

TELL ME
THE
STORY
OF
JESUS



The author & a fishing bear

FOREWORD

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There are lots of facts which you will learn from reading this series of stories from the gospel of Mark. Mark first wrote the stories in the Greek language. Peter first told the stories to Mark who wrote them down. I have tried to keep close to the exact words which Peter gave to Mark.

There are 40 stories altogether and each one tells us something important about how Jesus changes lives. Together these stories are living proof that Jesus is the Son of God.

DEDICATION

I would like to thank my wife Mina for her suggestions and help in proof-reading. Together we dedicate these stories to our grandchildren Ethan, Ben and Ruby Coffey. We hope that many children all over the world will enjoy the stories and as a result learn to read the Bible and come to love the Lord Jesus as their Saviour.

Easter 2008

TELL ME THE STORY OF JESUS



HE COULD RUN AND HE COULD WRITE



John Mark was a really fast **runner**. He tells us he made his getaway from guys who tried to hold him the night Jesus was taken prisoner. There is a saying, "He that fights and runs away lives to fight another day". Mark's life was like that. Once he ran off from another Christian called Paul but later came back and helped Paul in Rome. He was a good writer and he helped Peter as the **writer** of the gospel of Mark.

Mark was close to Jesus. The first church that ever met was in the house of Mark's mother. Later he went to Rome and it seems he ended up in Egypt.

PETER AND MARK TOGETHER

It seems that when Peter was in Rome he told Mark lots that he did not know about Jesus- especially what happened in Galilee. Mark wrote on paper we call papyrus. What I am now going to tell you is exciting.



Peter's fisherman friend John lived in Ephesus long after Peter and Paul died and he had a young friend called Papias.

Papias had a secret - he may have learned it from John - the secret is that *"Mark wrote down what Peter told him accurately but not in order."*

Some think that Mark like the brother of the painter called Durer had disabled hands and when soldiers captured Peter, Mark stopped writing and ran for his life. You see, the Christians were being killed because Caesar Nero burned Rome to build it better and blamed the Christians for the fire. We really don't know if his hands were injured when soldiers burst in to get Peter but we know Mark got away from Rome because he later became a leader of the Christians in Egypt.

SOMETHING TO DO

What is really great is that Peter remembered and told Mark over forty special stories from his three years with Jesus. This was the first book about Jesus. It made the world wake up to who Jesus was. **Why don't you start by counting the number of times Mark says "immediately" in chapter One of the Gospel.** Why count this word anyway? Because it is a sort of key that opens the story.



You see Jesus did greater things in a day than anyone else on earth had ever done and He did them because he cared for people. He finished everything that He did perfectly. He came to change the world. He came to conquer Satan. He came to change lives, homes, nations, and the whole world. Jesus is very much alive and the pace of change is getting quicker as we look forward to Him coming back to make the biggest changes yet.

YOUR LIFE HOUSE

Jesus knew that hard things happen to us - people do wrong things, they are sad, they get sick, they die. Jesus came to help, to forgive, to heal, to make us good and to give us life that goes on after death. You see, our bodies are **Life houses** -and lots of people had allowed Satan God's enemy into their Life-house. Only Jesus was strong enough to get him out. When we make Jesus our Saviour Jesus becomes owner of our **Life house**. He does not want us to live alone in our **Life house** so He sends His Holy Spirit to live with us in our **Life house**.



You have a Life-house and sometimes it echoes inside with angry words and God sees wrong thought pictures on its walls and bad deeds in its library which is our memory... When you ask Jesus to forgive and clean out your **Life house** He brings forgiveness and joy just like He did for Peter when he had a long cry about failing Jesus.

PETER TOLD THE STORY IN ROME

Because Peter loved Jesus he went years later to help Jesus' followers in Rome where a cruel man called **Nero** Caesar was burning Christians.

Peter felt so unworthy of Jesus he asked to be put upside down on a cross when they were going to kill him. That happened just after he finished telling this story we are going to read. In time Jesus won the Romans by His love and Constantine Caesar became a Christian.

To follow Jesus means being bold - things may be hard - but it also means to win over wrong and to live after death. Before Peter died he had just time to tell the stories you will be reading before the army took him away and Mark the writer probably ran for his life.

THE AMAZING PREDICTIONS OF ISAIAH



Have you watched those little pictures on the T.V. showing sunshine and raindrops for the days of the week? You see, there are satellites up in the sky and they show us the sort of weather that is coming our way.

Solomon once said, "Nobody knows what will be after he dies" but God did tell the prophets what would be long after they had died. **Isaiah** who lived 700 years before Jesus was one of these. The story is told that he was sawn in two by a wooden saw because people hated him.

Peter discovered in a copy of a scroll **Isaiah** wrote things that precisely described John the Baptist and also Jesus.

You see, God wanted **Isaiah** to show the world that He knew what would happen in the future. He even knew the names of people that would rule many hundreds of years later - people like the great Persian Cyrus. He told us long before about the birth of Jesus, the death of Jesus, and that a great man in the desert would introduce Jesus. He is John the Baptist.

Isaiah also said that the child God sent from heaven would be called "Immanuel" meaning "God with us" - that person was Jesus. All these stories which you will read when put together give us



the Big Picture of Jesus and show us how He came to serve and lift the heavy burdens that make life difficult.

THE TWO NUMBERS CHAPTERS AND VERSES

When Peter began to tell the great story of Jesus to Mark he showed Mark in his scroll of Isaiah the words about John the Baptist. You can find them in your bible in **Isaiah 40:3**.

Finding places in the bible is like the postman finding the number of your house. He first has to get to your street and then to your door. You may wonder why there are always two numbers when you have to find places in the bible.

It is just because two men divided the bible up to make it handy to find places. They were called Mr. Sancto Caro and Mr. Robert Stevens. Mr. Sancto Caro gave us the chapters and Mr. Stevens the verses of the bible. A good example is the best known verse of the bible **John 3:16** The first number "3" is the chapter. The second "16" is the verse.

JOHN THE BAPTIST - A SPECIAL MAN

MARK 1.3

Mark tells us when God wanted to waken up the world to Jesus and the most important news ever He chose a guy who could do that - a man who left the noisy city of Jerusalem to live and talk with God in the desert. The man wore a camel skin coat which kept him warm at night and cool in the daytime. He had a leather belt and sandals - that's all he ever had. Even soldiers trembled before him - he was the straightest man on earth not counting Jesus. He was called John the Baptist.

John the Baptist ate strange food. He ate locusts. They are like flying grasshoppers. He probably stored them up in salt. There was plenty of salt in the Dead Sea. He ate honey. There are beautiful flowers in Israel where Jesus lived and bees make lots of honey out of pollen of flowers.

This special man John the Baptist lived in the desert and thousands came to listen to him. He did just what Isaiah the prophet predicted 700 years before - he said "I am a voice crying in the desert, prepare the way of the Lord, make His path straight" - and then people can **immediately** use it. He said God was sending a Saviour. He would be pure and innocent as a lamb and cruel people would kill Him like a Passover lamb. John called Jesus the "Lamb of God"

When a road gets a new surface we have to wait just a few days till it opens. We have great machines which can make old roads like new in a very short time. That's what John the Baptist did for God's path - he got lots of people on the new road to God in a very short time.

WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN?

The father of John the Baptist was a priest who retired exactly a year and three months before Jesus was born - in September of the year 1BC. Jesus called John "the greatest born of women".

John had great faith, great courage, and great wisdom; He was a great leader with a great job to do. He prepared for Jesus. He even told the king off for taking his brother's wife. He knew just about everything that was written in the Bible then.

A DAY TO REMEMBER



Just fancy having a cousin you hardly ever get to see. John was like that. He never got to see Jesus - he was down there in the desert. He had many followers and they must have known how to use Dead Sea salt to store locusts and lots also about honey gathering.

John kept talking about "the coming to earth of the Son of God." God privately told this very great man not just how to "**know**" God's Son - because his mother knew Jesus was sent by God -but how to "**show**" to everyone that Jesus was God's Son.

When God's own Son arrived with John there was to be a very big event take place. Even John could not imagine how very big it was going to be. There was something about that day brighter than all sunshine, sweeter than any song, gentler than the loveliest Passover lamb that ever was. **Something God was doing that day changed the world for ever.**

STORY ONE MARK 1. 10 THE SHINING HIGHWAY

The Jerusalem-Jericho road ran for 12 dangerous miles with robbers lurking in the shadows. There is a story in the bible about a Samaritan who picked up a man robbed on that road. You can travel that rough and twisty road even today - it is called the Wadi Kelt.

When John the Baptist was preaching by the Jordan near Jericho the road was very busy. John dipped people who were waiting for Jesus and ready to live better in the river Jordan.

Soldiers marched to hear John, tax men came on horses, lines of people braved that dangerous road and Pharisees shuffled along at a distance from everybody else.

Isaiah had promised that this John would live in the desert and that his teaching would start the building of an even busier and bigger Highway of life that would change the world. **Sudden as a flash** when John baptised Jesus **immediately** the skies opened, God the Father spoke and people got such a surprise - just imagine God speaking from the sky - fantastic! It was like the days of the ten commandments when God spoke from heaven.

Suddenly life had changed - as if for everybody who wanted it **a new shining path had opened from earth to heaven with Jesus leading every follower along that Highway through life and on to heaven.** Boys and girls could be happy again-forgiven-kind-good-generous.

You are my
Son whom I
love -You
please me
well

People pointed to the Skies - saying things like, "Heaven is open". "Look." "God is really behind this". "He is speaking." One man who

loved horses some days later in Galilee told another man who had been reading Psalm 110 under a tree, "We have found Him - the one you were reading about, God's Son - come and meet Him". You see, the skies closed again, the voice faded out but Jesus is still alive and the path to heaven begins as we kneel and say "Thank You" for coming to die for me and all the wrong things I have done."

STORY TWO MARK 1.12 SIX WEEKS IN THE DESERT

A friend of mine walked across part of the Sahara Desert. Camels can walk miles in the desert sands because they carry lots of water in their humps and have great padded feet. The sand does not get into their eyes. They are called "ships of the desert". Jesus spent weeks on end in the lonely desert of Judea.

Jesus was so close to the Father, such a complete success in living a beautiful humble life free from sin that the Holy Spirit rushed Him out **immediately** into the desert to meet Satan and show him that He was going to be defeated - even by Jesus followers who lived by the word of God.

In Israel there is a mountain called Qarantel where little round stones lie all about just like fresh baked scones of bread; it was around there that Satan met Jesus to tempt Him. The Lord was very hungry.

Satan said, "You should change these stones into scones by just a word". Jesus had eaten nothing for 40 days but He had been talking with God His Father which gave Him more strength than bread. Remember when God talks to you in the bible you too become strong.

Here are some hard choices. Would you choose to camp out in the desert where animals howl and stinging scorpions rise out of the sands at night, or would you choose to go without food for weeks, or would you do exactly what the devil wants? The Devil wanted Jesus to do what he suggested - make stones bread and not go hungry, jump into the arms of angels from the high point of the temple and prove He was great, and bow down to him when he promised Jesus the world..

Jesus was willing to stay in the dangerous desert and go without food but no matter how the devil tried Jesus would not do what he wanted. He would not put self first and have a feast, He would not try to win the world by one big jump, and He would not bow to Satan.

Remember temptation is all about "**timing**". Satan comes to tempt us when we are weak, so be ready like a soldier with your Christian armour on. Keep praying and memorize your bible (the sword), trust in Jesus(shield), be sure you are saved (helmet), speak the truth (The belt) and follow Jesus(shoes).

Jesus was never beaten by temptation - He took all the big tests we get and He knows how hard it is for us. He can help us - call for His help - prayer is the key.

STORY THREE MARK 1.18 WHAT GOD COULD DO WITH YOUR LIFE?

The seaside can be great fun. It can wash things away too. I once lost a sandal as the tide came in. One sandal is not much good. The sea had stolen my sandal and I was sad. I learned something about the sea that day. You have to watch it. Men must be brave to take ships out to sea. Jesus chose two brave fishermen as His first disciples. They were casting a net into the sea.

Jesus came by and said, "**Follow me**"

He promised them work around the big waters of the Mediterranean which is a salt sea. They loved their Galilee lakeside but they agreed **immediately** to what He asked. Years later just like Jesus said Peter went to Rome and Andrew went to Greece to tell other people about Jesus. Peter and Andrew became martyrs - they died for Jesus. We are told that one died crucified upside down and the other on a cross in the shape of an "X".

I have heard clever men say that Andrew's head was buried in St. Andrews because the Scots made him their patron and hero and so the Scottish flag has a white diagonal cross on its blue background. Peter's name is also respected all over the world. As young fellows both of them obeyed Jesus without a question the moment He called them to follow Him.

STORY FOUR MARK 1.20 ZEBEDEE THE FISHERMAN

A stick and a string and a pin with a jam-jar for the fish - that was my earliest effort at fishing. Then I bought a toy rod. I only ever landed one fish. Zebedee was a real fisherman. He knew all the tricks in the fish business and he hoped his two burly sons James and John would follow in his footsteps. But that never happened. Jesus **immediately** called them to follow Him - one ended up being clubbed to death by wicked men in Jerusalem and the other lived to almost 100 in Ephesus in a land we know as Turkey.

 Zebedee was a really good dad who loved his sons and he was glad when they followed Jesus. Their mother was  pleased because she believed Jesus was going to become their king. Later she  to stood near the cross and saw Jesus die - but then she saw Him rise as LORD of all - so she wasn't so wrong about his destiny after all.

Anyway, when we begin to follow Jesus we don't know where He will send us but we know Jesus has used thousands of people since - people like Hudson Taylor who took the gospel to China and David Livingstone who told the people in Africa about Jesus. They left their homes when Jesus called them.



 Livingstone set off on a snowy day with his father for Africa - they parted tearfully after prayer at the Glasgow quayside. David only ever won one soul to Christ - chief Sechele - but he made maps of the lands of central Africa so others could follow and reach the people there with the good news. He left his Scots home at Blantyre to follow Jesus and reach others who needed Jesus.

STORY FIVE MARK 1.21 WE WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU

In this story we hear about Satan again. He is real, he once was an angel in the middle of heaven's worship but he became proud and wanted to be god and ever since he has been trying to build a rival kingdom in the hearts of people. God gave him a place called Hell where after death all who follow him join him and his junior demons. Jesus came to pull down the kingdom Satan had been building for ages in many lands.

On the Jewish day of worship which is Saturday Jesus **immediately** went into the synagogue (a place where people came to worship, just like a church). Jesus used to worship in Nazareth but when he moved to live in the city of Capernaum He first found a place where people met with God and there He was very often invited to teach or read.

Jesus had been teaching from the scrolls when suddenly someone shouted, "**WE WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU!**" Jesus knew that some junior devils had come to live in the Life-house of this man and they were putting words in the man's mouth. Still Jesus loved the man. You see, **Satan** (whose name means "**Jesus' adversary**") really knows that Jesus is God's Son and the demons fear Jesus.

Satan left Jesus for a little time after the three temptations in the desert but now he turns up again boldly showing how he could control a man's life - even in a place of worship. Jesus sent the demons packing from the man's Life-house. He really said to the junior demons, "Get your muzzle on!" and they obeyed him just like a dog when you tell it to stop barking.

STORY SIX MARK 1.28 WHO'S IN CHARGE?

As we have learned, the synagogue Jesus attended was in the Roman fortress town of Capernaum.

It is called in the bible "His own town" and He was loved by leaders and citizens alike in the town. Even today the synagogue pillars stand tall. It was a lovely place. But on that day it was noisy, like a battle, and Satan was in for a show-down, trying to turn people against Jesus. It seems strange that Satan wanted to get worshipping people to object to Jesus - but it is obvious why.

Satan fears those who love Jesus and who listen to His word. His first plan is to stop them following Jesus, divide them and make them afraid.

One man and many demons shouted "We don't want you." but do you know what happened afterward? Everybody, including the man who had been demon possessed, traveled home. As they went they told the story of how Jesus took full command over demons. **Immediately** the news spread - and was told over and over again in thousands of homes in Galilee.

For the very first time in history people began to see that Satan and evil powers will be defeated. The bible tells us that one day the world will finally be at peace. Before that day there

will be a great war and many nations will go to battle in Israel. Jesus told us not to fear these things because He was going to come again.

STORY SEVEN MARK 1.29 MOTHER IS SICK

Your mother is very important. She is a child's best friend. My mother taught me to read and write, she read me my first bible stories and taught me my first hymns. Now Peter the fisherman disciple had a busy life. He was married. His wife's **mother** - we would call her grandmother - also lived with them.

Have you ever felt all hot and ill? That's just how this lady felt. Everybody had gone to worship. **Immediately** Jesus finished speaking in the synagogue the family of Peter set out on the short walk home - the women, and Simon's wife among them, were leading the way. Simon's wife's mother had remained behind and was cooking the lunch - there would be fish and lots of fruit.

There is a special kind of fish in the lake of Galilee (we now call it Peter's fish). It had a big head and a funny habit of holding its little babies in its mouth to take them where the food is. When it had no baby fish to look after its mouth felt empty so it would hold little stones - one even held a coin in its mouth. You can read about that in Matthew 17.27.

But granny, who was supposed to be preparing the food, was feeling very unwell. She dropped on the bed. She had never been so ill. She felt she might die. She felt dizzy, everything went blank. The first person home from worship would be Peter's wife, she would welcome others. We know she was not at home with grandmother or she would have gone for help.

She shouts, "Mum, Mum!" There is no reply. "Something has happened" - "where is she? "Mum can't have gone out because she knew the family was coming back and the meal was on the boil!" Peter's wife rushes into the bedroom - "O mum!" She falls on the bed - grandmother is so very hot - and she is not responding.

What can she do? Mother is dying. This is an emergency. "O Peter, Peter", "O Rabbi", "O Jesus"- these names flash through her mind - her mum was so precious.

STORY EIGHT MARK 1.30 MOTHER WAKES UP

Peter's wife is very shocked and nearly crying - she races out into the big circular family room. Peter, Andrew, James and John and others have arrived. She tells them about mother. They don't spend time thinking who to call - they all rush out **immediately** and tell "Jesus."

Peter thought to himself, "I'm sure Jesus can deal with this, Jesus has conquered demons, He forgives sins, He takes control when He is asked - let's put it in his hands." Now we do not know if Jesus had begun healing before this time. Peter simply went to Jesus believing He could heal mother.

That's not the end of this gripping story; if Jesus can heal this woman who is about to die it will be big news. Already the town is buzzing with the news of the fisherman's wife and her mother's sudden illness. Many died of such fevers. There were swamps nearby and mosquitoes spread a killer disease called malaria. If Jesus was able to cure this illness He would become very busy for those were the days before medicine and people died of illnesses we can now cure.



All this happened on Saturday when lots of people play football in our country but Jews worship on that day because God rested on Saturday after He had made heaven and earth. Jesus had been with His Father God when He made the world. All eyes were on Jesus to see if He could make this lady well again.

STORY NINE MARK 1.31 SERVING JESUS

Jesus stood by mum's bedside. One sting of a mosquito fly can bring disease. One touch of Jesus and **immediately** her eyes opened, the burning fever was gone. Jesus didn't just touch her hand -he grasped it firmly - we are not told if Jesus even said anything. But Peter tells us that when Jesus took hold of mum's hand and raised her up He held it as if He was in full command: her weakness was gone; her sickness vanished.

Jesus had conquered not only her illness - he had conquered her heart and affections forever. She was so thrilled to see Him as a guest in the house that she rushed off to get water to wash His feet, for that is how you used to be welcomed to a Jewish home. In the flurry over the illness the welcome had been forgotten. Soon she served something tasty to eat. What a day they spent together.

Peter loved Jesus so much, so did his brother Andrew. Now Peter's wife loved Jesus for what He did for mum and mum's love for Jesus and joy to serve Him was unstoppable. For the first time in the life of the great Roman fortress town of Capernaum there was a sort of synagogue or meeting at the door of Peter's house that very evening.

Jesus stood there casting out demons and healing people who were pale with anemia, black with sores, red with bleeding, yellow with jaundice, illnesses of every colour and type.

What a day it had been - but Jesus didn't sleep in next morning. He was up and away to a deserted place talking with God the Father. That is how He began work - Father and Son planned ahead - just like Joseph and Jesus used to do in the carpenter's shop. Jesus talked everything over with God the Father - that's the way we should begin the day.

STORY TEN MARK 1.42 A LEPER IS HEALED

Peter, who rose very early to go fishing, called by at the house of Jesus at first light. Jesus was gone. In the soft ground and along the earth footpath he and others followed the fresh footprints. "Quiet, He's talking to His Father" whispered Peter as they came near.

Jesus gave them His full attention. Peter, always ready with a plan, said, "In the city everybody's looking for you!" Jesus replied, "Let's go to the people in the country villages to tell them about my kingdom, for I came to do that."

While He was traveling around a leper came and kneeled before Jesus. That never should have happened for the law said lepers should shout "Unclean, Unclean" and not come near anyone. Instead the leper spoke boldly, "If You choose to and want to You can cure me!"

Peter saw something no-one else spotted. He saw Jesus wince as if the inside of his body was being torn out. Jesus knew God's healing is not as easy as just choosing people to heal. To have the authority to heal He would have to choose to die for them. This bold man didn't understand that- but still Jesus loved him and said, "I have you in my plan today - be well"



As Jesus spoke those words the leprosy was cured - you would never have known the man was a leper. White blotches gone - hands and feet restored - **immediately**. Now there was a law that anyone who was so fortunate as to be cured of leprosy brought two sparrows to the priest. One was killed and the other flew free.

This leper should have kept away from others - he did not. Would he go to the priest at all or just be careless and break this rule as well? Let's see how it goes

STORY ELEVEN MARK 1.43 JESUS IS HURT

Have you ever felt disappointed with somebody? Jesus was!

Jesus gave a big sigh because He knew what was going to happen next. The leper with white spots and sore hands and feet was cured. But he was too proud to listen to Jesus.

Jesus **immediately** waved the man away saying "Go show yourself to the priests and offer what Moses commanded". You will remember that two little sparrows had to be offered - one would die and one would fly free.

Jesus commanded the man not to speak about this and to go to the priest, present the sparrows and show his body free from the sores and scabs of leprosy. Why do you think Jesus was hurt? Jesus wanted the priests (who were the leaders in those days) to see that He was able to forgive sin and make people clean. He loved the leaders and wanted to show them His new way - but the Lord's big plan had to wait because this fellow failed Jesus.

This leper might have become a really good friend of Jesus but he was proud and disobedient :he began to talk about himself. Even thought he was the first leper healed since the days of Naaman there was greater news - news about God's Son, His kingdom, His resurrection, God's forgiveness and life that never ends.

The message of Jesus is that He came to make us friends with God and to be obedient to Jesus as our King. This man went around talking about himself and because of this Jesus had to hide like a leper in deserted places. Once people heard Jesus had touched a leper He was not welcome in synagogues because people thought they would catch leprosy like catching a cold.

Instead people came to Jesus as to John the Baptist in the open air. In Mark 15. 38 God tore the 9-inch thick curtain in the temple to show the priests that Jesus was the only way to God. God's big plan always succeeds in the end, In Acts 6.7 we read that lots of priests believed in Jesus.

STORY TWELVE MARK 2.1 THE ROOF OF JESUS' HOUSE



Soon Jesus was able to move quietly back into Capernaum to his own house. But **immediately** on His return crowds gathered at the door, even scribes came, so they had stopped worrying about getting the leper's disease.

Houses in the west have tall roofs but the house of Jesus would have had a flat roof. People used to use the roof for drying grain or put up a canopy and sit there in the evening. Jesus may have used His flat roof to store tools and timber or for reading and prayer and as a place to chat with others. The roof was built of wood and mud.

It could be that the house Jesus moved into in Capernaum was one He built himself for he was a carpenter and stone worker. It was just one storey high but it had a lovely rooftop with a little safety wall around it -which God said every Jewish house should have.

The four men who brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus found a big crowd at His door which would not make way for them because they were in a queue to be healed. But these four men must have been in Jesus' house before. They knew how to get in and they had to be sure there were tools on hand to do the job. They climbed up the outside steps set about digging out the clay of the roof and they lowered their friend on his stretcher through the lower wooden part of the roof right to the feet of Jesus.

The paralyzed man as he was lowered was looking into the eyes of Jesus. Jesus was smiling broadly. When he reached the floor he was looking up into the kind eyes of Jesus again. Jesus said "Your sins are forgiven". The man felt so peaceful, free at last from every worry, but he still had no strength. This was a bit of a surprise because he thought Jesus would say "What do you need most?" He would have said "I need to be healed". But Jesus knew his greatest need was to be forgiven and He sorted that out first..

STORY THIRTEEN MARK 2.8 JESUS KNOWS THE HEART

Nobody really knows what's going on in your head - they can only guess. The next story of Peter shows that someone else knows every teeny weenie thought!

You remember in our last story how some men climbed the outside steps of Jesus' house on to the roof and began to make lots of noise above His head. Now listen to what happened next!

Jesus did not send people to find out about the noise, Jesus did not even bother about the roof, Jesus did not tell them off. Jesus knew these men had great faith - they were sure of Jesus! They believed Jesus would heal their friend and overlook their action. Jesus did not start by healing the

man. He started with the man's thoughts, his worries that troubled him. Jesus first words to him were, "Your sins are forgiven" - Jesus meant every sin since he was a little child and even his sins in the future. When Jesus does that for us we feel really happy and want to say, "thanks".

There were writers sitting listening - people who copied the books of the bible by hand. These men knew every word in the bible. They knew God said to Moses "I am God forgiving sin." Exodus 34.7 David said "forgiveness is with You, Lord" Psalm 134.7. They thought silently in their hearts, "Jesus is doing something very wrong - he is trying to act as if he is God who alone can forgive sins."

Jesus **immediately** knew their thoughts and answered, "Is it easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven or rise up and walk?'" He said He was "The Son of Man" that Daniel said would come from heaven to give His life for sin's forgiveness and be given the power to be king of the entire world. That day people went very quiet. They found out that Jesus knew their thoughts.

STORY FOURTEEN MARK 2.12 THE LOOK ON THE MAN'S FACE

Jesus said, "Rise, take your mattress, go home and join me in the future". The man **immediately** went out looking at the people as he went. There was a look about him - as if he was on the Lord's side - and in many eyes there was still anger.

The house emptied. Everybody wanted to see if he would fall down after a few steps. As they watched their hearts changed. A word Peter uses can mean "their legs went out of joint" just like Jacob's when he wrestled with God.

As the man went on and on - maybe even with Jesus chatting to him - the saying went round the crowd "We have seen something we never saw before". They became so changed in heart that they were shouting a special word - "Hallelujah" - as they gave thanks to God and Jesus.

STORY FIFTEEN MARK 3.6 THE ONE-HANDED MAN



Every little leaf of a tree is like a factory turning sunlight into food for the tree. When it withers it dies and is useless. A withered hand is just like that withered leaf - one which was useful but has now lost its power. There was a man worshipping near Jesus who had a hand like this. It's not very easy to do things with one hand; to eat, to read, to skip and to ride a bike with one hand is very dangerous.

Now it was the Sabbath day and people called Pharisees and Herod's followers were watching Jesus. It was a real trap because if He helped the man they would say He was breaking the 5th commandment and not keeping the Sabbath for God. You see, anything that was not worship was work for the Jews.



Jesus said to the man, "Stand up in front of everyone". Then He put a conundrum to them, "Is it right by the law to do good or evil on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" (Jews worship on Saturday)

There was silence. Jesus looked around angrily. They knew the answer but they would

not speak to help the poor man for they hated Jesus. Jesus shared the man's hurt feeling at their hardness.

Jesus said to the man "stretch out your hand" and he did. The hand was now as healthy like the other one. These evil men moved **immediately** to call a council to plan to destroy Jesus. Jesus made the Sabbath so people could rest and be well now men were planning on that day to use their hands to kill Jesus.

STORY SIXTEEN MARK 4.15 SEED FALLS ON THE PATH

As a boy I enjoyed watching my dad walking across a field sowing seed with what he called a "fiddle". It was just like a violin. When you drew the bow it turned a little wheel which fanned the seed from a space in the fiddle high into the air and on to the field. In Jesus days farmers just took handfuls of seed and threw them into the air. Some landed in strange places

The first seed landed on a dirt path. When farmers sow seed birds are watching and the seed that falls on the path is not hidden in the ploughed soil so the hungry birds swoop down and pick it up

Jesus story is really about the **words** He speaks. They are like **seed**. The ground is our mind and heart. Because our hearts are hard we don't want to listen to the story of Jesus. Satan comes to take away what Jesus says just like those birds swoop down **immediately** and take the seed from the path. Satan may say "Play lots of football, watch lots of TV, and forget about the Bible. Many boys and girls forget about Jesus. When they go to bed they don't say their prayers. They go to sleep thinking about pals, toys, money, and food. Jesus is more important than all these things to a boy or girl who follows Him.

If you have learned to read the clock you will know there are 24 hours in a day, we sleep for about 7 and are at school for about 6. We have lots of spare time and every day Jesus wants us to spend time getting to know the Bible and speaking to Him in prayer. Do take time for Jesus.

STORY SEVENTEEN MARK 4.16 SEED FALLS AMONG ROCKS



Rocks are hard .You will discover that if you fall on rocks or if you are at the seaside and you slip and hurt your foot on a rock. Rocks get very hot in the sunshine. Put your hand on the bricks of your own house when the sun has been shining on them for a while. They will be warm.

Some of the farmer's seed fell on the rocks. If seeds could talk they would have said to themselves, "It's lovely and warm here, we are enjoying the rocks." We are often like those little chatting seeds, we listen to what preachers say and **immediately** think, "That's important" but then forget all about it and we live as if it did not matter at all.

When our queen is at home her flag flies high on a mast at Buckingham Palace and everybody knows she is at home. When Jesus really is our Saviour we should be willing to tell people we love Him. We should have *joy* and *courage* and *obedience* and *care* about others as well as ourselves.



Joy is a flag flying high from the castle of my heart
From the castle of my heart
From the castle of my heart
Joy is a flag flying high from the castle of my heart
For the King is in residence there.

Everybody knows that seed needs soil. Have you ever tried to grow cress? I know a man who when he was a boy grew cress. His teacher didn't think he would have much success in life but today he sends lorry loads of cress and other vegetables to major cities all over Britain and Europe. He learned to use good soil and grows excellent products that way.

You won't be able to be a Christian if you don't let what Jesus says get down deep into your heart to stay. But if you do it will bring a crop of joy peace patience gentleness goodness faith meekness and self-control

STORY EIGHTEEN MARK 4.17 PERSECUTION AND PRESSURE



Back to the story of the Farmer that Jesus first told. Peter gave it to Mark. The story goes on to show us that there is something called "persecution". That means somebody is after you. It's not a nice feeling. You have to run very fast and then you feel terrified when a hand grasps you and you are not free until someone rescues you.

There are boys and girls in countries where it is forbidden to worship Jesus who are made to feel afraid like that everyday. But these children keep the faith.

There is another thing called "pressure". When you blow up a balloon it gets bigger and bigger as it fills with pressure. If you keep blowing too long the balloon will burst. When it becomes hard to follow Jesus the faith of some **immediately** goes to pieces.

When friends start ignoring you: when others try to bully you; when pals don't choose you in team games because you go to church they are putting "pressure" on you to cut out all the Christian stuff. Don't do it for anybody. Stay true to Jesus!

You see, we can become rocky ground - happy to read about Jesus, to know He loves us, but when others call us names or laugh at us because we go to church we give up, we just don't pray or read about Jesus any more. We are now in big danger. We could join the crowd who seem happy all day but many go to bed afraid because they have lived wrong and said things that hurt others. Some get really worried that God will punish them or not want them in heaven.

Others just roll over in bed and say, "God will never do anything about it" and so they grow up to be hard and careless about what Jesus said. They run away from pressure and problems which we need to face to make us strong in character. They avoid God and live for themselves and unless they change troubled thoughts will come upon them later in life with much sadness.

STORY NINETEEN MARK 4.29 GOOD SEED ON GOOD GROUND



Have you ever noticed how quickly flowers grow in the spring? One morning you waken up in February and there is a snowdrop. You waken up one morning in March and there is a daffodil, lots of daffodils. Later on there are tulips, wallflowers, sweet peas, roses and chrysanthemums.

Daddy spots the flowers too. He goes out and cuts a lovely bunch of roses and brings it in and gives it to mummy. You see, mothers love flowers. They are the harvest of the garden.

Jesus taught us that you know good seed by the size and quality of the harvest. He told us that when the whole world hears His message **immediately** He will return to the earth and take the good seed of his harvest home. What do you think that means?

It means that one day Jesus will come back from heaven and take every man and woman, boy and girl who knows He is their Saviour away together. It will be like a farmer gathering up all the corn from a field and taking it off in a trailer. God will send his angels and take us all to heaven. We will be given new bodies and never be sick or unhappy any more.



Only when we receive Jesus as our Saviour and the good seed of what Jesus commands and promises into our hearts can we be certain of going to heaven. Receiving Jesus is a wonderful beginning, reading His word and talking to Him is the best way to go on and staying in his friendship for life is called endurance.

As Christian soldiers we need loyalty, courage and endurance. Receiving Jesus means telling Him you have done lots of wrong things. It means saying, "Jesus, I'm sorry for my sins, thank You for giving your life on the cross to forgive my sins so I could go to heaven. Put your flag up over my Life-house, and give me the Holy Spirit to live in my Heart-house and help me to put into practice all I am learning about You."

STORY TWENTY MARK 5.2 THE MAN WHO LIVED IN A TOMB



Lake Galilee was harp shaped. Jesus sailed over the north of Lake Galilee from west to east. He had just reached shore when a wild man ran at Him yelling aloud. The man was so strong that he broke the ropes and chains that men used to tie him up so he would not harm anyone.

He lived in an old cemetery where the bones of people were put in small stone boxes called ossuaries in large stone tombs which were like small rooms. No sensible person would live there.

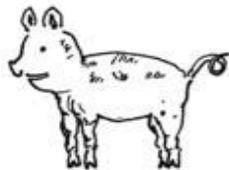
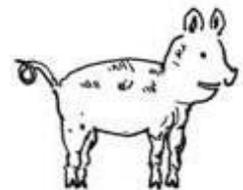
This man spent the time cutting himself to pieces with stones. Had he gone on doing this much longer he would have killed himself. He saw Jesus' boat sailing his way and **immediately** ran to stop Jesus coming near shouting, "What is there we have in common, Jesus Son of the Most High God. Swear to God you will not rub me on the touchstone to test who I really am." Long ago precious articles looking like gold would be rubbed on a stone and would leave a mark that proved it was real gold. Jesus knew many demons lived in his Life-house and ordered them to leave.

Jesus asked the spirits their name and they answered "A legion" which could be 1000 or more. These evil spirits feared being sent to hell to await judgement. Long ago demon spirits came to earth when Satan was cast out of heaven because in pride he wanted to become god. The angels who followed him we call junior devils or demons because they followed the Devil. The Devil continues to try to destroy us and stop people believing the good news. He falsely accuses good men to try to make them downcast and blame God. He captures those who are proud and disobedient to Jesus. Some people even give themselves to Satan and he controls them. One day soon he will be put in chains and nations will turn to God.

STORY TWENTY-ONE MARK 5.13 WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM JESUS?

Perhaps there is something special you want the LORD to do for you. This story shows that sometimes Jesus has different ideas and wants you to do something special for Him. The **demons pleaded** with Jesus to enter the bodies of the pigs grazing nearby. Just think - here were many demons that had once been angels. Jesus knew all these angels from long ago.

They pleaded not to be sent out of the country but to be allowed to live in the pigs' bodies. Jesus **immediately told them what their end would be** - they would leave all bodies and go to await judgement. The demons wanted to destroy the man - now they destroy the pigs.



But what would happen to the demons? They might even wander about hoping some other people would ask Satan for them to come into their Life-house but, as Jesus said, they would end up in Hell. The men who were in charge of feeding the pigs ran away and told people in the fields and city of Gadara about the pigs. The people ran miles to see the pigs in the water but they also saw the man who had been under the Devil's control sitting with an outer garment he had put on and showing complete self control.

These people who came had the story pointed out in detail to them. They were shown the pigs in the water - the cliff - Jesus and the boat - and the man looking so different. They were not in the least interested in the man's better life; they thought more of the pigs and their value. **They began to plead** that Jesus would leave the borders of their land.

Just as Jesus got into the ship that new follower of Jesus who had the legion **now pleaded louder** than all the pig farmers and other people so that the others were silent. You can imagine why he pleaded, "Let me go with You". It was such a privilege to be with Jesus. But it is also a great honour to remain at home in our own country and witness to Jesus.

Jesus sent him instead to his home, to his own family to tell what the LORD had done for him and of the mercy of the LORD to him and he said, as He often did, "as you go up I will be with You" (There is a little word that Peter uses in v.19 which means "go up in union with me"). He went away not sad but glad to serve and speak of Jesus and soon ten great cities where there were poets and clever men heard what Jesus had done for this man once ruled by Satan.

STORY TWENTY-TWO MARK 5.28 A LADY TOUCHED JESUS' COAT

There was a lady who had been ill for 12 years. That's a long time. Many illnesses can be cured by a course of tablets, some even go away themselves and others mean we have to go to hospital.



Have you ever had a bad cut when the blood keeps running and you thought you were going to die? Well this lady had been bleeding for 12 years. She heard of somebody who touched Jesus and said to herself, "I will touch his garment also and I will be saved."

She pushed and pushed till she got in close beside Jesus. She stretched out her hand and she could hardly believe it, **immediately** she felt the bleeding stop. But she knew she could not get away without being noticed and Jesus spun right round and he was looking straight at her.

Those eyes - they did not condemn her - they invited her to come forward again and she felt happy to do that. After all it was the best day in her life for 12 whole years.

STORY TWENTY-THREE MARK 5.30 THE LADY TELLS ALL

Jesus was hurrying to reach a very sick girl. In fact some people came at this time and said she had died. Still he took time to finish the job of making this lady a real disciple. "Who touched my garments?" He asked. Jesus knew **immediately**. The lady had caught both His toga and robe. The disciples said, "Master, you see the whole crowd is pressing you -why ask, "Who?"

Jesus still looked around and the lady who was sure she was healed came and fell on the ground before him where people had drawn back. She told Jesus what she planned. She was open about her bleeding problem. She smiled and said, "It's gone" and I'm sure she said "Thank You" aren't you?

Jesus spoke some great words to her. He said "You are a daughter, "Your faith has saved you". That is what Jesus longs for -that we will be open with Him and trust Him to change our lives.

Jesus also said, "Go up, I am right with you"* (*That word Peter uses over and over again to show Jesus kept assuring people that He would be with them). If you promise to follow Jesus you too can be sure he is the unseen guest where you live and companion where you go

Jesus last words made the lady sure this illness would never come back. "You are absolutely whole from the scourge". Jesus knew exactly how she felt - as if somebody had been whipping her till she was bleeding. Before Jesus went to the cross a soldier whipped him and Peter tells us of the great bleeding sore on our Lord's body. You can read about it in 1Peter 2.24

STORY TWENTY-FOUR MARK 5.36

JAIRUS LEARNS ABOUT FAITH

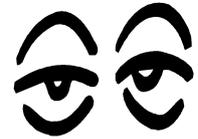
Jairus had to hang about listening to Jesus and this little lady. He wanted to hurry Jesus away but all the time he was learning how to be patient finding out that Jesus knows everything and can be trusted with our problems

Just as the lady went home some men arrived with news for Jairus (the man who was waiting for Jesus to come and heal his dying daughter). They whispered, "Your daughter is dead. Why keep flogging the *teacher*". A strange way to speak!

The men could see that Jesus had come to a stop and was teaching a lesson - to force him to move on would be like trying to move a stubborn donkey by hitting it with a stick... I have seen my cousin try this when I was a boy. The donkey just sat motionless till it decided it wanted to move.

The message of the men shook Jairus. You could see the shock and fear in Jairus' eyes. Still he had been very patient. Jesus **immediately** turned to him and said, "Don't fear, just trust me". Off the Lord went at a good pace with Jairus, his friends, and Peter, James and John.

When Jesus got to the house crowds of people were already there. They were groaning and roaring and lamenting with tears. Jesus said, "The child is not dead but sleeping".



They jeered so much He could not be heard. Jesus sent them all out and went to the room where Peter saw her and he describes her as an offering on an altar. One thing we know about offerings is that they have to be dead before they are put on an altar. Peter knew she had died. What ever would Jesus do now?

STORY TWENTY-FIVE MARK 5.42

A LIVING SACRIFICE

Jesus stood by the child's side. He took her hand. His very words to her were, "Talitha koumi". Peter and Jesus spoke a language called Aramaic. Mark tells us the meaning is "Beloved young girl, I am speaking to you, rise up." I think she was the darling of all Capernaum - the Rabbi's daughter of "the" synagogue.

Jesus knew this little girl well and had great personal affection for her just like he had for Lazarus, another person He raised from death.

The girl was twelve - the age at which Jewish children were presented before God in Jerusalem.

She rose **immediately** and walked around - a visible lesson on Jesus' power to raise dead people. The parents and disciples were over the moon. Peter tells us Jesus "tore open" many things. It was like Christmas when we open parcels and get lots of surprises.

Jesus allowed this family and three of His disciples to see who He really was, to see that death could be defeated, to see why He called death "sleep", to see He was God, to see that faith and love are important.

He also showed them that everything has to be done in God's time. That's why He took time with the lady on the way, that's why He told them not to share the experience of resurrection yet, that's why He told them not only to feed their daughter but to tell the whole story to the little girl later for she was of age to learn about Jesus.

Boys and girls can easily understand how to become followers of Jesus at 12. I myself thank God He showed me my sin and my Saviour's forgiving love when I was just 13 and then I wished it could have been a year earlier.

This little girl would have the joy of giving her whole future life to following Jesus teaching - that was what Jesus really meant when he said, "Feed her". You see, Peter who was in the room was also told to teach children - Jesus commanded him to "Feed my lambs"

STORY TWENTY-SIX **MARK** 6.25 THE LITTLE DANCING GIRL

This is a very sad and terrible story. Peter tells of a young girl whose mother left her husband and married King Herod. Now John the Baptist said she should not have done this. The woman wanted to get her own back on John.

One day Herod the king had a big party for his soldiers. The young girl was now Herod's step-daughter and she could really dance. Herod counted this a class act. She was a star. Everybody clapped their hands - it was great. Herod promised her anything up to half the kingdom. He swore to God he would keep his promise. He was talking like a proud man, one who had drunk lots of wine.



The girl went to mummy for help on what gift to request. She might have liked a horse, or a boat trip to Cyprus or lots of new dresses. She tripped off to her mother who seems to have been in the dressing room backstage. She must have been really disappointed when her mother said, "Ask daddy for 'the head of John the Baptist on a plate'. She trusted her evil mother and **immediately** ran in to ask the king for this terrible prize that would haunt her all her life. "I wish I had never done it" she would say again and again when she grew older.

Herod became sad just like Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane - very sad. But, he had made a promise. He had sworn to God. Lords and ladies had heard him. Silence fell, people stopped talking.

STORY TWENTY-SEVEN **MARK** 6.27 HEROD TREMBLES AT THE NEWS OF JESUS



Immediately Herod summoned a Roman soldier. Only the Romans had power to execute. The soldier came back with the terrible prize for the girl. Herod lifted it, looked in the eyes of John and gave the bleeding head to the little girl. Nobody clapped. Everybody knew Herod hated what he had just done, everybody pitied the poor little girl, and everybody suspected the King's new wife who now had a murder on her hands.

The girl walked off in silence. The great prophet was dead. John had many followers and they requested the other part of John's body and put it in a tomb giving him great honour.

We learn from this story how important it is that parents advise their children right. How important it is not to be vengeful and cruel but to think about the future and especially to respect people like John the Baptist who believe in Jesus and live straight.

Just about this time Jesus disciples had been all over the country preaching about God's kingdom, healing the sick and challenging Satan's demons who were fleeing in all directions. So even though a terrible wrong was done - great and good things happened too. Herod got so rattled by news of these good things that he trembled, thinking John the Baptist had risen from the dead and was come to shake his kingdom.

STORY TWENTY-EIGHT MARK 6.45 JESUS CARES ABOUT YOU

As we learned from our last story the greatest man in the land, not counting Jesus, had been murdered. People were very frightened and Jesus took trouble to show he cared for them.



First, Jesus fed these 5000 men on the other side of Galilee with 5 loaves and 2 fish. He put them in little groups where they got to know each other and as the disciples came round they got to know one or two of them quite well too. Then Jesus took fish to each of the 50 little parties on the grass-and met Him and they simply loved Him.

Now it was time to go home. In a few hours the sun would set quickly. The disciples wanted to stay and help get the crowds moving - but Jesus had a special way of saying "good-bye". He would often say, "Be courageous as soldiers". He left people so that they knew he loved them and they were special.

He forced His twelve disciples to set off for home **immediately**. They didn't want to leave Jesus behind but He said, "You go" and they set off. Jesus knew they were thinking of home and family so off they went rowing strongly, chatting and waving.

Jesus talked to the big crowd as they left in little groups. He was able to meet needs He had seen earlier-He was free if they wanted to speak to Him.

The groups of people who ate together made lasting friendships that day in the lovely countryside across Galilee - friendships that would last for a long time - they had been with Jesus and Jesus gave them new hope. They left with His gentle smile and soon he was off up the hillside to talk to His Father about them, about the disciples, about things we could never guess.

There on the hillside as he prayed He could see the disciples in the middle of the sea straining on their oars. There was a great storm blowing. They needed Him too - he must get to them - but how could that be possible?

STORY TWENTY-NINE MARK 6.50 WALKING ON THE SEA

It is a great miracle. Jesus actually walked on the sea. It was stormy but there he was walking over the rising waves. When the twelve disciples saw him they all began to cry to God in heaven. They thought it was unreal. They were terrified. Jesus walked around them. Matthew tells us that Peter asked Jesus if he could walk to meet him; you can read about that for yourself by looking up the bible at [Matthew 14.28](#)

The disciples probably tried to row away. Jesus wanted to come along beside them. You can imagine them shouting, "Row to the left", "Row the other way" and so on.

Immediately Jesus spoke with them. "Be daring" "Be bold" "Have courage" He said to one and another as he walked round them. Then he said, "I AM ". He had just used the Jewish word for "God" - the one Moses was given at the burning bush long ago. Then He added "Don't be afraid."

Jesus said these things over and over like a lullaby. Even the wind seemed to be taking notice of His words for as He came up to the boat and just stepped in the storm went all quiet. They had never known anything like it and these words of Jesus made them think He really must be God.

They had seen the miracle of the bread multiplying in His hands but they had not dropped to it then that Jesus was really God. They just wondered - is it possible He is God - how can He be - He is so natural -so like ourselves - a real man. It was hard to understand.

Jesus was a real man but we know from His resurrection and miracles and the fact that He was perfect and that He will judge the world and that He commands angels and many other wonderful things that He is really God too.

STORY THIRTY MARK 6.54 GARDEN OF GREEN SHOOTS

Close by Tiberias (the only city on the lake of Galilee today) and near the vale of doves is countryside which the governor Josephus called "a garden of green shoots". This story may even follow the storm on the lake and if so they were blown miles off course

There is an old saying, "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good." If you have a kite you will be glad of some wind so you can fly your kite. The boat lay at anchor. The countryside began to buzz with the news of Jesus.

The locals **immediately** recognised Jesus and decided to take the chance to get their sick healed. Sick people were carried on beds and as Jesus passed through villages and cities and fields and markets friends placed the sick ones on the path He would walk. The sick people then pleaded that they would be allowed to touch his outer garment.

Can you remember the story of the little lady who did that a few kilometres to the North. Now everybody wanted to do it. She had told the public how she was healed and now everybody who was ill wanted to touch Jesus clothes..

More and more people were healed. Whoever touched his garment was well again. Jesus was teaching ordinary people how to find new life and how to grow in faith in this land of green shoots. Like rows of healthy plants these people were rising up and looking well.

STORY THIRTY-ONE MARK 7.35 THE MAN WHO LIVED IN A SILENT WORLD



How would you feel if you could not hear? You would live in a silent world. How would you feel if you could hardly speak at all? Sometimes because of infection we get to know in a small way what it's like.

Jesus was travelling from the east to the south of Galilee when some people brought to Him a man who could neither hear and nobody could make out what he said.

Jesus took him away from the crowd and put his fingers in the man's ears and spat and put his hand with the spittle on the man's tongue. Then Jesus gave a big sigh towards heaven and said to the man, "Be opened". **Immediately** his ears opened.

He could hear the birds singing and the sound of animals and even buzzing bees. Whatever kept the man from speaking was fixed and he started talking right. Before that no-one had any idea what he was trying to say.

Jesus made it clear that they should not make Him a hero when speaking to anyone. The more He urged them not to the more they heralded Him as king. They had a huge pride in Jesus and you might as well try to stop the tide coming in as stop them.

They said, "He has done **all things** well and in good time. He makes the deaf to hear and those who can't talk to talk." They were right. Nothing Jesus did was less than the best. His work deserved this description. Every man that ever lived has some faulty work to his name - but not Jesus.

STORY THIRTY-TWO MARK 8.10 JESUS FEEDS FOUR THOUSAND

A huge crowd stayed with Jesus for three days. They slept through cold nights huddled together. They went without food. They listened to Him teaching. They never complained. Jesus said, "My whole inside is moved to sacrifice for them". If I send them away they will be ill before they reach home and they will die on the way".

We know Jesus had talked to them for He said that certain friends had come a great distance - people from different places dress and speak different.

4000

The disciples said, "How can we feed so many in this deserted place?" Jesus asked, "How many loaves do you have?" "Seven", they reply. He passed along the command, "Sit down on the ground". Then Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks. The disciples passed them along - it was amazing - there was just more and more bread, enough for all 4000 people. Something very special happened next.

The disciples had a few **small** fish for their own lunch- they knew He could make something of the fish because they saw Him use a boy's lunch to feed thousands before - so they gave Him the fish. Jesus said beautiful words over the gift. They passed the fish along and by a miracle even when people took a fish there was another and another and another so that everybody could eat as much as they needed.

Jesus Himself sent the people away. He had cheered them up. They left so different. They felt free, they were no longer slaves of Satan or Rome or Herod. They had found a Master who would sacrifice Himself for them and they had learned so much in three days their lives would never be the same. **Immediately** Jesus left for Dalmanutha where He stayed only minutes because the religious men there were not like the people on the other side-they would not follow Him without a sign out of heaven to prove who He was. Jesus sighed and refused. Had they been willing to follow Him they would have seen many signs. What Jesus had already done on earth was enough to prove He was God's Son. These men had decided not to follow Jesus unless He did what they said. That's the wrong way round.

STORY THIRTY-THREE MARK 9.15 AN ARGUMENT OVER A YOUTH



When we are young we have some annoying habits. But the young man in this story had a really big problem, too big for his parents to sort out without Jesus.

The youth Peter tells us about was a real problem to his dad. His dad brought him to Jesus and the disciples who did not go up with Jesus tried to get the evil spirit to come out of the **Life house** of this young man but he just fell, he rolled about in circles, foam came out of his mouth, he rattled his teeth and then went as stiff as a board.

You see, Jesus had gone high up a big mountain called Hermon - up near the snow line - too high for people to follow.

Moses and Elijah came down from heaven to talk to Jesus about His death and resurrection. They knew Jesus was ready to give away his life to heal and forgive and bring people to heaven.

God the Father showed Peter James and John that Jesus was His beloved Son - the One they should listen to and obey. Jesus made Peter promise not to tell anyone about this till he went back to heaven.

When Jesus and the three disciples came down into the valley people **immediately** ran and welcomed them. There was an argument going on about a youth. Jesus asked what it was. The father of the youth said it was all about getting rid of his boy's demons. The disciples tried to do it. People called scribes were arguing that it could not be done. Jesus said, "Carry him to me".

STORY THIRTY-FOUR MARK 9.20 THE BOY WHO HURT HIMSELF

After a hard journey this father almost got his son to Jesus. But on the day he came Jesus was up this very high mountain. This father had hoped his son could take over the home, maybe the farm or the business, but the youth put himself in danger so often that his father had to watch him every waking hour. Now things looked hopeful. "Jesus will do something about it", he thought to himself.

The Father carried his youthful son to Jesus. Father was getting older the lad was heavier -but there was nothing the father would not do to help his boy.

The Son caught sight of Jesus and the demon in his **Life house** was scared. He **immediately** threw the boy to the ground, made him roll in circles and nearly choked him with foam which came out of his mouth.

Jesus asked the father about the past. He said that since he was a small child the boy had tried to burn himself in the fire and drown himself in rivers. What a wonderful dad he had, who watched him all those years and rescued him over and over again. Long ago president of the USA was Abraham Lincoln .He said "All that I have and am in life I owe to my angel mother" This boy owed everything in his life so far to a wonderful father and mother too if we only knew it.

STORY THIRTY-FIVE MARK 9.24 IT'S GOOD WHEN YOUR FATHER BELIEVES

The dad could not go on -he pleaded with Jesus, "If You can, help us, let Your heart go out in sacrifice for us both". Jesus replied, "If you are able to believe in me, everything is possible".

Immediately the Father cried out as tears ran down his cheeks,"I do believe, O LORD, please help me when my faith falters"

When Jesus saw the crowd running toward Him he blamed the unclean spirit, saying "You deaf and dumb spirit I thrust you out where you will be kept for judgement - never to enter him again."

The spirit came out yelling and making the young man terribly sick so he fell to the ground as if he was dead. The watching crowd said "He is dead"- he really did look dead.

Jesus took his hand in His strong grasp -a grasp that meant He would keep that young man. He raised him up. What a happy ending too for his wonderful father. When the lad and his dad got home they could write on a scroll, "Jesus is the head of this home - He will hold us in His strong hand - even when our faith is weak." Every day with Jesus would be better than those days before.

STORY THIRTY-SIX MARK 10.52 BLIND BAR-TIMAEUS CAN SEE AGAIN

I remember a young woman called Barbara who is now in heaven. She had fallen in childhood and was very disabled. Her brave words were, "I'd rather be like this and have Jesus than be well but not know Him as my Saviour"

Bar-Timaeus was son of a well-known man and he was blind. Why then was he begging by the main road out of Jericho? Maybe his father had died or maybe he followed John and Jesus and his father didn't want to know him. Peter tells us he was begging hard. Passover was near, the weather was lovely, lots of people were on holiday and in a good mood and generous, which is why Bar-Timaeus was out every day.

"Son of David, have mercy on me" shouted Bar-Timaeus-for Jesus was passing very near. The crowd got annoyed with him and said, "Stop barking like a dog." Jesus said, "Call him." The disciples were kind and helpful. "Be confident, they said, "Get up, Jesus is calling you." He tossed away his robe and money. He couldn't believe it. Jesus said, "What do you want me to do for you?" His reply was "My beloved Rabbi, that I might look up to see You." Jesus said, "Continue close to me, your faith has saved you". **Immediately** he looked up with confidence and followed Jesus on the way that led to the cross and the joy of the resurrection.

STORY THIRTY-SEVEN MARK 11.3 JUST WHAT JESUS NEEDS

Have you ever been to the beach where boys and girls can get to ride on a donkey? These donkeys are always nice and quiet. But the one Jesus planned to ride had never had anyone on his back before. Would he not be afraid and kick and refuse to move?

The two disciples found the donkey .They were just to take him or if asked why they were loosing him they were to say, "The LORD needs him". That is what we call a password. Someone was watching. If he knew the disciples because Jesus had described them to him he might say nothing. If he wanted to be sure he would say, "Why are you loosing him?" They would reply "The LORD needs him".

The donkey was tied to a door of some houses that had a road running right round them. There were men standing by the houses and they asked the exact question Jesus said they would ask. The disciples gave their password and the colt was **immediately** sent to Jesus.

The disciples put their coats on the colt. Jesus sat on his back. People began to put coats on the road like a white carpet and others put fragrant leaves on the road. The crowds called out "Save us here on earth, blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; blessed is the king that comes in the name of our father David, save us there in heaven."

Those people were right. Jesus came to earth to save them. He had to die to do that. He lives in heaven to watch over us and from heaven He hears us call and can save us today. He is still calling boys and girls who are ready to do what He says.

STORY THIRTY-EIGHT MARK 14.43

WHAT THE CLOCK SAYS



Can you tell the time? If you can you will know that the big hand of the clock is the "hour" hand and the small hand is the "minute" hand. Jesus told his followers to spend **an hour** praying because they would need to be strong to face what was coming.

An hour is sixty minutes. As those minutes ticked away Jesus talked to God His Father. He went deeper into the garden about as far as you could throw a stone.

He came back a few times to speak to his disciples and encourage them but they had gone asleep. When He talked to God He seemed to be in tears. This did not often happen to Jesus. One or two disciples must have crept closer in the dark to see why.

There was Jesus talking to God about suffering ahead and with sweat drops from his face falling on the ground. It was scary, for on the ground they looked like blood. The disciples had heard enough - it was something about a "cup" that Jesus didn't like but was willing to drink.

The disciples couldn't keep their eyes open. Minutes ticked by - fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven, fifty-eight, fifty-nine. They awoke with a start. This was the third time Jesus had pulled Himself away from talking with His Father and straight back to them. Jesus spoke softly.

"This is the hour, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of lawbreakers, arise let's go look my betrayer is very close." **Immediately** Judas, one of the twelve, turned up. With Judas there was a crowd, guards with swords and staves, two important priests, writers who kept records, older leaders of the nation. Peter and the others were afraid and Peter was also very angry. This was a big plot, a cowardly night-time scheme to trap Jesus in his favourite retreat, the Garden of the Oil-Press.

STORY THIRTY-NINE MARK 14.45

BADGE OF THE CHRISTIANS



When at bedtime mummy or daddy kiss their daughter or son goodnight it is because they love their children and look forward to waking next day to continue a loving friendship.

Peter tells us the kiss that shows kindness was a **friendship sign** of the early Christians. Look at 1Peter 5.14 for yourself. Paul also told us this four times so it must have been a badge of those who shared love for Jesus.

Jesus had a follower called Judas who did a rotten thing. He agreed with wicked men to hand Jesus over to be killed for 30 silver coins. Judas arranged with the high priests that he would kiss Jesus in the Garden of the Oil-Press - giving them a signal to tie Jesus with cords. He said, "Take hold of the one I kiss and lead Him away securely."

Judas **immediately** walked up to Jesus and said, "Rabbi, rabbi" and kissed him as if he really loved him. Peter seems to have missed Jesus reply. Dr Luke tells us that Jesus said, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of man with a kiss?"

Dr. Luke tells us what Peter did just then. He got his sword out and faced the man coming behind Judas to grab Jesus. He had a swipe at that man, who was called Malchus. He nearly missed him in the dark but the sword swipe left Malchus' ear hanging off. Dr. Luke also tells us that Jesus asked to be released to touch the ear which He healed there and then. He also tells us that Jesus wanted no fighting-He wanted his disciples just to leave. Jesus came to show us God's great love. He wanted his disciples to "love one another". That's why the badge of the Christians who loved Jesus was a kiss.

STORY FORTY MARK 15.1 SEVENTY ADVISORS AND JESUS

If you have ever been to London you will have seen Big Ben. It is the clock on what we call the Houses of Parliament. The members of parliament who meet there get votes of people over 18 from all over the kingdom when we have an election. They hold meetings and talk a lot and advise about our schools, hospitals, and all our laws.

70

In Jesus lifetime there were 70 men who advised the nation of Israel. The High Priests called them together **immediately** on the day devoted to preparing lambs - that was against Jewish law. They argued that Jesus should die. We know that two of them disagreed -Joseph and Nicodemus, who seem to have been secret followers of Jesus.

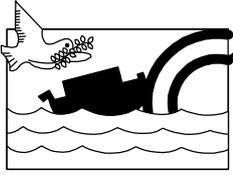
The Jews had to ask Pilate to have Jesus killed. Pilate was not happy to consent and tried to get Herod to sort Jesus out. Herod had many questions but Jesus never spoke to this man who had murdered John the Baptist. Herod put a royal robe of a king on Jesus and his soldiers mocked Jesus.

The High Priests followed Jesus everywhere. Now back with Pilate they got a big crowd together and gave them words to chant. So the crowd shouted "Crucify Him" again and again and when they said that if Pilate allowed Jesus to live on as a king he would be a rebel against Caesar, Pilate got scared and sent Jesus to the cross. When Pilate condemned Jesus to die Peter went away and cried loudly. He had denied that he knew Him and was very sorry.

Before Jesus died there was a big earthquake - far bigger than the one in 2008 in England. The sun could not be seen for 3 hours and a great big curtain nearly 6 inches thick was torn from top to bottom in the temple. The High Priest had to meet God behind that curtain once a year and it was to be on the very next day. But when the curtain tore God was saying to the priests "I don't need you, I don't need lambs to be killed. My Son's death and blood shed for sinners now makes the way open for everyone who believes and is sorry for their sin.

WHY FORTY STORIES ?

When a new car or aeroplane is built it is tested over and over again. That is done to prove the vehicle or plane can do everything its makers claim. It is really good. When you buy a ball pen you are sometimes allowed to try it out in the store.



"Forty" is a special number in the bible. It is used when God tests obedience. During Noah's time the flood was on the earth 40 days. It was a great trial for Noah. His faith was being tested. He was beginning to think he was forgotten but the bible says, "God remembered Noah."

When God came to check out the evil city of Sodom He said He would not burn Sodom if there were 40 good people in the city. The Jews had to live 40 years in the wilderness before they were ready to obey God and enter the Promised Land. Jesus was tested and shown to be a perfect man during 40 days in the desert.

Peter knew hundreds of stories about Jesus but he gave these forty to Mark to write down because together they show Jesus is God and he cares for us. He is a perfect Man and he gave everything he was and had to forgive and save us. They also show how much Jesus changed the world. They show that when people, no matter who they were, trusted and obeyed Jesus, He **immediately** changed their lives. The Stories were written to help you to trust Jesus like that.

JESUS IS ALIVE

The Centurion who had the nails driven into Jesus hands said the very moment Jesus died, "Certainly this man **still lives** as the Son of God".

He was right for Peter tells us Jesus went to tell the demons in the darkness of hell that he had conquered - even though long ago in Noah's time they tried to ruin the future of the human race and stop Jesus being born.

He was right because within three days Jesus was in the Garden tomb telling Mary Magdalene as she wept that He was longing to meet Peter and the disciples again. He was right because Jesus spent 40 days with the disciples after that and met 500 of them in Galilee - all before He went up into the skies with his hands raised in blessing promising to come again one distant day.

JESUS CHANGED LIVES

JESUS IS CHANGING THE WORLD

JESUS IS COMING BACK TO FINISH THE JOB

Peace



Earth

Jesus had changed the many lives you have read about in these stories - changed them for good and changed them for ever. Jesus changed history - the story of the world - the time we call A.D. means in the language of ancient Rome "the year of our Lord's birth". Jesus changed Peter who started his work feeding lambs or young Christians just like You when he told these stories to Mark and then he went on to lead the sheep or believers at Pentecost and then to feed the sheep or suffering Christians as He wrote his later letters.

Jesus is coming again to Jerusalem one day to make the greatest changes the world has ever known and bring great peace and a thousand years of joy. Before that Jesus is coming to the skies to gather Christians to heaven and organise His Empire before He comes in glory with mighty angels to put an end to war and make Jerusalem His capital the holiest and greatest city on earth.

You have read over and over again how quickly Jesus made changes. When you trust Him as your Saviour you **immediately** feel the joy of Jesus and a new power in your Life house that will change your life to be more and more like Jesus. When Jesus comes to the skies to take his followers to heaven those who don't believe will be left in a world at war. It will **immediately** feel terrible without Jesus and without the Christians. Then when He returns with angels and in great glory to rule in Jerusalem peace and prosperity and happiness will follow **immediately**. This word "Immediately" that Peter uses so much shows us that Jesus has the same power which He used to create this world in six days! When Jesus returns people will see for themselves that He can change things with the speed of light.

The big change Jesus is making today by sending His good news is to turn us away from Satan and sin so that we are willing to be called Christians.

I will finish these great stories of Peter with the cheerful call of the disciples to blind Bar-Timaeus. "Be confident" of Jesus, they said. Whoever you are. wherever you live, whatever you have done, Jesus can forgive you, He can make you well. He can look after you all the days you live. He can give you hope after death. He can make something of your life. "Take courage-He is calling you!"

The stories are authored by Bob Coffey

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