

GNCOMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

SERMON SERIES: "THE GOSPEL OF MARK"

SERMON TITLE: "ALLOWING THE TEST"

DATE PREACHED: SUNDAY, MARCH 11TH 2018

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SERMON IN A SENTENCE:

"When you don't accept the challenge, you are not allowing the growth."

WARM UP QUESTIONS: (choose the ones you think fit best)

- 🗨️ How have you seen challenges in your life produce growth in your life?
- 🗨️ How would you rate your "pain/discomfort" tolerance in order to grow at things in your life?
- 🗨️ Introspective/thought question: Do you have a heart posture towards God that is desirous to grow in your faith?
- 🗨️ Why do you think we as humans (especially as Americans) work so hard to avoid anything difficult or of discomfort, even when we understand that most of the personal growth in our lives come through challenges?
- 🗨️ Do you ever feel like God is inattentive toward you when you are struggling through a life challenge?

◆ Bible Study Facilitator NOTE: As you prepare ahead of time, look through the passages/questions below to help yourself prioritize the ones that you definitely want to cover with the time you have available.

Hebrews 12:6 — "6 The Lord disciplines the one He loves."

- 🗨️ Is this verse an "oxymoron" or can God both discipline us/teach us discipline and fully love us?
- 🗨️ How does human parenting help give us insight into this verse and how God's love would actually lead Him to discipline us?

James 1:2-4 — "2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

- 🗨️ Can you say that you consider trials and the testing of your faith “pure joy” as James encourages us to?
- 🗨️ Regardless of how much you personally exercise, how do the principles and fundamentals of how you grow physically and spiritually similar? {example: no pain no gain}
- 🗨️ Have you come to terms with the fact that to grow spiritually, it will take an investment of time, energy, and focus and will naturally bring challenges designed to help you grow?

Mark 6:45-52 — “**45** Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the crowd. **46** After leaving them, He went up on a mountainside to pray. **47** Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and He was alone on land. **48** He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn He went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, **49** but when they saw Him walking on the lake, they thought He was a ghost. They cried out, **50** because they all saw Him and were terrified. Immediately He spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” **51** Then He climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, **52** for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.”

- 🗨️ Why do you think Jesus waited so long to go out to His disciples, even though He saw/knew they were straining at the oars? {the original greek text tells us that Jesus saw them struggling in the evening, and didn’t go out to them until sometime between 3am-6am. Verse 48 even tells us that Jesus was going to “pass by them”}. Doesn’t Jesus care? If He does, then what is His purpose?
- 🗨️ Introspective/thought question: Have you ever been struggling with something in your life, and you were frustrated because you didn’t know where God was, if He cared, and why He wasn’t intervening?
- 🗨️ How comforting is it when reading this passage that Jesus **A)** never took His eyes and attention off of the disciples, **B)** had the ability to walk on the water to go directly out to them, **C)** when He stepped into the disciple’s boat, that the wind, which had been causing the

disciples so much trouble, died down? How does this encourage your faith in the midst of the trials of this life?

Romans 5:3-5— “**3** We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4** perseverance, character; and character, hope. **5** And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

-  Do you desire this attitude and heart posture in your life and faith?
-  What will help encourage you into more of this type of heart posture? {*Leader Hint: Being in God’s Word consistently to ground you in His power, truth, and purposes, AND by allowing God’s people into your life to encourage and hold you accountable.}
-  What trial of life and test of faith are you in right now that

TAKE THESE HOME WITH YOU “TAKEAWAYS”:

-  What trial of life and test of faith are you in right now that you need to trust Jesus that He sees you, cares about you, and is desirous to use this trial to strengthen your faith?
-  Who is someone in your life right now that you know needs you to help encourage them in their faith as they go through their current trial of life?

 Close in prayer.

MATCHING THEME IDEAS FOR THE KID’S LESSON:

- I’d encourage a worship time if possible (youtube works great {Lifetree Kids}).
- Ask them if they have any things in their life that they need Jesus’ help with, and then pray for the requests of the group.
- And feel free to ask any of the kids if they’d like to say a prayer for the group.
- Read: **James 1:2-4**— “**2** Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, **3** because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. **4** Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”
- Ask them if they’ve ever done anything difficult/challenging?

- Ask them who they think would have bigger muscles: Someone who worked hard with their muscles (worked out), or someone who just laid on a couch and never did anything?
- Ask them who they think would have a stronger faith in God: Someone who trusted God through difficult things, or someone who never needed to trust God because they avoided anything difficult?
- Have a push up contest and see who is able to endure the most push ups. Correlate that with doing the hard work to grow in the faith and strength of God.
- Ask them who wants to have a strong faith in God. Get them excited to grow and be strong in their walk with God.
- Tell them that, just because they experience difficult things in this life, it doesn't mean that God doesn't see them, love them, care about them, and that He is able to help grow them through those difficult experiences.