



## THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Study Guide Light  
March-April 2020  
Mark 10-12

As we continue on our extended examination of the Gospel of Mark during this Lenten season, we focus on one key question:

What does cruciform (cross-shaped) disciple look like?

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 more 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, confession, meditation, and prayer with a Connection Group. Indeed, Connection Groups are one of the primary forms of discipleship in our church life.

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 will still be providing that material on a weekly basis.

— Stuart Campbell

10 *And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.*

## Mark 10:1-12

Notes:

2 *And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"* 3 *He answered them, "What did Moses command you?"* 4 *They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away."* 5 *And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.* 6 *But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'* 7 *'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife,* 8 *and the two shall become one flesh.'* So they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 *What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."*

10 *And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter.* 11 *And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her,* 12 *and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."*



*"And God said let us make mankind in our image, after our likeness." — Genesis 1:26*

*Stained glass, Latin, location unknown (cbeinternational.org)*



## Discussion Questions:

- 1) *Discuss:* In considering this text, it is helpful to first consider the cultural milieu in which we live: How does contemporary culture in Vancouver view marriage? What does our culture teach us about “Happily ever after...”? What does it also teach us about singlehood?
- 2) *Study:* Consult the principal verse, Deuteronomy 24:1, referenced here in this passage, as well as the other gospel references to divorce, in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. What is the overall ethic of marriage and divorce seen in these passages?
- 3) *Study:* What do you know about marriage and divorce in the ancient world? It might be helpful to simply “Google” “Divorce in ancient Rome”. Along these lines, consider reading the chapter “Appeals to Women” from Rodney Stark’s *The Triumph of Christianity*. How does awareness of ancient cultural context put Jesus’ words here into greater focus?
- 4) *Lament:* As a group, lament the state of marriage in our culture—that it is often entered into lightly, and that rarely do we emphasize the intense character work that marriage regularly demands. Lament the reality of marriage in the church—that for most of us, divorce has touched us closely in some way or another. Lament the reality of singlehood in our culture—that we live in an era where “image” reigns. Lament the reality of singlehood in our church—that too often we marginalize the life of singles in our church. In prayer, mournfully express to God our collective sorrow over the collective state of things.
- 5) *Confess:* Whether you are single or married, divorced or widowed, we have all made promises that we have made with the best intentions, yet not have not kept, for whatever reasons. Spend some time silently searching your heart, and confess to God your sorrow over those promises that you have not kept, whether to him or to others. Rest assured that there is nothing that can divorce us from God’s love. If you feel comfortable, share with one another.
- 6) *Pray:* Pray for the marriages in our church. Pray for the singles. Pray for those divorced and widowed. Pray for the younger generation. Pray that we all would be marked not by a “hardness of heart” but by warmth, openness, humility, and care.

Mark 10:  
17-31

17 *And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'"* 20 *And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth."* 21 *And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."* 22 *Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

23 *And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."* 26 *And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." 28 Peter began to say to him, "See, we have left everything and followed you." 29 Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first."*

## Discussion Questions:

- 1) *Praise*: Praise God for his goodness. Have you ever heard Israel Houghton's gospel song "You are Good"? Taken a listen (YouTube), and consider singing along.
- 2) *Study*: Reread the 10 commandments from Exodus 20. As an interesting and helpful exercise, rephrase each of the commandments in positive language. The scope of the commandments necessarily broadens!
- 3) *Confess*: Having done the exercise from the first question above, sit quietly with your 10 readjusted commandments. Let them measure your heart. Confess your failure to keep these commands, and rest assured in his grace.
- 4) *Reflect*: What are those things that you personally have had to leave behind in following Christ? How have you seen God meet you abundantly in ministering to your surrender? Encourage one another.
- 5) *Discern*: The Lenten season is a wonderful one to particularly consider our actions of charity and our gifts of giving. As a Connection Group, ask the Holy Spirit: What is one specific way that we can be care for a few particular people who are in need? Ask for his strength to step out, as a group, in this direction.
- 6) *Meditate*: How is the Spirit moving you to a greater place of surrender and sacrifice, especially during this Lenten season? Might this be with regard to your finances? Might this be with regard to your time and relationships? Sit quietly, and ask for his guidance.

## Mark 10: 32-52

32 *And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, 33 saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. 34 And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."*

35 *And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." 36 And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" 37 And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." 38 Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" 39 And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, 40 but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." 41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. 42 And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

46 *And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49 And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." 50 And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51 And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight." 52 And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.*



## Discussion Questions:

1) *Reflect*: On the road of your own experience of Christian faith, what has amazed you? What has made you afraid? How do you see your own past in the “road trip” of these verses of Jesus and his disciples? Share with one another in the effort to get to know each other better.

2) *Discern*: While it would be a poor application of verse 34 for us to seek being mocked by others, it is worthwhile to ask: “How is your Christian identity present in the public square, and how is your Christian way of life visible to the city?” If there is no chance that we will ever be mocked, because our Christian walk stays within the walls of Sunday services or mid-week bible studies, we ought to pause.

3) *Confess*: Being fully honest with yourself, how do you identify with James and John in their request for a role of power within the kingdom of God? If you are not tempted by power, by what else are you tempted—control, relevance, autonomy; fame, success, comfort?

4) *Discern*: What is one step that you can take this week to move out further in service? Your CGroup as a whole?

5) *Meditate*: How are you in need of the mercy of Christ this week? How are you in need of his healing, restoration, and guidance? Meditate upon your own “blindness”.

6) *Meditate*: What would it look like for you to “throw off your cloak and *spring up* to come to Jesus?” Is it regular confession, small-group participation, spiritual direction, professional counseling, reconciliation? Search deeply.

## Mark 12:1-12

Notes:

12 *And he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country. 2 When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 4 Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. 5 And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed. 6 He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 7 But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 8 And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. 9 What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. 10 Have you not read this Scripture:*

*"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; 11 this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"*

*12 And they were seeking to arrest him but feared the people, for they perceived that he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away.*



## Discussion Questions:

- 1) *Study*: Read Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7? How does that Old Testament text inform today's pericope (passage)?
- 2) *Reflect*: In what ways in the past have you identified with the servants, those rejected on behalf of the vineyard owner, namely Christ? How have you felt the sting of rejection on behalf of your faith? Reflect on your past, and encourage one another in your shared experience.
- 3) *Confess*: In recent weeks, how have you identified with the tenants in their rejection of Jesus? Are there ways that you are prone to turn away from Christ? Confess your sin silently before God. Share with others if you feel comfortable, resting in his arms of forgiveness.
- 4) *Discuss*: What might this passage have to say about religious violence? How would you respond to someone who critiques that the passage condones such violence?
- 5) *Lament*: Lament over those in our own lives—whether family, friends, neighbours, or coworkers—who would come against Jesus with the heart of the tenants here. Sorrowfully express to God in prayer that, though this is the very reality expressed in the parable, this reality breaks our hearts, as it does God's.
- 6) *Pray*: Close your Connection Group gathering in prayer by first reading Psalm 118, the source of the "cornerstone" quotation. Use this psalm to root your prayers by repeating the psalm's refrain "His steadfast love endures forever" after each prayer is uttered.

## Mark 12:13-18

Notes:

13 *And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. 14 And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" 15 But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." 16 And they brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." 17 Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at him.*



## Discussion Questions:

1) *Study*: What do you know about the Herodians in the context of Mark's gospel? What happened the last time that we saw them at the beginning of Mark 3? What else do you know about the Herodians? Consider Googling "Herodians" and "biblehub" to see the entry at [biblehub.com/topical/h/herodians.htm](http://biblehub.com/topical/h/herodians.htm).

2) *Discuss*: 20th century Swiss theologian Karl Barth is known for calling the church to be an "unreliable ally" for any and every political system? What do you make of this idea? How does this line up with this week's passage? How does this idea line up with Anthony's preaching on the notion of "rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's"? How does this line up with other biblical passages in this area, like Romans 13:1-7.

3) *Meditate*: Ask the Spirit, "What are those things of you that I might increasingly give over to you?" Listen quietly for a response. Continue to do so once a day for the next week.

4) *Pray*: Matthew Flemming writes in the *Mark Feasting on the Gospels* commentary: "The image of Jesus grasping a coin with an image of Caesar upon it is one of divinity holding the power of empire in the palm of his hand. As contemporary readers of the text, we know that the claims of the Roman Empire and its leader proved false. The coin, which could purchase goods and service throughout an unprecedented portion of the world in the first century, is now a museum piece." With this perspective, lift up the concerns of the world, recognizing that our God is omnipotent and eternal. Consider using tips from [worldvision.org](http://worldvision.org)'s "Five Tips for Praying Globally."

5) *Discuss*: What are some spiritual practices that you have found helpful in the past to remember that we are the image of God—that it is Christ's image that is to be minted upon our hearts? Share with one another your experiences, and encourage each other in this regard.

6) *Pray*: This text might be summarized by the wonderful introduction to Psalm 24: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein." Read the Psalm now, and use it to both to begin and end your prayer time.



18 *And Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection. And they asked him a question, saying, 19 "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife, but leaves no child, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. 20 There were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and when he died left no offspring. 21 And the second took her, and died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise. 22 And the seven left no offspring. Last of all the woman also died. 23 In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as wife." 24 Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? 25 For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 26 And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? 27 He is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong."*

28 *And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." 32 And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. 33 And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.*

35 *And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? 36 David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared,*

*"The Lord said to my Lord,  
"Sit at my right hand,  
until I put your enemies under your feet.""*

37 *David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?" And the great throng heard him gladly.*

## Discussion Questions:

1) *Study*: This is the first time we encounter the Sadducees in Mark. What do you know about them? Perhaps consult Biblehub's entry: [biblehub.com/topical/s/sadducees.htm](http://biblehub.com/topical/s/sadducees.htm)

2) *Confess*: In what ways have you recently all too readily forgotten God's power working throughout history, in your life and that of the church, in covenant with his people?

3) *Meditate*: How does the transformative hope of the resurrection, of the power of God by the scriptures, encourage you this week in your life situations?

4) *Discern*: Is your Connection Group life inspiring a holistic love of God: of heart, soul, mind, strength, and neighbour? Remember, this is the current vision of Connection Group life (see [www.firstbc.org/grow/connection-groups/](http://www.firstbc.org/grow/connection-groups/)). In which of these areas could your group increase its focus, even considering limitations of time and energy? If you are not in a Connection Group, why is that, especially as CG life is one of the primary forms of discipleship at FBC?

5) *Reflect*: The Lenten season is a wonderful one to build space for reflection. Reflect upon how you have grown in the Lord in the past year, in terms of heart, soul, mind, strength and neighbour. Praise God for the way that his Spirit has grown you. If the past year has largely been one of stagnation for you, ask God to revivify your walk with him, and to grant you his peace and grace.

6) *Pray*: Consider repeating verses 29-31 as a refrain following each person's prayer during your prayer time!

## Mark 12:38-44

Notes:

38 *And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces 39 and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, 40 who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."*

41 *And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. 43 And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. 44 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."*





## Discussion Questions:

- 1) *Meditate*: What are the “best seats”—literally “first seats” as in “places of honour” (πρωτοκαθεδρίας, *protokathedrias*)—in our church? In other words, what are the places of honour within the structure of our church that tempt us, calling us for the wrong reasons?
- 2) *Confess*: In the last few weeks, have there been elements of your Christian walk that you have engaged in “for pretense”? (Note here: the Greek προφάσει [*prophasei*] is from the root verb φαίνω [*phaino*], meaning “to appear”; hence the emphasis here is “for appearance’ sake.”) Sit silently over this question. Be brutally honest with yourself. Then silently confess your sin, turning to his great grace and full forgiveness. If you feel comfortable, share your thoughts with your group. Keep in mind that your honesty may help others “take off the mask” that often inhibits deeper small-group fellowship.
- 3) *Meditate*: The Greek here for “everything she had,” reflected in some English translations, is ὅλον τὸν βίον αὐτῆς (*holon ton bion autēs*), as in “all of her life.” Here, “bion” (as of words like “biography”) most commonly means “life,” or the “resources needed to sustain life.” Ask yourself: What of my life is God calling me to give in this season?
- 4) *Discern*: How can your Connection Group share out of its collective resources, with the heart of charity that marks this poor window? What are the strengths and giftings that God has placed within your group? What would it look like to serve the church out of these strengths? What would it look like to serve the neighbourhood out of these resources?
- 5) *Reflect*: In the past, how have you given to the Lord “out of your poverty,” whether in terms of finances, time, energy, or relationships? How did you see God meet you during that season? Share with your group, to encourage them in the provision of our God.
- 6) *Pray*: Pray for our Heart for the City fundraising campaign. If you have not considered giving to the campaign, ask God what would be, in light of your current income, your “two small copper coins.” Ask God what you can be contributing beyond finances, particularly in light of our impending move out of the church building. Ask God, above all, that the project would enable us to fulfill our missional call to holistically love this city.

## Mark 11:1-11

Notes:

11 *Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples 2 and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. 3 If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" 4 And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. 5 And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" 6 And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. 8 And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. 9 And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"*

11 *And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.*



## Discussion Questions:

1) *Praise*: Begin your time on this Palm Sunday by singing with the likes of Hillsong's "Hosanna in the Highest." You might use the words of the musical bridge to frame your prayers today:

*Heal my heart and make it clean  
Open up my eyes to the things unseen  
Show me how to love like you have loved me  
Break my heart for what breaks yours  
Everything I am for your kingdom's cause  
As I walk from earth into eternity*

2) *Meditate*: We don't know exactly how Jesus knew in advance that the colt would be so tied, but Mark emphasizes the prescience of Jesus. In this sense, how does it encourage you this week that our Triune God knows what lies ahead in your own future? In what areas of your life can you use the reassurance of Christ over anxieties in your own future? Sit quietly with this question, searching your heart; then share, if comfortable.

3) *Study*: Read the Old Testament quotation of Zechariah 9:9-10. But, also read verses 1-8. What is the general message of these verses? How does knowing the context of this Old Testament citation reveal the heart of this first "Palm Sunday" crowd?

4) *Meditate*: Wolfgang Stahlberg writes in the *Mark Feasting on the Gospels* commentary, "The question for us...are we on the side of the powers that be, supporting the status quo with its injustice, inequality...and destruction of creation? Or are we on the side of God's rule with its nonviolent, creative movement of peace, justice, and love for all of God's children and the whole cosmos"? Ask the Spirit for discernment to read your own experience.

5) *Discern*: What would it look like for your Connection Group to "spread your cloaks on the road" to welcome Jesus in your neighbourhood, that he might be praised in this city? What would it look like for your group to do so especially through Christ's meekness?

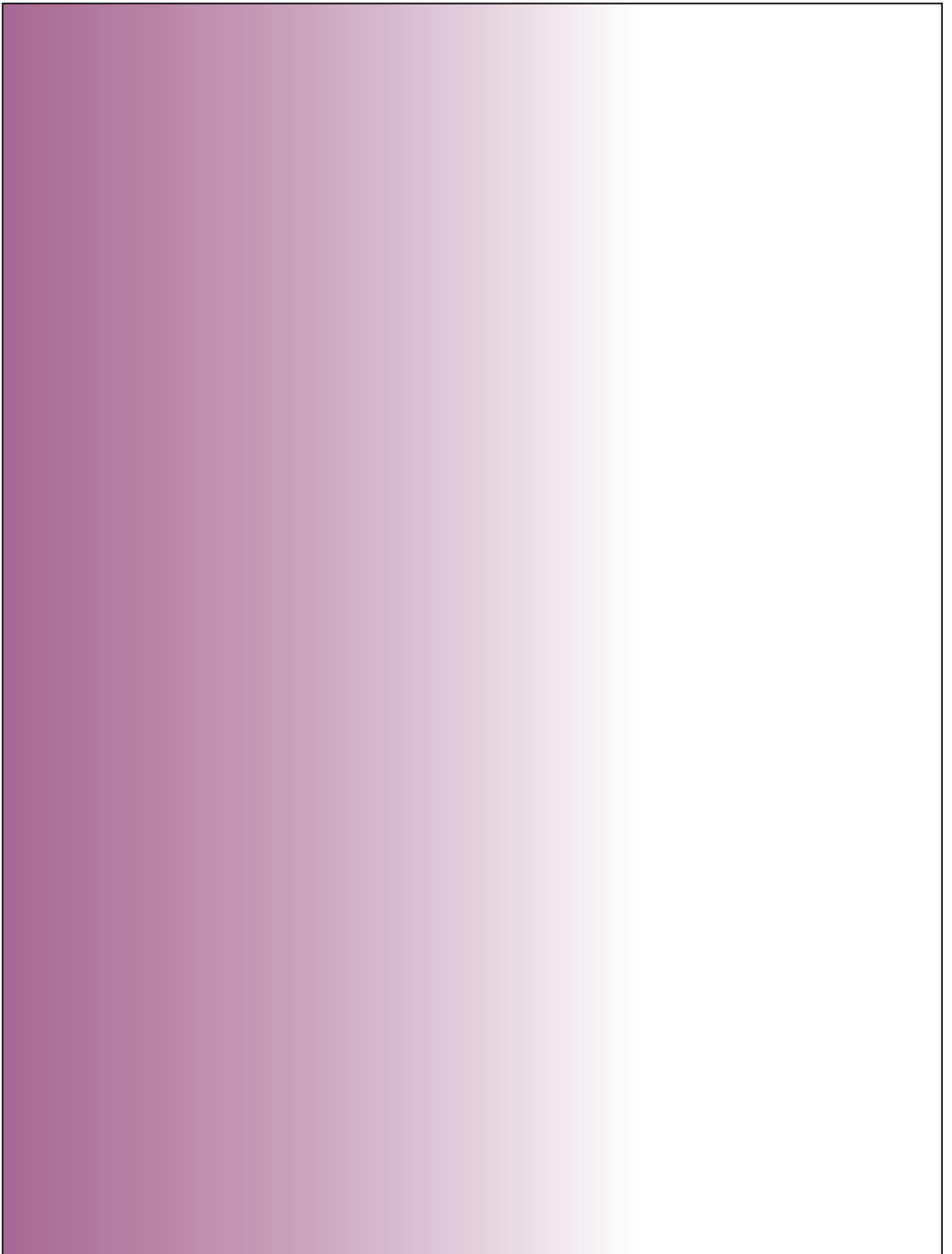
6) *Pray*: Pray that we would follow our Lord by the meekness that marks this procession.





# Notes







**ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΡΚΟΝ 12:30**

**καὶ ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου  
ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου  
καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ψυχῆς σου  
καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς διανοίας σου  
καὶ ἐξ ὅλης τῆς ἰσχύος σου.**

*And you shall love the Lord your God  
with all your heart  
and with all your soul  
and with all your mind  
and with all your strength.*



**THE GOSPEL OF MARK**

More to Come...