

Study Guide for the Week of July 1, 2007

*This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. **For 2007 the study guide will help you read through the New Testament in a year.** Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Sermon manuscripts are available at www.spwired.com.*

Monday, July 2. Read Mark 11:15-33. Jesus' anger at those selling things in the outer area of the Temple was aimed at the abuse of the common people. The selling of sacrificial animals was originally meant to be a way to help those who had traveled a great distance. Unfortunately it had become a predatory practice where prices were inflated and those who simply wanted to make a suitable sacrifice to God were gouged out of their hard-earned money. Knowing that, what does this parable say about Jesus and his actions in the temple that day? What today in our world might cause a similar reaction in Jesus?

Tuesday, July 3. Read Mark 12:1-27. In verses 1-12 Jesus tells the kind of parable that caused him a great deal of trouble. This parable is aimed at the Jews of that day. The owner of the vineyard is God; the people working the vineyard are the Jews. The messengers the owner sends are the prophets of old, and the son of the owner is Jesus himself. Jesus was pointing out the generosity of God, his grace, his patience with the chosen people, and also his justice in the end. What does this tell you about God, about Jesus, about how God's message is received...then and now?

Wednesday, July 4. Read Mark 12:28-44. Focus on verses 28-34. Up until that point no one had taken these two commandments and put them together. Religion to Jesus was loving God and loving others. In fact Jesus would have said that the only way to prove one's love for God is by showing love to others. Relate this passage back to the message on the Good Samaritan from Sunday. How might you live this out today and every day? What is the result if you do? What is the consequence if you do not?

Thursday, July 5. Read Mark 13:1-13. Chapter 13 of Mark is a collection of Jesus' sayings about the end times. Jewish belief at that time was that a day would come, called The Day of the Lord, when God would set all things right, wipe out evil, and set the Jews in their place as the chosen people. Jesus used those images to speak about 1. the destruction of Jerusalem, 2. the future persecution of his followers, 3. the dangers of the last days, 4. warnings to be watchful, and 5. his eventual return. What do these verses say to you about being ready for Jesus return?

Friday, July 6. Read Mark 13:14-37. These verses follow on yesterday's and include the same themes. Can you find evidence of the 5 things from yesterday in today's reading? What should we do to balance being ready for the end of time and Jesus' return (if it should happen in our lifetimes) with the necessity to be fully engaged in life here and now?

Saturday, July 7. Read Mark 14:1-31. This is the beginning of the end for Jesus. What elements jump out at you? Notice the way Jesus is telling his disciples what is going to happen to him. Do they understand? Sunday we celebrated communion. Can you see a reflection of this passage in our celebration of the Lord's Supper?

Sunday, July 8. Read Mark 14:32-72. What do you learn about Jesus from his time of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane? What do you learn about his followers? How are we like them sometimes? Notice Jesus' surrender to God as he says, "not my will, but yours be done." Some say that for Jesus' followers today, that is the prayer that never fails, "your will be done, Lord." What else here in the story of Jesus betrayal and trial speak to you about the nature and character of Jesus?