



THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Study Guide Light
August-October 2019
Weeks 7-13

We continue in our extended examination of the Gospel of Mark, focusing particularly on two key questions:

- a) Who is Jesus? and
- b) What does it mean to be his disciple?

Towards the goal of cultivating congregational reflection on these questions, we have for you here a Study Guide Light: a slimmer version of our weekly Study Guides that follow the sermon series. The purpose in writing this slimmer version is to make the content easily digested, especially for the ESL individuals in our family.

Along the pathway of discipleship, the pastoral team strongly encourages you to live weeklong in the sermon passages by utilizing these questions in discussion, reflection, and prayer with at least one or two others: if you are in a Connection Group, then you need look no further; if not, consider discussing these questions with a family, a friend, or an accountability partner—or consider joining a Connection Group!

For those who have come to love the Study Guides in their longer format of questions and verse-by-verse commentary notes, remember that we are still providing that material on a weekly basis.

— Stuart Campbell

7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. 8 When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. 9 Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. 10 For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. 11 Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." 12 But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons. 16 These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), 17 James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder"), 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Mark 3:7-19

Notes:

Discussion Questions:

- 1) *Study*: Take a look at a Bible atlas, or simply Google a biblical map of the places noted in these verses. What might be Mark's emphasis in terms of listing these places in particular? What would be a modern-day approximation of these places within the region and context of British Columbia?
- 2) *Discuss*: What do you make of the fact that Jesus himself is the moving (in a physical sense) centre of this growing movement that is following him, and that the centre is not simply the temple centrally located in Jerusalem? What might this truth have to say about our Christian practice of faith in the current age?
- 3) *Discern*: How are you living out the reality that we follow a God who longs to heal—physically, emotionally, spiritually, and otherwise—even if this is not always according to the timing/manner that we desire? How are you practicing congregational care this week?
- 4) *Confess*: In what ways this week have you not lived in line with the truth that Jesus is the Son of God"? Has your disobedience taken the form of anxiety, selfishness, greed, or extreme busyness? If comfortable, confess to one another, and receive afresh his forgiveness.
- 5) *Reflect*: What spiritual and life practices have you found helpful to maintain a healthy balance—in accordance with your own natural introversion/extroversion—between being among the crowds and withdrawing from them?
- 6) *Reflect*: How are you drawing near to Christ—be in on a hillside, in a park, in an office, etc.—so as to be strengthened to teach, by word and deed, in all ways, the good news of Christ?

Mark 3:20-35

Notes:

20 *Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. 21 When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." 22 And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons."*

23 *So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. 27 In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house. 28 Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, 29 but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin." 30 He said this because they were saying, "He has an impure spirit."*

31 *Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." 33 "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. 34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."*

Discussion Questions:

- 1) *Discuss:* Being careful not to gossip, discuss: How has nuclear family been hard for you in some way, especially in regards to the expectations that naturally seem to accompany family?
- 2) *Discuss:* Why do you think that Jesus responds to the crowds *in parables* at this moment of conflict?
- 3) *Confess:* How have individuals, groups, and denominations in the church been guilty, in past history or in the present, of approaching one another with an attitude similar to that of those around Jesus here: "You are doing this by Satan!" If you feel led, confess, asking for forgiveness for the corporate, historical sins of the church as such.
- 4) *Meditate:* With this text, how is the Father personally calling you to greater allegiance to the Son by the power of the Spirit? What does this look like in your life in terms of participation in the life of our church? What does it look like in terms of spiritual practices in your daily rhythms?
- 5) *Reflect:* When you first became a Christian, how was your *new* family of the church of great encouragement to you?
- 6) *Discern:* In this late summer, in what ways can you demonstrate to your neighbourhood the reality that whenever the church is participating in God's mission it is being family?

1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God,

Mark 1:1-3

Notes:

*2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:
"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way"—*

*3 "A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"*

*4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness,
preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*

5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

*12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness,
13 and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.*

Discussion Questions:

- 1) *Study*: Read Isaiah 40:1-12, one of the key sources of the Old Testament quotation that begins the Gospel of Mark. In terms of “making straight in the desert a highway for our God,” what other important terms and imagery are given in that Isaiah passage that might help us understand John the Baptist’s language in Mark 1?
- 2) *Discern*: What might it look like for you to “make straight the paths of the Lord” in your local neighbourhood? In other words, how might you reveal the glory of the Lord in natural, organic ways to those around you?
- 3) *Discuss*: That Matthew speaks of “the whole Judean country” going out to meet John the Baptist implies, even if this is hyperbolic language, a considerable size group. If the narrative of Mark 1 were rewritten today, do you think a similar size group would respond in similar fashion? Why or why not? How do you characterize our modern society specifically with regards to repentance?
- 4) *Confess*: What might be, in this current season, the wilderness of your own life and Christian experience? In walking through that wilderness, are there any words of repentance that you might like to voice that his forgiveness might be experienced afresh?
- 5) *Reflect*: How does the Father’s pleasure in the Son speak, by the Spirit, words of good news to you this week, as you seek to live increasingly into your identity in Christ?
- 6) *Pray*: To whom might God be calling you to minister and serve this week, whether in the form of congregational care for one another, a shared coffee conversation, or help in running errands? Ask the Spirit to put a particular name and face upon your heart.

4 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge.

2 He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: 3 "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times." 9 Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

10 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. 11 He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables 12 so that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"

13 Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 14 The farmer sows the word. 15 Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. 16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. 20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown."

21 He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? 22 For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear." 24 "Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. 25 Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."

26 He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. 27 Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. 28 All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. 29 As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

30 Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. 32 Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade." 33 With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. 34 He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

Discussion Questions:

Notes:

1) *Discuss*: Knowing what you already know about Israel's expectations of Jesus as Messiah—as a powerful political liberator—discuss: How do you think the original audience of Israel would have heard the parable of the soil?

2) *Discuss*: How would you respond to those who understand in these verses that Jesus is deliberately obfuscating his message?

3) *Study*: Read the Old Testament quotation from Isaiah and its surrounding verses, Isaiah 6: 8-13. How does Jesus change slightly the Old Testament verses? Why do you think Jesus quotes these verses in Mark? What is the literary context of the original Isaiah passage?

4) *Reflect*: We usually consider the parable of the sower from an individual perspective. What does it look like if we consider it from a congregational perspective? In what ways are we good soil? In what ways might we be an example of rocky soil?

5) *Confess*: How, in the past few weeks, have you and your heart looked more like rocky or thorny soil than good soil? Confess, and ask for the Spirit's revitalization.

6) *Discern*: How do we translate the truths of God as mustard seed to language that is understandable and helpful in our surrounding neighbourhoods?

7) *Pray*: Pray that we, as FBC family, would truly have ears to hear the Spirit's words of God's power to and for us.

Mark 4:35-41

Notes:

35 *That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."* 36 *Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.* 37 *A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.* 38 *Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"*



39 *He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.* 40 *He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"* 41 *They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"*

Discussion Questions:

- 1) *Reflect*: What are your normal, ingrained tendencies as regards dealing with the “storms” of your life? Looking back on your past, consider: From where did you learn this approach?
- 2) *Reflect*: How are you prone this week to utter the words of the disciples, “Jesus, don’t you care if we drown?” How has the *apparent* absence of Christ left you fearfully anxious?
- 3) *Discuss*: How do we grow in Christian discipleship as regards trusting in the truth that Jesus is with us in the storms, that he cares about our well-being, and that he is in control over all things?
- 4) *Reflect*: How is the omnipotent voice of Christ speaking “Peace, be still!” encouraging you this week?
- 5) *Confess*: In what ways this week have you been tempted to question the identity of Christ, even despite seeing in the past overwhelming evidence of his power?
- 6) *Reflect*: Is your theology such that you are expecting Jesus to save you from all storms of suffering in life? If so, how does this passage speak to you?

5 *They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. 2 And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. 3 He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, 4 for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. 6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. 7 And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." 8 For he was saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." 10 And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11 Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, 12 and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them." 13 So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.*

14 The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. 15 And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 16 And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. 17 And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. 18 As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. 19 And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled.

Discussion Questions:

Notes:

1) Reflect: Begin this study by considering this introductory question: How have you felt the unfortunate but all too common pain of social shunning at some point in your past?

2) Discern: Who are those who “live shackled among the tombs” in our modern-day context of Vancouver? Do we have eyes to see them? Of this community, how are you asking the simple yet intimate question, “What is your name?”

3) Discuss: Why do you think Jesus sends the demons into the herd of pigs? How does this detail fit within the overall context of the pericope, and within the greater Markan context of the narratives of Jesus’ works of power?

4) Discuss: How is the compassion of Christ demonstrated in this narrative?

5) Confess: Is part of your heart, in response to the demonstrated power of Christ—and all that this power demands on your life—asking Jesus to “Please go away”? If comfortable, share with one another, and pray together over your uncertainties and hesitations?

6) Pray: Pray that we might find the proper language and spirit to proclaim and demonstrate in our communities, with our family, and with our coworkers how much Jesus has done for us. Pray that the effect would be a wonder rooted in the gospel.

21 *And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. 22 Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet 23 and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live." 24 And he went with him.*

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. 25 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, 26 and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. 28 For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." 29 And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 And he looked around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. 34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

35 While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." 37 And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. 38 They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." 40 And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. 41 Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." 42 And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. 43 And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Discussion Questions:

Notes:

1) Discuss: How can we characterize Jairus? As one of the rulers of the synoguge, how might his approach to Jesus have cost him religiously and socially?

2) Discuss: Why do you think Mark places the narrative of the bleeding woman sandwiched inside that of Jairus and his daughter? How do the two stories relate to one another? How can they be compared and contrasted to one another?

3) Study: Review what the Old Testament says with regards to those who are considered unclean, including people with bodily discharges, by reading Numbers 5:1-4 and Leviticus 15:25-33. How does knowing this historical background help us understand the plight of the bleeding woman?

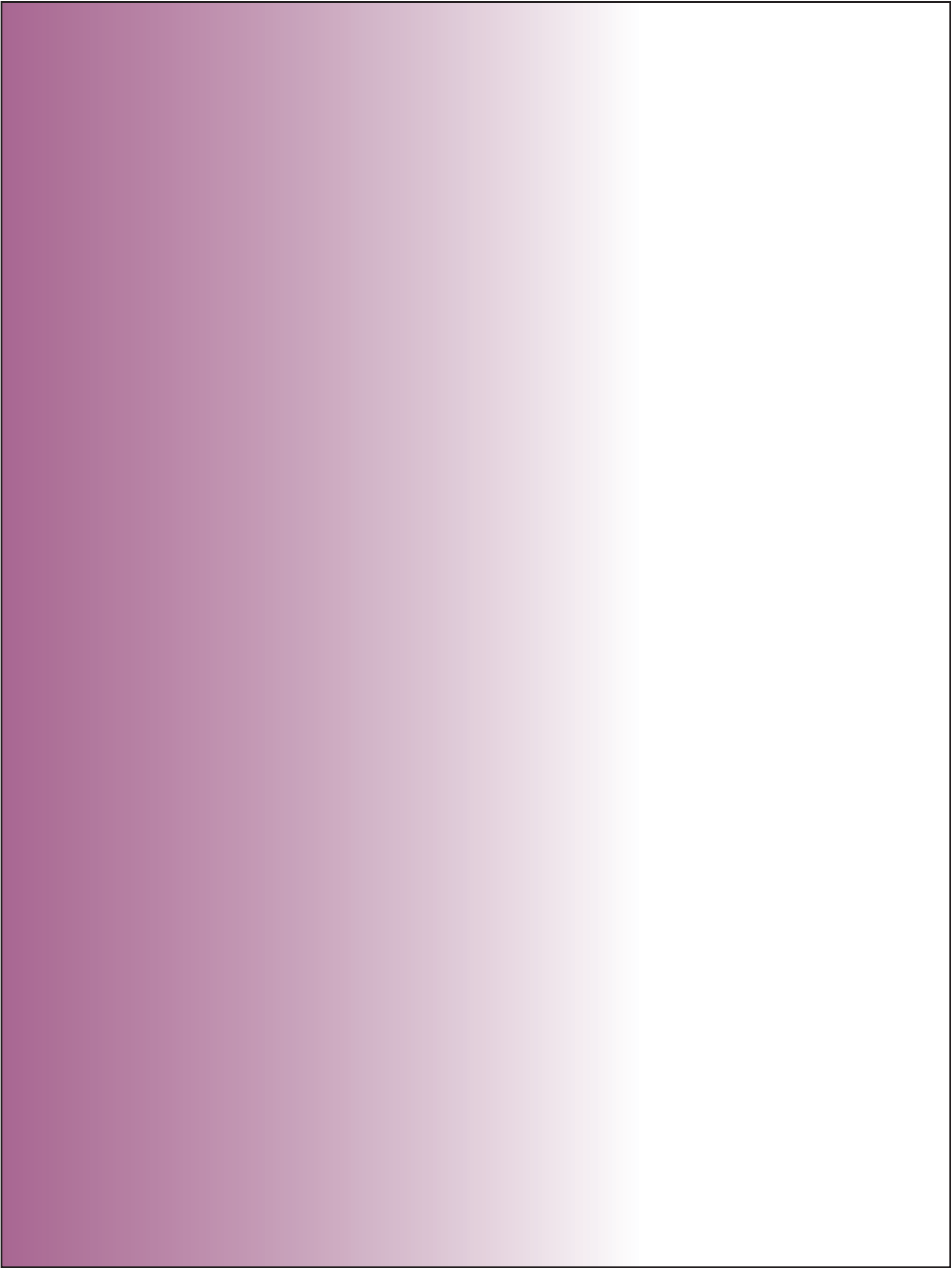
4) Discern: How is the presence of Christ in both of these narratives encouraging you to step out farther in terms of the ministries of presence and touch that is congregational care?

5) Meditate: How is the truth that Jesus is willing to become ritually unclean in order to be with and heal people speaking to your heart this week?

6) Discuss: In what ways are Jesus' words, "Do not fear, only believe," particular and appropriate to the given context of Jairus and his daughter? How could these same words be unhelpful if we utter them to other believers in a distinctly different context?

An aerial photograph of a city street. In the foreground, a large, light-colored stone church with multiple steeples and Gothic-style windows is visible. To the right of the church, a multi-lane road with yellow lane markings has several cars, including a white car and a red car. In the background, modern high-rise buildings with glass facades and balconies are visible, along with some trees and a clear sky.

Notes



ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΡΚΟΝ 3:11

προσέπιπτον αὐτῷ καὶ ἔκραζον λέγοντες ὅτι

Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.

They fell down before him

and cried out,

"You are the Son of God."



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More to Come...