

Let's Do Difficult

I. Jesus Leading the Way

Mark 10:32–34 (NIV®)

³² They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and **the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid.** Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. ³³ "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and **the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles,** ³⁴ **who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him.** Three days later he will rise."

II. The Gospel of Mark

Mark 1:1–4 (NIV®)

¹ The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.² It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way"— ³ **"a voice of one** calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.' " ⁴ And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 1:9–13 (NIV®)

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

¹² **At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert,** ¹³ and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Mark 1:14–15 (NIV®)

¹⁴ After **John was put in prison,** Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Mark 1:21–26 (NIV®)

²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.

²² The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. ²³ Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, ²⁴ **"What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"** ²⁵ "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" ²⁶ The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

Mark 1:35–37 (NIV®)

³⁵ **Very early in the morning, while it was still dark,** Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶ Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

Mark 1:39–45 (NIV®)

³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. ⁴⁰ **A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."** ⁴¹ Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured. ⁴³ Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: **"See that you don't tell this to anyone.** But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." ⁴⁵ **Instead he went out and began to talk**

freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

Mark 2:3–12 (NIV®)

³ Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶ **Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"** ⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? ¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." He said to the paralytic, ¹¹ "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Mark 2:15–17 (NIV®)

¹⁵ While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶ When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: **"Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"** ¹⁷ On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Mark 2:18 (NIV®)

Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, **"How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"**

Mark 2:23–24 (NIV®)

²³ One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. ²⁴ **The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"**

Mark 3:1–6 (NIV®)

¹ Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ² **Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus,** so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³ Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone." ⁴ Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. ⁵ He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. ⁶ **Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.**

Proclamation

I have decided to follow Jesus.

I will take up my cross daily.

I will run with perseverance the race marked out for me.

I intend to run in such a way as to get the prize.

I will throw off every hindrance and any sin which might entangle.

I choose to say no to ungodliness and yes to obedience.

I offer myself as a living sacrifice for the purposes of Almighty God. Amen.