

By Galilee



SABBATH—APRIL 16

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Mark 4:1–5:43.

MEMORY VERSE: “They [the disciples] were terrified. They asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey Him!’ ” (Mark 4:41, NIV).

THE MAN OF GALILEE. Jesus grew up in Nazareth, a small town in the mountains. He made Capernaum the headquarters for His ministry (work) (Mark 2:1). Capernaum was at the north end of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum was at the center of the fishing industry. When Jesus was finished with one of His missionary trips, He always went back to Capernaum. He felt Capernaum was His home.

The Sea of Galilee is a large part of northern Israel. The sea is a giant heart. It is about 13 miles long north to south, and about 8 miles at its greatest width. The greenish-blue fresh water is full of fish. It is 130–148 feet deep in some places. Because its surface is about seven hundred feet below sea level, the weather around the lake is very warm.

The Sea of Galilee is where we find Jesus in this week's lesson. Every day's study puts Him on the sea or on one side of it.

A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON: What lesson was Jesus teaching in the parable¹ of the sower? Why did Jesus compare² His eternal³ kingdom to a seed? What can we learn from the storm on the sea? What can we learn from the healing of the demon-possessed man? What can we learn from how Jesus treated two special women? What traditions⁴ did Jesus do away with, and why?

*Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 23.

¹parable—a simple story that gives a moral or religious lesson.

²compare—show how things are the same.

³eternal—forever; without beginning or end; lasting forever.

⁴traditions—religious customs that people have followed for a long time.

SUNDAY—APRIL 17
THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER
(Mark 4:1-20).



Mark 4 is one of the few places in Mark's Gospel⁵ where Mark tries to explain Jesus' teaching. In most of his Gospel, Mark shows Jesus as a man of action. He does not bother to explain Jesus' teachings.

Jesus' parables are famous. Even people who do not believe in Jesus know His parables. The parables are about everyday events.⁶ The parables use simple words and ideas. But the parables teach deep truths. As the Author of all wisdom, Jesus never tried to impress people with His great

knowledge. Instead, He taught truth with simple stories from common life. The other Gospel writers wrote about many more of Jesus' parables. Often, these parables have a surprise ending. But the parables in Mark 4 do not have surprise endings.

Study Jesus' parable of the sower and how He explained the parable.

Read Mark 4:1-20. Describe each of the people in the parable.

People along the path _____

People in the rocky places _____

People among thorns _____

People in good soil _____

⁵Gospel—the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are called the Gospels.

⁶events—things that happen.

Notice that the sower is always the same. The seed also stays the same. Only the people change. God's invitation to accept salvation goes out to all kinds of people. But God never forces people to accept salvation. He gives to everyone the opportunity to refuse His kind invitation.

The parable also makes clear that to follow Jesus takes more than one decision. Some Christians like to remember the actual day they were saved. But the Christian life does not become full in one day. The Christian life is a battle and a march. God calls us to grow in grace and in knowledge of Him. As Jesus explained in this parable, some people start well. But they do not grow. The seed starts to grow. But it never gives fruit.

Think about someone you know who fits in each group of people in the parable of the sower. What things made each person like the group that person is in? For each person, what is helpful to their faith and what can damage their faith?

**MONDAY—APRIL 18
(Mark 4:3-8, 30-32).**

In two short but interesting parables, Jesus explains that God's kingdom is the same as a seed. God's kingdom is so very different from the kingdoms set up by proud, ambitious humans. People use terrible weapons and strong armies as symbols of

human kingdoms. One political leader has said that power comes from a gun. But Jesus, God's Son, says that God's kingdom comes from a seed!

What kinds of seeds are shown in the following parables? Mark 4:26-29, Mark 4:30-32.



Any seed is small. But all seeds have an energy that causes them to grow. Powerful trees such as oaks and the redwoods grow toward the heavens. They make us feel small. But they began with a seed.

Charlemagne, king of the Holy Roman Empire, bowed to no one. When the pope was about to put the crown on his head, Charlemagne grabbed it and crowned himself. Charlemagne was so strong, people feared him. But he grew old. Facing death, Charlemagne explained how he wanted his body handled after he died. He wanted to be clothed in his royal robes. He wanted a crown on his head. And he wanted to be seated on his throne. His throne was then to be put in a tomb. And the

tomb was to be sealed tight, never to be broken. He would rule forever, even in death!

His servants did all this. The years went by. The winds blew and the rain fell on Charlemagne's tomb. One day, the wind blew a tiny seed into a crack in one of the tomb's walls. The rain fell. The seed grew. The seed's roots made the crack larger. Then the wind blew in more soil and the seed grew into a larger plant. It grew and grew, until one day it cracked the tomb open. Inside was a skeleton sitting on a dusty throne. The robes had rotted. The crown had fallen to the ground. The powerful Charlemagne had been defeated by the power of a tiny seed.

What useful steps can help you focus on God's eternal kingdom instead of things that always end in dust and death? How can these verses help? Matthew 6:19; 2 Corinthians 4:18; Philippians 4:8.

**TUESDAY—APRIL 19
TERROR BY WATER
(Mark 4:35-41).**

C. S. Lewis, a famous Christian writer, explained how his wife's death tested his faith in God. "You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth becomes a matter of life and death to you. It is easy for you to say that a rope is strong if you are using it to tie a box. But suppose you had to hang by that rope over a cliff. Would you not then first try to see how much you really

trusted the rope?"—Adapted from C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1996), pp. 22, 23.

Read Mark 4:35-41. The disciples were faced with death. How do these words and behavior show what Lewis was saying about faith and trust?



How does Mark 4:35-41 show a powerful example of Jesus as both God and human?

In Mark 4:38, the disciples asked a question that millions of Christians have asked during times of trouble. By faith, we know the answer. By faith, we know God cares. The whole purpose of the Cross was to save us

so we do not have to die and be eternally (forever) lost (John 3:16; John 10:10; 2 Peter 3:9). But we all have found ourselves in almost the same situation as the disciples. When our boat fills with water, we all cry, “God, do You not care?”

When was the last time you found yourself in almost the same situation as the disciples? What happened? Would Jesus have been right in asking you, Why do you not have faith? What have you learned from Mark 4:35-41 that can help you the next time you are tempted to believe God does not care?

WEDNESDAY—APRIL 20

TWO THOUSAND DEAD PIGS (Mark 5:1-20).

Read Mark 5:1-20. If you could learn just one lesson from this story, what would that lesson be?

There are many lessons a person could learn from this story:

1. If you focused on Jesus' power to cast (throw) out demons, what lessons could you learn about God's power to help you overcome sin and bad habits?

2. Maybe you focused on the demons and their power over the man. What lessons can you learn from the demons' power about the great war between Jesus and Satan?

3. Did you focus on how the pig keepers felt about what happened to their pigs? What lessons could you learn about how worldly thoughts can hide God's true nature and character from us?

4. Maybe you focused on how the man felt about what Jesus had done for him. What lesson can you learn from this man about what we should do when Jesus works for us?

5. Maybe you focused on what Jesus told the man to do after he asked to stay with Jesus. What can you learn from Jesus' words that should encourage you to tell other people about what Jesus has done for you?

You probably learned a useful lesson from today's study.

Now find another Bible story that supports what you have learned from Mark 5:1-20. Be ready to share your story with the Sabbath School class.

THURSDAY—APRIL 21

A DEAD GIRL AND A SICK WOMAN (MARK 5:21-43).

Back across the Sea of Galilee, Jesus gives us another example of His power. His life gives life to the seed. In the seed, power works silently and wonderfully. His power commands winds and waves to be still (quiet). His power brings calm to the

troubled soul of a wild man. Now His power drives away long-time disease and raises a young girl from death.

Read Mark 5:21-43. What connections do you find between these two miracles? How do these miracles show Jesus' interest in all kinds of people?



Here are two females. One is still young. The other is older. Both were thought to be unimportant to society. Because of her bleeding, the older woman was unclean. Anyone who touched her would also be unclean (Leviticus 15:25-27). The younger female was dead. Her body was unclean. Anyone who touched her body would be unclean (Numbers 19:11). So when Jesus touched these two women, He became unclean.

Jesus often put aside laws and rules that kept faith from growing when those laws and rules were used in a wrong way (Mark 7:13). His

Sabbath healings are one of the best examples of this. Another example is when Jesus drove money changers out of the temple (Matthew 21:12-17). Still another example is when Jesus criticized the practice of “corban”⁷ (Mark 7:11). One more example would be Jesus' words about washing or about food (Mark 7:1-8). Many of these rules were supported by the Bible. But many people had come to believe that obeying these rules would save them, not Jesus!

What rules in your culture or faith might be broken for a greater good? What practices or beliefs are often thought of as sacred (holy) that could be broken for the right reasons? Does that mean that these practices should not be thrown out completely? How are we to know which practices or beliefs should stay and which should go?

FRIDAY—APRIL 22

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, “ ‘Peace, Be Still’ ” and “The Touch of Faith,” in *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 333–348; “ ‘The Sower Went Forth to Sow,’ ” and “ ‘First the Blade, Then the Ear,’ ” in *Christ's [Jesus'] Object Lessons*, pp. 33–61, 62–69.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have someone in the class who knows about gardening explain

⁷corban—when a Jew announced “corban,” he was denying his parents of property by dedicating it as a gift to the temple. Jesus criticized this practice severely.

what makes soil good for a seed to grow. What spiritual lessons can you learn from this?

2. In the New Testament, demons are real. But some people argue that these were just examples of mental illness and that the Bible writers did not know any better. How would you answer these people? Why is it important that we believe demons are real?
3. In Mark 5:36, Jesus said, "Be not afraid, only believe." What did he mean? How can His words be important to someone who is having a terrible problem? Why should we not be afraid? And what should we believe?
4. Discuss as a class the question of

what church practices can be broken and what church practices cannot be broken. Can sacred (holy) traditions ever work against the truth? Explain.

SUMMARY: "Who is this. . .?" cried the disciples when Jesus calmed the storm. The same cry can be given for each of Jesus' deeds we studied this week. Who is this Jesus who comes into the world as a growing seed? Who is this Jesus whom demons know and fear? Who is this Jesus who gives power from the hem of His robe to heal a woman's suffering? Who is this Jesus who calls a dead girl back to life?

This is Jesus, who turns our world upside down. This is Jesus, the greatest Man who ever lived. This is Jesus, the Son of the living God.