

Making Space for God

Lessons From Mark #10—Mary's Son

Opening Prayer

Forgive me, most gracious lord and Father, if this day I have done or said anything to increase the pain of the world. Pardon the unkind word, the impatient gesture, the hard and selfish deed, the failure to show sympathy and kindly help where I have had the opportunity, but missed it; and enable me so to live that I may daily do something to lessen the tide of human sorrow, and add to the sum of human happiness. Amen

F.B. Meyer (England 1847-1929)



Arrival

Take some times to settle yourself. Invite the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts for the day. Think back over where you have been in the last four weeks. What burdens, emotions, and concerns do you carry? What are you thankful for? When have you experienced the Lord's presence? Journal your thoughts and offer these to the Lord.

Scripture—Mark 6:1-6—Read Slowly

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ² When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? ³ Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

⁴ Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶ He was amazed at their lack of faith.¹

Imagination Exercise

Take twenty minutes and put yourself in the story. Imagine the sights, sounds, smells, feelings, and thoughts in the room that day. What would you be thinking and feeling if you were there? How would you have responded? Take time to express what you experienced. You might consider writing a poem, song, dialogue, making a sketch or composing a prayer. The handout called Mary's Son the Carpenter is a sample of what you might do.

Readings

In theory, salvation seems desirable. At the level of feeling, it is different. It is humiliating to be saved.

Michael Casey in Living in the Truth, page 58

¹ **New International Version (NIV)** Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.](http://www.biblica.com)® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

² *Artwork—Mary's Son the Carpenter, Acrylic Collage on Form Board, 11 x 6.5 inches, Steven Stuckey, 2017*

Benedict assures us that humility will speedily lead us to the goal of our calling. The notion of rapid progress is probably better avoided...A realistic estimate of the time needed to get to the summit would be forty or fifty years. This is because progress is rarely unqualified. In most people's lives, there are periods of backsliding, false starts are made, blind alleys are entered...Anyone who zooms up the ladder without pause or hindrance is probably going to die young. For the rest of us, it is a life long journey.

Michael Casey in Living in the Truth, page 66

Our problems teach us not to rely on ourselves but to learn the freedom that follows our dependence on God. Even our very lack of virtue can expedite our progress towards God. The worse we perceive ourselves, the more likely we are to invest our hopes in the saving intervention of God rather than in our own capacity to find solutions to our difficulties.

Michael Casey in Living in the Truth, page 67

Being estranged from God means being unaware of and out of touch with the heights and depths of our personality; it means being estranged from our center and unable to live our own truth. The sickness and lostness of humanity which the Gospels describe is a condition in which we are carried away by unconscious fears and desires, are deaf to the promptings of an intuitive wisdom, reject forces within ourselves making for health and healing, and find the spring of life poisoned. Out of touch with our true center, "the heart's heart," we are driven by an innate need to find another center, an absolute to give order and direction to our life; we are liable to find ourselves compulsively attached to some cause or object which takes the place of our true center.

Christopher Bryant, The River Within, page 30

We live lives of tortured complexity. Inside each of us there is both a saint and a sinner and enough complexity to write our own book on abnormal psychology. Our hearts are a murky caldron of grace and sin, angels and demons. Always, it seems, we are torn in a way that leaves us feeling unsure, guilty, and tense. It is no simple task being a human being.

From Prayer, Our Deepest Longing by Ronald Rolheiser

Whatever you do with your life—whatever you end up achieving or not achieving—the great gift you have in you to give to the world is the gift of who you alone are; your way of seeing things, and saying things, and feeling about things, that is like nobody else's. If so much as a single one of you were missing, there would be an empty place at the great feast of life that nobody else in all creation could fill.

~ Frederick Buechner

I am grateful for my handicaps, for through it I found my world, myself, and my God.

Helen Keller

Benediction

Lord Jesus, faith in you means trusting and relying upon you. There is a part of me that does that implicitly. But I have other internal parts that doubt, resist your influence, or feel indignant and offended by your presence. Those parts are often afraid. I believe you love those parts of me too. Woo them, win them, and love them so that all of me can love and trust you. Help me to do the same with the people in my life that I dislike, am offended by, or would rather dismiss. Thank You. Amen