**Survey of New Testament**

**Mark 6**

This is a chapter filled with opportunities, some of which were missed because of unbelief, some of which were enjoyed because of faith.

1. **Opportunity to Know the Servant (6:1–6)** The people in His hometown had tried to kill Jesus a year before (Luke 4:29), but He graciously returned and gave them another opportunity to get to know Him. They thought they really knew Him because He had grown up in their city and lived there for thirty years. Yet they saw Him only as “the carpenter” (v. 3) and not as the Son of God, and they were amazed at His wisdom and works. Jesus marveled at their unbelief.
2. **Opportunity to Share the Word (6:7–13)** The Twelve were Christ’s ambassadors, commissioned and empowered by Him to serve wherever He sent them. If you compare Mark’s account with Matthew’s (10:1–42), you will see that Mark has omitted mention of the ministry to the Jews, for he wrote for Gentile readers. Jesus encouraged them to live by faith, a lesson God’s people need to learn in every age. Their main task was to preach the Word and lead people to trust the Savior.
3. **Opportunity to Repent of Sin (6:14–29)** Herod Antipas was only the governor of Galilee and Perea, but he liked to be known as king. He had married his niece Herodias, who had left her husband Herod Philip to form this evil alliance; and John the Baptist rebuked him (Lev. 18:16). Herodias wanted her husband to kill John, but Herod compromised by putting John in prison and occasionally listening to him preach. Herod heard the greatest prophet God ever sent and yet refused to submit to the Word of God. Herod’s indecision made him a murderer, for instead of heeding the Word, he tried to silence the Word by killing John the Baptist. A year later, when Jesus stood before Herod Antipas (Luke 23:6–12), the Son of God refused to speak to him, for Herod had once and for all silenced the voice of God.
4. **Opportunity to Show Compassion (6:30–44)** The Twelve were sent out by Jesus, so they returned to report to Him and tell what God had done through them. After an intensive time of ministry, they needed rest; so Jesus and the apostles went off by themselves. It is good to minister to the needs of people, but it is also good to take care of yourself so you are strong enough to minister again. “If you don’t come apart and rest, you will come apart!” Jesus tried to withdraw from the crowds, but His attempt was not successful (see 7:24). God’s Servant cannot even take time off to rest! The people followed Him, and He had compassion on them and taught them and then fed them. The feeding of the 5,000 is recorded in all four Gospels, so it is an important miracle.
5. **Opportunity to Grow in Faith (6:45–52)** John tells us that the crowd, amazed at His ability to feed so many people, wanted to make Jesus king (John 6:15). At this stage in their faith, the Twelve probably would have agreed with the crowd; so Jesus sent them off in the boat while He dismissed the people and then went to the mountain to pray. He was testing the apostles’ faith, for He knew that the storm was coming. In the previous storm (4:35–41), Jesus was with the men in the boat; but now He was absent. When the situation was at its worst, Jesus came to them, spoke to them, and brought peace and safety. Mark does not mention Peter’s walking on the water (Matt. 14:22–32); but if Mark was Peter’s spokesman in his Gospel, that omission is understandable. But Mark does record the failure of all the disciples to understand the power of Jesus and learn the spiritual truths He wanted to teach them (v. 52).
6. **Opportunity to Receive the Lord’s Help (6:53–56)** Their boat landed south of Capernaum. The people recognized Jesus, ran to get their sick and afflicted, and brought them to Him. They not only brought their own sick, but they spread the good news to other villages, so that wherever Jesus went, needy people were waiting for Him. The Servant was at the beck and call of all kinds of people, and He graciously met their needs. It was on the next day that Jesus gave His sermon on “The Bread of Life” and lost His crowd (John 6:22–71). They wanted bread but they did not want the truth. How like many people today who want Jesus to help and heal them, but not to save and deliver them from their sins.

**MARK 7**

This chapter would be of special interest to Mark’s readers, because in it, Jesus answers two important questions about the Gentiles.

1. **Do the Gentiles Defile the Jews? (7:1–13)** Jesus had violated the Sabbath traditions (2:15–28; 3:22–30), and now they were watching Him closely to see what else He might do. In this case, it was a violation of their tradition about the ceremonial washing of hands. Tradition is not necessarily a bad thing, but when it has more authority than the Word of God, then it is wrong. Jesus pointed out that the great danger was hypocrisy: we obey the traditions with words and deeds, but we fail to serve God from the heart (Isa. 29:13). Note the steps downward: first we lay aside God’s Word (v. 8), then we reject the Word (v. 9), and finally we rob the Word of any power in our lives (v. 13). Man’s tradition, not God’s truth, controls our lives. But Jesus did not stop with exposing the Jews’ hypocrisy; He also exposed their hearts (vv. 14–23). The Jews were not defiled from without by coming in contact with Gentiles, but from within because of their own sinful hearts. And no amount of washing on the outside can remove defilement on the inside (Ps. 51:6–10). The list in vv. 21–22 should convince any honest person that the human heart is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9).
2. **Are the Gentiles Less Important Than the Jews? (7:24–37)** Jesus visited two predominantly Gentile regions, Tyre and Sidon (vv. 24–30) and the Decapolis (“Ten Cities,” vv. 31–37), and ministered to a woman and a man. The Jewish Law separated the Jews from the Gentiles, not because the Jews were better, but because the Jews were different in their covenant relationship with God. A wall in the temple prevented Gentiles from entering the Jewish temple courts under penalty of death. God wanted the Jews to witness to the Gentiles of the true and living God; but His people failed in their task. Jesus would break down the wall of separation and remove the “spiritual distance,” thus making believing Gentiles and believing Jews one in Christ (Eph. 2:11–22). Twice Jesus marveled at great faith; and in both instances, it involved Gentiles (Matt. 8:10 and 15:28). Jesus did not want people to follow Him because of His miracles; but the more He told people to keep quiet, the more they talked! On the other hand, He tells us to tell everyone the Good News, and we keep quiet!

**MARK 8**

The Decapolis (Gk. for “ten cities”) was a league of ten cities that was like a country within a country. They had their own army, court system, and currency and enjoyed a high level of Gentile culture. The events described in this chapter took place in the area of the Decapolis as Jesus ministered among the Gentiles.

1. **Compassion (8:1–9)** Whenever Jesus saw the needy multitudes, He was moved with compassion and wanted to help them (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; Mark 6:34). This miracle must not be confused with one recorded in 6:32–44, for each has its own distinguishing features:

Mark 6:32–44 Mark 8:1–9

5,000+ people, mostly Jews 4,000+ people, mostly Gentiles

With Jesus one day (6:35) With Jesus three days (8:2)

Took place in Galilee Took place near the Decapolis

Five loaves, two fish Seven loaves, a few fish

Twelve baskets left over Seven baskets left over

1. **Concern (8:10–21)** Jesus and His disciples returned to Galilee, only to be met by the Pharisees who wanted a sign from heaven. The feeding of the 5,000 was not a great enough miracle for them, for Moses had brought bread down from heaven. (See John 6:30–33.) We once again see Jesus sighing (v. 12; 7:34), and His only response was to leave once again and go to the eastern shore of the sea. Jesus commanded the disciples to depart so quickly that they did not have time to pack a lunch, and this led to an argument as to whose fault it was. Jesus used the discussion about bread to warn His disciples to avoid false teachings. He compared false teaching to yeast: it is small but powerful and can spread quickly. As Jews, the Twelve were acquainted with the symbolism of leaven at the Passover (Ex. 12:18–20), so the image was not new to them. (See Matt. 16:11; Gal. 5:1–9; 1 Cor. 5.) Hypocrisy is the leaven of the Pharisees, and worldly compromise the leaven of Herod.
2. **Condemnation (8:22–26)** This is the second of two miracles recorded only by Mark; the other is the healing of the deaf mute (7:31–37). In both instances, Jesus took the person away from the crowd; here, He took him out of the town! Why? To avoid publicity, for one thing, and to let the town know it was under the judgment of God (Matt. 11:21–24). This is the only “gradual” miracle recorded in any of the four Gospels.
3. **Crucifixion (8:27–33)** Although He had previously hinted at His death (John 2:19; 3:14), this is the first time Jesus clearly taught His disciples that He was going to die and be raised from the dead. (See 9:30–32; 10:32–34.) Like most orthodox Jews, the Twelve believed that their Messiah would come in power and glory and defeat their enemies, not be defeated by their enemies.
4. **Consecration (8:34–38)** We become children of God by trusting Christ and confessing Him to be the Son of God (1 John 4:1–3) who died for us on the cross and rose again (Rom. 10:9–10). We become disciples of Jesus Christ by surrendering our all to Him, taking up our cross, and following Him. If we live for ourselves, we lose our lives, if we die to self, we save our lives and glorify Him (John 12:23–28).

**MARK 9**

Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to die. As the Twelve walked with Him, they had a variety of experiences to prepare them for their coming ministry. Understanding the experiences recorded in this chapter can help us in our ministry today.

1. **A Confirmation of Hope (9:1–13)** Jesus promises His return in glory. He confirmed these words by showing that promised glory to Peter, James, and John (John 1:14; 2 Peter 1:16–18). This is the only recorded instance during our Lord’s ministry of His revealing His inner glory for others to see. It was really a confirmation of the kingdom that God has promised to His people Israel (Matt. 16:28). Moses represented the Law and Elijah the prophets, both of which are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. They discussed with our Lord His decease (“departure” or “exodus”: see Luke 9:31) that He would accomplish in Jerusalem. In suggesting that they all remain on the mountain in the glory, Peter was once again hindering our Lord’s plans to go to the cross (8:32–33). While a cloud of glory enveloped the scene, the Father’s voice interrupted Peter and gently rebuked him. “Hear Him!” is a command we need to heed today.
2. **A Demonstration of Faith (9:14–29)** While Peter, James, and John were experiencing the glory of God on the mountain, the other nine disciples were involved in an embarrassing situation in the valley below. A distraught father had brought his demonized son, deaf and dumb (v. 25), for the disciples to heal, but they could not cast out the demon. Jesus had given them this power (3:15; 6:7, 13), but they were unable to deliver the boy. Jesus delivered the boy, but the devil made one last attempt to destroy him (v. 26; Luke 9:42). Often just before deliverance, the devil seems to get a great victory, but the Lord ultimately wins the battle. Why had the disciples failed? Because of their unbelief (vv. 19, 23; Matt. 17:20) and their lack of prayer and discipline (v. 29).
3. **An Affirmation of Love (9:30–50)**  **A. Christ’s love for sinners (vv. 30–32).** This is the second time (see 8:31) that Jesus spoke openly to the Twelve about His impending death and resurrection, but they still could not grasp what He was saying. **B. Loving one another (vv. 33–37).** Jesus spoke about suffering and death, but the Twelve argued over who was the greatest! God wants us to be childlike but not childish. **C. Loving those outside our fellowship (vv. 38–41).** John thought he would impress Jesus with his zeal, but Jesus lovingly rebuked him for his lack of love and discernment. Did the Twelve think that they were the only ones serving Jesus? How often we criticize others for success that we cannot attain ourselves! **D. Loving the lost (vv. 42–50).** This is our Lord’s longest and most awesome warning about future punishment. If we are not serving others (v. 35), we may cause others to stumble (“offend,” v. 42); and this might lead to their eternal condemnation. We must deal drastically with sin in our lives, both for our sake and the sake of others, for the fires of hell are real and everlasting.

**MARK 10**

The chapter presents five requests that people brought to the Servant.

1. **A Request for Interpretation (10:1–12)** The religious leaders did not agree in their interpretations of Deut. 24:1–4, so they kept asking (v. 2) what Jesus thought the passage taught. They were not questioning the legality of either divorce or remarriage, for Moses made it clear that God permitted both. The big question was, “For what cause may a man put his wife away and take another?” Instead of taking sides Jesus went back to Moses and the first marriage (Gen. 1:27; 2:21–25). From the beginning, marriage meant one man and one woman becoming one flesh for one lifetime. Moses’ commandment in Deut. 24:1–4 was a concession to the Jews because of their hardness of heart.
2. **A Request for Blessing (10:13–16)** Marriage leads to children, and children should be brought to the Lord and dedicated to Him. It was customary for rabbis to bless children, and parents brought their little ones to Jesus for His blessing. The parents were asking for His special blessing on their little ones, and He was pleased to grant their request.
3. **A Request for Eternal Life (10:17–31)** This man was rich (Luke 18:23), young (Matt. 19:20, 22), and a ruler (Luke 18:18), and had everything but salvation. The Jews would not use the word “good” in addressing a rabbi, so Jesus had every right to ask the man why he used it. Did he really believe that Jesus was God? If so, would he obey what Jesus said? Nobody is saved by keeping the Law (Gal. 3:21). Nobody is saved by selling everything and giving the money to the poor. We are saved by trusting the Son of God who gave everything to make us rich (2 Cor. 8:9). Jesus asked the young man to give up what he trusted in (riches) and trust Him (Jesus).
4. **A Request for Throne (10:32–45)** For the third time, the Lord instructs the disciples about His coming death; now He tells them He will be crucified in Jerusalem (Matt. 20:19). You would think that this third announcement would have humbled the Twelve; but instead, James and John and their mother (Matt. 20:20) came asking Jesus for thrones! They had not yet learned the lesson that the cross must come before the crown, that suffering comes before glory.
5. **A Request for Illumination (10:46–52)** With a great crowd following Him, Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem for that final Passover. There were two cities named Jericho: the ruined old city and the new city about a mile away, built by Herod. This helps to explain how He could depart from Jericho (Matt. 20:29), draw near to Jericho (Luke 18:35), and come and go out of Jericho all at the same time and still meet the two blind beggars (Matt. 20:30). Mark describes the healing of Bartimaeus, the more vocal of the two, just as he did the healing of one of the Gadarene demoniacs (5:2). Bartimaeus heard the crowd and recognized that there was something different about it, so he asked who was going by. When he heard it was Jesus, he immediately cried out for mercy. He had heard about the miraculous cures Jesus had wrought, and he wanted the Master’s help. Nothing could keep him from getting to Jesus!