

2 Timothy 2:15

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

It's not just studying and accumulating knowledge, but studying to know Him and be able to do His will. It's studying Him because of how awesome he is and how much you love him that you can't do anything else.

I heard a quote about what happens to us each morning - that we wake up with Satan sitting on our face just waiting to squash our day, to squash our joy. If we don't pick him up and toss him across the room - he'll succeed. And we can't do it. He prowls around like a roaring lion waiting to devour us, he's the ruler of this world, he wins, UNLESS, we resist him.

How?

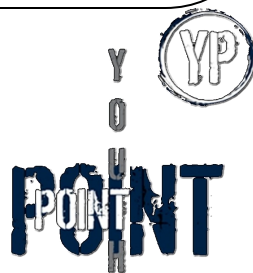
By being firm in our faith, by having the Spirit interceding for us, by fighting! We must fight! We must contend!

What's your weapon of choice for this fight?



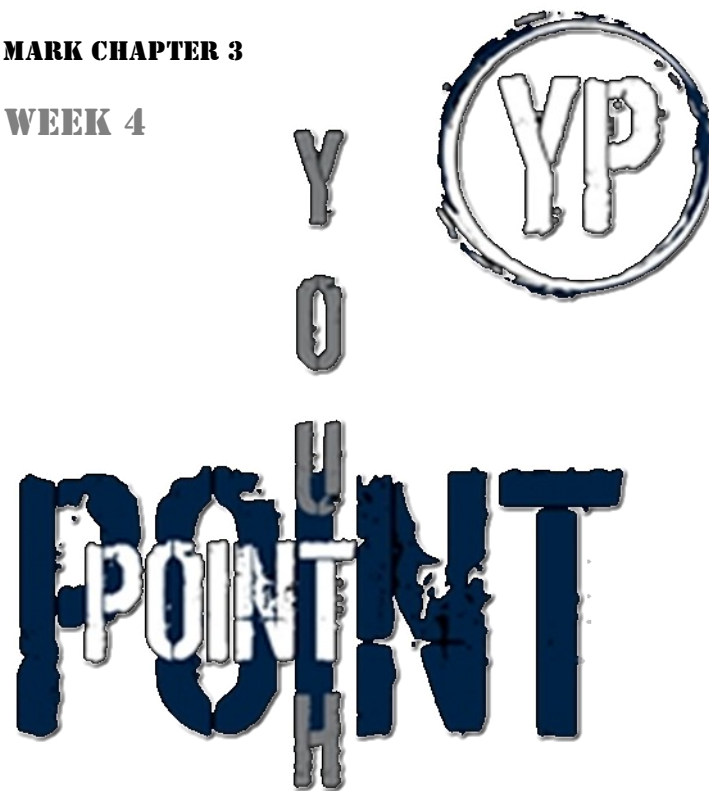
Ephesians 6:10-17 - The Armor of God

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God



MARK CHAPTER 3

WEEK 4



After a break last week, a new chapter this week.

Things to notice or take note of while your reading:

- ⇒ This chapter picks right back up with the same issue of the Jesus in the synagogue doing something on the Sabbath.
 - ◆ Notice how they already want to get rid of Him
- ⇒ The list of the apostles
- ⇒ What's up with his family?
 - ◆ Why do they try to go get him?
 - ◆ What's his response?

Mark 3

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon. When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him, for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." And he called them to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

Week 4 — Mark 3

Day 5 continued

Many people think that Jesus existed and that he was a nice guy and a good teacher, but that's not an option. I don't know if you've read any CS Lewis outside of the Chronicles of Narnia, but he's awesome. In Mere Christianity he explains that idea:

"even His enemies, when they read the Gospels, do not usually get the impression of silliness and conceit. Still less do unprejudiced readers. Christ says that He is "humble and meek" and we believe Him; not noticing that, if He were merely a man, humility and meekness are the very last characteristics we could attribute to some of His sayings. I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. We are faced, then, with a frightening alternative. This man we are talking about either was (and is) just what He said or else a lunatic, or something worse. Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God. God has landed on this enemy-occupied world in human form. And now, what was the purpose of it all? What did He come to do? Well, to teach, of course"

Kewl, right? Liar, Lunatic or Lord. Only one fits.

Things haven't changed much, people in His day didn't get who He was and why He was here and people today get it even less. Though back then they at least cared enough to call Him out on it, today no one cares what anyone else believes.

- ◆ So, what was so wrong with the scribes thinking that He was possessed?

Remember, what we think about Jesus means everything.

- ◆ What's the eternal sin?

- ◆ Have you committed it?

Week 4 — Mark 3

Day 1 continued

"Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"—for they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

- ◆ What did you find to be the most interesting part of this chapter?

- ◆ How many times is the word 'and' used in this chapter? Why might that be important? How about in the Greek? :-)

- ◆ What's your take on JC's mother and brothers?

Week 4 — Mark 3

Day 2

IS DOING GOOD, OKAY??

I find the portion for today a bit amusing, but also sad. Sad to how blind they were. How blind we all were before He opened our eyes.

Mark 3:1-6

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.” And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Normally, I present you with the versions as they are in the other gospels, so that you can read them for yourself. But, today instead of presenting you with the whole text as it is - I'm going to let you see some of the key differences in **bold**. They help bring out the passage.

Luke 6:6-11

On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose **right hand** was withered. And the **scribes and the Pharisees** watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might **find a reason** to accuse him. **But he knew their thoughts**, and he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come **and stand** here.” And he rose and stood there. And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?” **And after looking around at them all he said to him**, “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored. **But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.**

Matthew 12:9-14

He went on from there and entered their synagogue. And a man was there with a withered hand. **And they asked him**, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—so that they might accuse him. **He said to them, “Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”** Then he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, **healthy like the other**. But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

Week 4 — Mark 3

Day 5

Lunatic? Possessed?

Mark 3:20-35

Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.” And he called them to him and said to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

“Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”—for they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you.” And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

Here we have Jesus casting out demons again, but was he out of his mind? I find it amusing that this is his very family that's saying this. His mother who was visited by an angel, who conceived him without having sex, who had raised this perfect little kid, is now at this point in the game wondering if he's crazy?!?! Come on! I could see that maybe from his brothers, but his mom. That's just not right! The thing is that that's an option, he could only be one of three things: crazy, demon, or God.

So, family thinks he's crazy, the scribes think that he's demon possessed, who thinks that he's God?? Oh, yeah - the demons!

We could analyze this passage from tons of different angles, but for now we're sticking with the craziness of it all and then get down to a truth that it reveals. Or better yet, I'll let you figure that truth out on your own. :-)



Week 4 — Mark 3

Day 4 continued

So, right off the bat you should see Peter. He's listed first each time the apostles are listed. Why? Well, simple answer is that he's the leader of the pack.

Peter's the guy that's in charge, but he's also the guy who always has to ask "why?"

He's the guy that's like let's go! He's always in the middle of all the action. Always asking questions, even when he should just keep his trap closed. He always has a response. Everyone is still being a coward in the boat, in awe of Jesus walking on water thinking 'there is no way' and Peter's the guy that's out there walking on it. Yeah, after he was out there he might have been like 'oh what did I just do', but he did it! He went for it! Peter - it means stone. That wasn't what he was, but it was what Jesus wanted him to be - to be solid. Depending on what was going on Jesus would either call him Simon or Peter or Simon Peter. It's interesting.

Sometimes Jesus chose people's nicknames because of what he wanted them to be, other times he chose them because of what they were. That's the case when it comes to James and John whom He referred to as the Sons of Thunder or hot heads. These guys had a temper. They could go off. Just think all that energy then directed towards the kingdom of Jesus! James and Peter were both arrested, but James they killed. Why? Cause he was a bigger threat! James was the first one of the apostles to be killed. Then the only time you see, what I always think of as the lovey-dovey John who leaned up on Jesus, alone in the gospels, well he's mad. It's really interesting to see their old nature come out. To see how normal these guys were.

Then we have Andrew. He's like the odd man out, cause some of the time he's in and some of the time he's out. He was called at the same time as the other three that form the inner circle were called, but he's not always part of them. He's the picture of a humble stone, always bringing people to Jesus. Never asking, "why not me too?" or saying, "I want to go too." He just is.

Then you have all the other ordinary guys, that besides Matthew who was a tax collector and wrote a book of the Bible, you don't know much about. You have Judas Iscariot on the list, but he is always referred to as the one that betrayed Jesus when mentioned in the gospels, but then not listed in Acts. We know that he's the guy that held the money for them, he was their accountant, but not much more.

Thru all of this, it wasn't what these guys were that made them so special, cause they weren't they were ordinary, BUT they were willing to become extraordinary for His sake. They were willing to leave it all and GO and GO and GO for His sake. Because of who He is and was and will always be. Are you?

Week 4 — Mark 3

Day 2 continued

I love how the Bible continually unveils itself to us. So, remember in Mark 2 Jesus had just proclaimed himself to be "Lord of the Sabbath", now He's back at it.

So, this whole bit is about whether it's legal to do good or not during the Sabbath, but there is so much detail here that we could spend days going through it all.

The guy with the withered hand for instance - in the Greek it refers to it drying up or atrophying, which is assumed by many to be from an injury and not that he was born that way, otherwise it wouldn't matter which hand it was. Luke makes sure to include the detail that it was his right hand - something that's important to note because between 85-90% of the population is right handed. So, if he couldn't use his hand, he most likely couldn't work or provide for his family. Then given that it had atrophied it wasn't a recent injury or something that would have been considered life threatening cause if it were He would have been allowed to at least stop the bleeding, but not make it better. Like there was some provision for putting on a bandage, but you couldn't also put on ointment on the Sabbath because that would be healing. Weird I know.

Also, just in case we weren't aware of who was watching Jesus, Luke tells us that it was "the scribes and the Pharisees" - remember the guys that knew the law. Jesus knew what they were after - He knew what they were thinking. So, Jesus asks them "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?" Thing is that these guys would of known what it said in Isaiah 1:11-17 :

*"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.
"When you come to appear before me, who has required of you
this trampling of my courts?
Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me.
New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.
Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates;
they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.
When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you;
even though you make many prayers, I will not listen;
your hands are full of blood.
Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;
cease to do evil, learn to do good;
seek justice, correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless,
plead the widow's cause.*

Essentially, it says 'I hate **your** Sabbaths! Stop doing evil! Learn to do good!'

So, that was basically Jesus sticking it to them. He was angry because of how hardened they were and then after He heals the man they were angry at him - they wanted to "destroy" Jesus, so they go off to plot with the Herodians aka guys whom they hated, their enemies, but who had power because they were in league with Rome. The Pharisees wanted to keep their religion and the Herodians wanted to keep their dynasty. They just didn't know **how** to get rid of this guy.

Week 4 — Mark 3

Day 3

Shhhh! Don't tell.

Mark 3:7-12

Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon. When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him, for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." And he strictly ordered them not to make him known.

Yesterday, the Pharisees were furious and started to plot to kill Him, today the crowd nearly does it for them, but for a different reason. There are so many people just wanting to touch Him that if he stays on dry land for too long He'll be smothered. Think about all these sick people just running up to you on the streets wanting to touch you and then other people falling down in front of you and crying out. Chaos! I'd be having people get a boat ready too! It's assumed that it was Peter's boat, but we can't know that for sure, though that same boat keeps coming up in later chapters.

So, we have the most popular guy around telling unclean spirits aka demons not to say who he really is. The demons are still the only ones who really know who Jesus is at this point. Everyone else just knows that He can do kewl stuff like heal people and teach like no one else, but he has yet to do any of the really kewl stuff like feed thousands from a kids lunch or walk on water. That's still to come, there is still a long time left of his ministry ~ 2 years. So, the time has not yet come. Here's Matthew's version which is kind of different, but shows us why He's here:

Matthew 12:15-21

Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all and ordered them not to make him known. This was **to fulfill** what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

"Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,
my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
He will not quarrel or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;
a bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not quench,
until he brings justice to victory;
and in his name the Gentiles will hope."

So, it's all to fulfill what was already said. Matthew doesn't really quote word per word what it says in Isaiah 42:1-4, but somewhat interprets what it says as he says it. Which, is neat to then look at what it says in Isaiah and how it's different from Matthew's take. Go & look. Look at the last line which states: "And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law." Neat, if you think of the coastlands as being all the other nations that wait to hear about Him. The first set of people that will go out are appointed tomorrow. We know of Him/can hope in Him cause they went out.

Week 4 — Mark 3

Day 4

The Apostles

Mark 3:13-19

And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

So, technically at this point we've seen Jesus call: Peter, James, John, Andrew, and Matthew. Now, He calls the rest of the 12 and appoints them as apostles.

FYI: this isn't really a formal list - it includes their nicknames :-) it's personal

He gathers them to be with Himself. To learn by being with Him and sitting under His teaching and plainly just living life with Him, so that He could train them. At this point, He will only be around for about another two years before he's killed on the cross. So, time is short. He plans on teaching them and sending them out. So, then He'll send them out two by two on short missions kind of like interns they go do some work and then come back and report what happened and get some extra training. This is it - this bunch of seemingly ordinary guys are Jesus' plan and there's no plan B.

So, who are they? The further down the list you go the less information there is about each of the apostles, but I have found out quite a few interesting features about them.

First, why 12? Why not 6 or 15 or 38? Well, how many tribes of Israel are there? 12. From what I've gathered it seems like it's assumed that they will be the 12 that are seated on the 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes, but guess we'll just have to see when that day comes.

Here's the list: (look at the order of the names)

Mark	Luke 6:14-16	Matthew 10:2-4	Acts 1:13
Peter James John Andrew	Peter Andrew James John	Peter Andrew James John	Peter John James Andrew
Philip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas	Philip Bartholomew Matthew Thomas	Philip Bartholomew Thomas Matthew	Philip Thomas Bartholomew Matthew
James Thaddaeus Simon Judas Iscariot	James Simon Judas (son of James) Judas Iscariot	James Thaddaeus Simon Judas Iscariot	James Simon Judas (son of James)