

# Journey to Judea - Part 1

When we think about the gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – Mark isn't usually the first place we go. Yet Mark, listening to the eyewitness accounts of Peter, wrote a fast-paced gospel sharing the miraculous things Jesus did, including His death and Resurrection, to convince his Roman readers that Jesus is the Son of God. Let's not overlook what we can learn about our Savior in the overlooked gospel.



## INTRODUCTION

This sermon used Mark (10:1-16) to pose three conditional statements in the form of “*if...then*.” The “if” statement was always the same, “If Jesus is God of our lives...” The “then” statement then followed with three different ideas:

1. We must “guard against a hard heart” (v. 2-9). Warning signs and what we can do were discussed.
2. We must “be careful not to destroy relationships” (v. 10-12). Marriage was used as an example.
3. We must “exercise unquestionable faith” (v. 13-16). A child's reliance on their father was an example (perfect timing on Father's Day).

## STARTER QUESTION

We often gain more clarity in this series when cultural and geographical context are explained in relation to the written Word. Do you agree with the comparison made today regarding New York and Texas as Judea and Galilee, respectively? Do you think this type of context is necessary in understanding the Word as written?

## INTO THE WORD

(Read Genesis 32:22-33:4) The story of Jacob and Esau is an example of a relationship that was destroyed. Jacob stole Esau's birthright by deceit. Before he returned home, not sure of Esau's reception, Jacob had to wrestle with God and was transformed. Esau reconciled with his brother and the relationship was restored. Was it necessary to face God before the relationship was restored?

(Read Luke 3:19-20) Clearly, John the Baptist had to know that there was risk involved in scolding Herod the tetrarch. Have you ever had to exercise unquestionable faith and speak against something that you felt was not right even though you knew you could suffer consequences? What happened?

(Read 1 John 4:7-12) This passage seems to discuss love, relationship, and faith. Do you agree that all the conditional statements above complement each other and are inseparable? Three ideas were presented in this sermon. Do you have any thoughts on what ideas four through six might be?

## APPLICATION

The list below are the signs of a hard heart noted in today's sermon. Do you have any suggestions on how to overcome a hard heart?

- You begin to lose emotion.
- You stop caring or distance yourself from people emotionally.
- You know you should enjoy life, but you see it mechanically...just getting through life...going through the motions.
- Passion is hard to come by...the color is gone.
- You begin to doubt the best in people...you stop giving people the benefit of the doubt.

The Pharisees demonstrated hardness of heart by their questioning. Are there any hot button issues we question God or our church leaders about to find loopholes rather than truth?

## **PRAYER**

Dear Father, help me to investigate my heart. Please help me to recognize a hard heart and give me the strength to fix it. I know that you are the God of my life. Help me to accept that without question. On Father's Day especially, bless all those relationships. Please soften the hearts of anyone who has lost or strained the relationship with their father and let them be healed. We know that you are the God of our lives and pray for the grace to let that affect us in every way possible. Amen