His food was to do the will of His Father,
that He is the Bread from heaven, and that waiting upon Him brings
strength and power. I don’t need further encouragement
to find time to be alone with Him.”***

~ Anonymous

Read Mark 6:14-29

7. As Jesus spoke words of grace and truth, people’s response varied depending upon the condition of their heart. When the Great Physician diagnosed their sin-filled pride, rather than repent, they attempted to kill the Messenger. John the Baptist was another prophet of truth who had no respect of persons. By his openly identifying the sin of King Herod, he earned the reward of wrongful imprisonment and death.
 - a. Read Mark 6:18-20. The bitter woman in this adulterous relationship, Herodias, was the one who wanted John killed rather than mere imprisonment. What did King Herod believe in his heart that prevented this for a time?

 - b. Rather than repent of his sin inwardly and take actions to make things right outwardly, Herod merely enjoyed listening to John speak about truth. Many go to church, listen to Bible studies, have conversations with godly friends “gladly”, yet still make no changes to their ungodly behavior and thought life. What does the Lord say about this from Titus 1:16? (Use a second translation for further emphasis).

Also, put Ezekiel 33:31 in your own words.

c. James 2 is a wonderful instructor about two characteristics of a Christian's life that must be life partners. Read verses 17-20 and describe how King Herod would have responded if he applied these verses to his life.

d. What was Samuel's powerful exhortation from 1 Samuel 15:22?

e. In our day, we are warned from 2 Timothy 3:5,7 that there will be men and women who have a godliness about them, but they do not walk in the power of holiness, nor show evidence of the fruit of the Holy Spirit's love. But instead, they are led by the lust of their flesh. They continually learn, even of godly things, yet they never embrace the truth that comes from fellowship with Jesus. Think about this before the Lord. What do you think will prevent YOU from falling into this category of people that fill church pews?

***“God has promised forgiveness to your repentance,
but He has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination.”
~ Augustine***

8. A wonderful blessing is the feeling of conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit. The Lord was giving Herod an ear full of truth and time to repent. Herod believed Jesus was John risen from the dead because of a conscience that felt guilty over what he had done (vs. 14, 16). He knew John was holy and just, but Satan used Herod's resistance to repent to set the stage for greater sin. In your own words, recount what the Bible says concerning others who had a guilty conscience.

1 Samuel 24:5 -

2 Samuel 24:10 -

Genesis 42:21 -

John 8:9 -

9. When the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, we have a choice to make. What does Psalm 66:18 say?

a. The word "regard" in the King James version is interpreted as "cherish or esteeming" in other Bible versions. When Moses had a choice to make, what does it say of him in Hebrews 11:25-26?

b. In Revelation 2:1-5, Jesus is speaking to those in the church of Ephesus. There were many good things He had to say about the people, their works, their character and the intolerance they had with people who were evil. Yet their hearts had grown cold (in general) and they no longer loved the Lord supremely. What does Jesus say to do in Revelation 2:5?

c. Jesus says, in the area of love, that actions speak louder than words. Write out His words to you from John 14:15.

d. The word “repent” is purposefully mentioned twice in Revelation 2:5 and it is a command by God to remedy the condition of their heart. Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines “repent” as a verb that means “To turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one’s life. To change one’s mind.” The Latin derivation means “to alter one’s direction or thoughts.”

Write out a response to the Lord regarding ANYTHING in your heart or life that needs to be repented of.

***“Repentance is not just a one time experience.
It is as much of a mark of a Christian, as faith is.
A very little sin, as the world calls it, is a very great sin to a true Christian.”
~ Spurgeon***

10. Mark's gospel does not include a significant event that happened in John the Baptist's life. 1 Peter 1:7 says that the testing of our faith is more precious than gold, so let's take a glimpse at a fiery trial that came to John's life.
 - a. John 11:6 gives us a hidden treasure in observing Jesus' response when the news of His friend Lazarus' illness comes to Him. "So, when He (Jesus) heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was." Note and write below a similar verse Matthew 4:12.

 - b. In Luke 7, Jesus' fame is spreading rapidly and news of this gets to John while he's in prison. What does Jesus say about who John is? Summarize Luke 7:26-28.

 - c. God chose John, out of billions of people for thousands of years, to be the person to prepare the way for Jesus' arrival. He was proclaiming truth, preparing hearts, and pointing to salvation in a way greater than all other prophets, according to Jesus. What did Isaiah prophesy about part of Jesus' mission in Isaiah 61:1?

 - d. In light of these things, put yourself in John's position and explain why he possibly sent his disciples to Jesus in Luke 7:19-20.

e. Have you ever gone through a time in your life (as a Christian), where your understanding of Who Jesus is made you question your faith in light of what you were walking through? Explain.

11. Doubt is not always a bad thing. When John questioned Jesus, the Lord did not condemn him, rebuke him for his lack of faith or not respond.

a. How did Jesus respond to John's sincere doubts? (Verses 21-23)

b. Note Jesus' words, "*Blessed is he who is not offended because of me.*" "Offended" in the Greek means "to stumble; cease believing, led astray." As we began our lesson with the importance, the power, and the necessity of belief, so we see John's beliefs shaken by Jesus' response to his circumstances. Is there anything happening in your life right now that you have expectations the Lord should change, or intervene, or rescue you from? Maybe not you, but someone you love? Bring this trial of your faith before the Lord in a brief prayer below.

- c. Optional: It would be good for you to reflect on the story of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus from John 11. Note that Jesus' deliberate actions were all done in perfect love for all those involved. But whether it was Lazarus, John the Baptist, or you today, every trial is for what reason according to John 11:4?

“You will have no test of faith that will not fit you to be a blessing if you are obedient to the Lord. I never had a trial but when I got out of the deep river, I found some poor pilgrim on the bank that I was able to help by that very experience.”

~ A.B. Simpson