

New Testament Challenge

March 1 – May 2, 2009

United Baptist Church – Old Town, ME

Small Group Questions – Week #3 – Starting March 15

Ice Breaker Game Idea:

Play the “What’s Your Name Game.” In this game go around and ask everyone in the group to share their entire name (first, middle, last, etc.). Then ask them to explain the significance of their name, how they got their name or who they got it from. You’ll learn a lot about the people in your group – plus, you’ll hear some really crazy names 📖

Quick Facts about the Book of Mark:

- Mark is believed to be the earliest of the 4 Gospels. It was written within a few decades of the death of Jesus and in circulation among the early church. It is the earliest account of Jesus’ life that has survived.
- There are sections of Mark that appear almost word for word in both Matthew and Luke (written just a few years later). This leads scholars to believe that both Matthew (one of Jesus’ disciples) and Luke (a doctor who traveled with Paul on some of his missionary journeys) had the Gospel of Mark sitting in front of them and were using it as a reference as they wrote their own Gospels.
- It is believed that Mark is Peter’s account of Jesus’ life and that Mark wrote down the account from listening to Peter tell stories about Jesus (perhaps from Peter’s sermons).
- Mark was the nephew of Barnabas and traveled with Paul and Barnabas on Paul’s first missionary journey. But Mark abandoned the journey. Later when Paul and Barnabas were about to go on a 2nd missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take Mark, but Paul didn’t. So, Barnabas and Mark went together and Paul and Silas went together. Later on Paul and Mark reconcile and Mark travels with Paul again.
- Mark is the shortest Gospel in length. In fact, there are only 24 verses in all of Mark that don’t also appear somewhere in Matthew or Luke.
- Notice that the Gospel of Mark is all about action. It has fewer of Jesus words, but tells story after story of Jesus in rapid fashion.
- Notice that in Mark the disciples seem to always lack faith and never seem to understand who Jesus is until the very end. Compare that to the blind man Jesus heals in Mark 8:22-26. Note that the blind man can’t see clearly at first...and then later the picture becomes clear. That is a picture of the disciples faith in Mark – gradual.

Quick Facts about the Book of 1 Corinthians:

- Paul stayed longer with the church in Corinth than he did in any of the other churches he started.
- It was in 55 AD (25 years after Jesus' death) that Paul learned that things were not all well in Corinth and wrote to the church there from the city of Ephesus. Paul is very personal and straight-forward in this letter because he knew the people of the church so well (contrast with Romans where he didn't know them well at all).
- Paul wrote several letters to Corinth (at least 4). Remember that his letters existed on scraps of papyrus and it wasn't until 90 AD that they were all collected together. So, some authors believe that part of Paul's letters to the Corinthians got thrown in together when they were copied. In 1 Corinthians 5:9 Paul refers to a previous letter he wrote to the church. Some scholars believe it is lost. Some believe that part of it is contained in 2 Corinthians 6:13 – 7:2. (Remember, originally there were no verses and chapters – just Paul's writings grouped together.) Then in 2 Corinthians 7:8 Paul refers to a previous "severe" letter that he wrote. Some scholars believe it is lost – others believe it to be 2 Corinthians 10-13.
- So there are a couple of possibilities with the 4 letters we know Paul wrote to Corinth:
 1. We have lost the 1st one. The 2nd one is 1 Corinthians. We lost the 3rd (severe) letter. The 4th one is 2 Corinthians.
 2. Letter #1 is 2 Corinthians 6:13-7:2; Letter #2 is 1 Corinthians; Letter #3 is 2 Corinthians 10-13; and Letter #4 is 2 Corinthians 1-9.

John the Baptist Beheaded (Mark 6:14-29)

1. Why do you think Mark included this flashback to Herod between sending out the disciples v. (6-13) and their return (v. 30-31)?
2. What do you do when God's message leaves you puzzled with an ending like this?
3. What would this story say to someone facing persecution, then and now?

The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10: 17-26)

1. Why do you think Jesus told him to sell everything and give to the poor?
2. What did the rich young ruler gain by choosing his wealth over Jesus' command?
3. What is one thing you can do this week to let go of material things and embrace God's kingdom more fully?

Marriage (1 Corinthians 7)

1. What do you consider the most important ingredient in a good marriage and why?
2. Why should marriage be aspired to?
3. In what ways can God use singleness for His kingdom?

Love (1 Corinthians 13)

1. How does love described here compare to love as typically defined in our culture?
2. In your opinion, what is the best way to develop the ability to love others?
3. What from culture do you think illustrates the love described in chapter thirteen (movies, books, etc.)?