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CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Looking Ahead - The Catch

March 22, 2026

If you follow Jesus, there's something in you that *wants* others to know him, too.

Whether you've seen what he's done in the lives of others or felt his amazing grace for yourself, it's natural to think, *I want people to experience this.*

But wanting to tell others about Jesus and actually stepping into conversations about him can cause some hesitation: *How do I even do that? What should I say? Am I going to sound pushy? What if they ask me something I don't know how to answer?*

Colossians 4:5-6

Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

Notice that this Scripture doesn't require us to have all the right words or every answer. It simply encourages us to be gracious and attentive to others. Fortunately, we have the best example of what this looks like.

Jesus modeled all of this for us. If you need a place to start, anchor your heart to him by following his example.

Jesus met people right where they were. He noticed them, listened to them, and cared before he spoke. And when he spoke, his words were always full of grace and truth.

God made you to "fish"—not by forcing conversations, but by faithfully living and loving like Jesus. Readiness grows as you stay close to him, pay attention to those around you, and trust that God is already at work.

As you look ahead, don't overcomplicate it. Stay near to Jesus and be aware of the people around you. Simply be ready to share the hope you've found.

You might just be more prepared than you think.

Discussion Questions:

Ice Breaker: What's something you enjoy doing that you had to learn by watching someone else first?

How can we move from fearing we'll push people away to trusting God as we reach out to them?

Read Luke 19:1-10: What do the actions of Zacchaeus reveal about the power of God to change hearts? Why do you think Jesus prioritized connection over correction in this story?

What does it look like for you to replace judgment with genuine curiosity about someone's story?

Reflect and Respond: Have you ever changed your opinion about someone after spending time with them? What happened?

Who is one person you might normally avoid or overlook that you could intentionally step toward this week?

Prayer:

Jesus, I say yes to you. I want my life, actions, and conversations to point people toward you. Help me move toward others the way you do, with grace, humility, and genuine care. Give me courage when I feel unsure and guard my heart from judgment. Teach me to see people the way you see them and to meet them right where they are. Use me, even in simple ways, to reflect your love. I love you, I trust you, and I worship you. Amen.

Series Theme Verse:

2 Corinthians 5:20

So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"

This post was written by Lori Tuckerman, Director of Content for the Daily LivingItOut.

Mark 9: Listen to Him - Mark Reading Plan

March 23, 2026

Bible in a Year: Psalms 111-113 | Hebrews 12

I'm a pretty good listener, or at least I like to think I am. I'll nod, say "mm-hmm," and even repeat back what I heard. But later, I'll realize I heard the words, but I just didn't let them sink in enough to truly hear them.

This tendency to only half-listen isn't new; it's something even the closest followers of Jesus experienced.

In Mark 9, something extraordinary happens. Jesus is transfigured before Peter, James, and John. Not only is his glory revealed, but also the ancient prophets Moses and Elijah appear. Then God speaks.

Mark 9:7

Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him."

That command feels almost surprising. The disciples already know who Jesus is, and Peter has confessed he is the Messiah (Mark 8:29).

They've walked with him, learned from him, and watched miracles happen. So why does God still need to say, "listen"?

Because knowing who Jesus is doesn't always mean we're obeying what he says.

The voice from heaven was God gently redirecting the disciples. At this point in Jesus's ministry, they had witnessed his glory, believed he was the Christ, and were now being asked to let that belief turn into obedience.

And that invitation still echoes to us today.

We live in a world full of voices, opinions, fears, headlines, expectations, and even our own anxious thoughts. It's easy to listen to everything except Jesus.

We read his words in Scripture but rush past them as we send up prayers while trying to keep control of our earthly situations. We ask our Heavenly

Father for guidance, then choose ease or comfort over the direction we feel the Holy Spirit nudging us toward.

But if we pause in our tracks and read this all again, we find that God's call is simple: *Listen to him.*

Listening attentively and obediently to Jesus means letting his voice shape our choices, relationships, reactions, and priorities. It means trusting that his way, even when confusing or costly, is always good.

Today, pause and remember, Jesus is God's dearly loved Son. Let's listen.

Questions:

When was the last time you intentionally paused to listen for God's direction?

What does “attentive obedience” look like in your life right now?

Where might God be inviting you to say yes to him and trust him more deeply?

Next Steps:

Keep a simple journal of what you sense God teaching you and how you're responding.

Identify one habit, app, or distraction you can reduce to make more room for God's voice.

Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for being God's dearly loved Son and for speaking truth into my life. Forgive me for the times I've heard your words but chosen my own way. Quiet the noise around me and within me. Teach me to recognize your voice, trust your heart, and follow your lead. Help me not just to listen, but to listen obediently and attentively, always responding with humility and faith. Today, I choose to lean in and walk with you. Amen.

This post was written by Lori Tuckerman, Director of Content for the Daily LivingItOut.

Mark 10:1-31: Owner or Owned? - Mark Reading Plan

March 24, 2026

Bible in a Year: Psalms 114-116 | Hebrews 13

Follow your heart.

From t-shirts to greeting cards and everything in between, you can't escape this quote. It's intended, no doubt, to be inspirational, but there is an underside to it, overlooked by many. We need only pause briefly and look around and within for the dark reality to be seen.

The rich man in Mark 10:17-31 unwittingly followed his heart. When the man asks Jesus how to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus acknowledges that the man knows and keeps many commandments. Then he lovingly exposes the rich man's oversight of the first commandment: "You must not have any other god but me" (Exodus 20:3).

It was love that motivated Jesus to speak this way to the young man. Jesus was speaking a truth too easily forgotten—eternal life costs something. For the young man, it was too much. He was genuinely grieved to learn what eternal life would cost him.

Mark 10:22

At this the man's face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

In reality, the man's wealth and what he perceived as an accomplished ability to keep commandments became his god, pushing out THE God. Jesus was lovingly communicating that earning one's way into heaven is not possible.

As followers of Christ, it's important to understand that no merit of our own makes us worthy to spend eternity in heaven. No amount of goodness, no amount of riches, no amount of commandment-keeping is enough. This is not necessarily an easy lesson.

Ephesians 2:8

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.

Because we live in a society where our “worth” or “worthiness” is measured by accomplishments and/or material things, it is easy to find it difficult to relinquish earthly possessions, similar to the rich man from the Book of Mark. However, it's foolhardy to *follow our hearts* and place our faith and trust anywhere other than in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Everything else will eventually fail us and leave us empty.

Titus 3:5-6

... he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.... He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our savior.

Questions:

In what ways do you relate with the rich man from Mark 10:17-31? What is the friction between owning things and being owned by things? What is the source of the friction?

Next Steps:

Reflect on this Dave Ramsey quote: “More money makes you more of what you already are. Whatever you are—good or bad—is going to get bigger when you add wealth to the mix.”

Journal about whether you find your identity in possessions and accomplishments. Give serious thought to whether you are genuinely pleased with who you are. Let God's Word guide you as you consider whether you need to take any steps to find your true identity in Christ.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I so easily get caught up in the ways of the world. Priorities easily get misaligned when I fail to focus on you and your plan for my life. Help me remember each day that my true identity is based on a personal relationship with you—nothing else and no one else. Continue to lead me on the straight and narrow path. Thank you for lovingly correcting me as Jesus lovingly corrected the rich man. Your grace and mercy are beyond comprehension. Thank you for your generosity in offering both fresh and new every day. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Karen Peck, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Devotional.

Mark 10:32-52: The Suffering Servant - Mark Reading Plan

March 25, 2026

Bible in a Year: Psalms 117-118 | Galatians 1

Sometimes, we ask something of someone they aren't capable of providing. Other times, we don't fully understand the extent of our request. And occasionally, it's not even the right question to ask at all.

We observe the disciples, John and James, doing this when they ask Jesus for a favor (Mark 10:35-37). They request to be seated in places of honor next to Jesus in his coming Kingdom. What they didn't realize is that only God could make that decision. Nor did they fully understand what would be required of them if their request was honored (Mark 10:38-40).

Eager to voice their request, John and James had completely ignored Jesus moments earlier when he foretold his coming death for the third time (Mark 10:32-34). The disciples asked Jesus what they thought was a fair question but did not see Jesus in light of his authority. Jesus responds by saying, *if you want to be great, if you want to have honor, you have to see me for who I am...*

Mark 10:43-45

"But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Did you catch that? Jesus refers to himself as a servant instead of parading himself as a master. *Slave* is a term that, perhaps to our modern sensibilities, makes us feel uncomfortable. But in ancient Israel, the relationship between servant and master would have been commonly understood. A slave's purpose was to submit to and honor their master's authority.

This is important because Jesus responded to James and John by setting the record straight on who he really is. He emphasized his role and purpose here on earth as servant and Savior.

In order to follow the Son of Man, the disciples would need to follow Jesus' example as the suffering servant and submit to him, as their savior.

We are called to do the same.

Questions:

Do you see Jesus as your ultimate authority?

Is it difficult for you to trust in who Jesus claims to be?

Next Steps:

Take time to learn about a person before asking a question.

Write down something you struggle to be honest with God about or share that with a trusted friend.

Say yes to Jesus by taking that step of trust you have been resisting.

Prayer:

God open my eyes to see who you are. I have some questions for you but help me to know who you are before I ask. I trust that you are my savior and I want to submit my life under your authority. I want to follow you, even though I could choose to go my own way. I want to thank you for being the suffering servant so I can experience the life you have for me. Amen!

This post was written by Becca Roberts, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Devotional.

Mark 11: Move that Mountain - Mark Reading Plan

March 26, 2026

Bible in a Year: Psalms 119 | Galatians 2

I've witnessed God answer my prayer requests in amazing ways. When I was four, he gave me a rainbow. When I was nine, he gave me a baby sister. When I was thirteen, God brought me out of middle school friend drama during the COVID-19 quarantine.

However, there have been many prayer requests answered with a "no." We have all been faced with situations like loneliness, diseases, being fired, or being scared. We ask God to take the hardship away, to make everything better, but nothing changes.

Mark 11:22-23

Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart."

Faith is powerful! We hear stories of people like David, Ruth, and Paul, and are awed by their courage, loyalty, and determination. So why don't we see miracles like this? Are we doubting God's power?

When we read these verses, we feel like it is our responsibility to have more faith, to pray better, and to believe harder in God's power. However, only God can perform miracles. Apart from him, we can't do anything. God uses our prayers to bring us into his story, to help us take part in the adventure he is writing.

If I hadn't prayed for a rainbow or a baby sister or less friend drama, would things have ended differently? I don't know. But I am reminded that God is the one working. We can only ask and wait open-handedly, knowing he has our best interests at heart.

Mark 11:24

"I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours."

God is at work in all of our lives. He hears our prayers and answers them in the best possible way. The things we want most—forgiveness, love, peace—he is already providing abundantly, even if the outcome we desire isn't what he has in mind. God has a perfect plan for our lives, and he will provide for us every step of the way.

Questions:

What prayer requests has God answered with a "yes"? What prayer requests has God answered with a "no"? What prayer requests are still waiting for an answer? How can you remind yourself of God's miracles even when faced with "no" or "wait"?

Next Steps:

Think about the ways God has shown up for you in the past. Share those experiences with others—that is a part of your testimony! Next time you pray, trust that God is already giving you exactly what you need.

Prayer:

Father, there are so many things I ask you for. Thank you for being open to my requests and listening every time I come to you. I can't always understand when you don't answer me the way I hope, but I know you have an amazing story planned out for me. I love you. Amen.

This post was written by Lydia Snyder, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Devotional.

Mark 12: Questions That Expose: More Than Right Answers - Mark Reading Plan

March 27, 2026

Bible in a Year: Psalms 120-121 | Galatians 3

Have you ever imagined yourself standing among the crowd surrounding Jesus as he taught? Maybe it's easier to visualize because of modern-day TV series like *The Chosen*, which depict what it was like when Jesus walked from city to city, preaching in an open-forum style.

In Scripture, we read about how people approach Jesus with questions: some honest, some heartfelt, yet many loaded with hidden motives. The religious leaders try to trap him with debates about politics, theology, and tradition, all hoping to catch him in blasphemy or discredit his teaching.

But what amazes me when I read the Gospels is that Jesus never takes the bait. Instead, he turns every question into an invitation or an opening to teach the crowd something deeper.

Mark 12:29-31

Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

Like in these verses from Mark 12, when the teacher of the law asks which commandment matters most, Jesus doesn't get bogged down in details or debate. He goes straight to the heart: Love God completely. Love people sincerely.

No loopholes, shortcuts, or technicalities.

Knowing what we've learned about Jewish religious leaders of the time, I'm a bit caught off guard by the teacher's response in the following verses.

Mark 12:33

"And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law."

He agrees (v.32), and he gets it. He realizes that loving God and loving others matter more than rituals and sacrifices. And Jesus says, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." (v.34)

Not far. Meaning that Jesus also knew the religious leader had the right answer, good theology, and could we even go as far as to say he respected Jesus?

But understanding isn't the same as surrender.

That hits home for me. How often do we come to God with questions that sound spiritual but hide our real motives? How often do we ask for clarity when we want comfort, or debate Scripture when what God is really inviting us to do is obey?

Jesus still meets us with patience and grace in those places. And if we continue listening with ears that seek understanding, he keeps turning us back to what matters most: wholehearted love for God, selfless love for others.

Faith isn't about winning arguments or getting all the answers. It's about living surrendered.

Today, Jesus isn't looking for clever questions; he's looking for a willing heart.

Questions:

What does it look like for me to love God with my whole heart, mind, and strength right now?

How am I loving my neighbors in practical ways?

Am I “not far” from obedience—or fully surrendered?

Next Steps:

Before praying or asking God for direction, pause and declare, “God, my answer is yes. What is your invitation?”

Focus daily on these two commands—loving God and loving people—before worrying about everything else.

Prayer:

Jesus, you see beyond my words into my heart. Thank you for meeting me with truth and grace, even when my motives are mixed. Teach me to love you with all that I am, not just in what I believe, but in how I live. Help me love others the way you love me. Move me from knowing the right answers to walking in real obedience. I love you, I trust you, and I worship you. Amen.

This post was written by Lori Tuckerman, Director of Content for the Daily LivingItOut.

Reflections - The Catch

March 28, 2026

As we reflect on this week of reading, one theme rises to the surface: Jesus doesn't just free us from the weight of our past—he meets us right in the middle of our present.

We see it again and again in stories like Luke 19, and in the Gospel of Mark we've read this week. Jesus models moving toward people, not away from them. He didn't wait for them to clean things up. He stepped into their stories as they were, offering grace, healing, and a new way forward.

So what do we do with that kind of grace?

We only have to receive it. We never have to try to earn it.

And then what? We simply have to reflect this grace on others who have not experienced it yet.

The same mercy that meets us in our mess is meant to move through us to others. It changes how we see people, how we approach them, and how we love them. We don't have to have all the right words or perfect timing. We simply stay close to Jesus and move toward people the way he did.

1 Peter 3:15

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.

Carry this with you: You are already seen, already known, and already met by Jesus.

Now, who is he inviting you to move toward?

Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for meeting me right where I am—not where I pretend to be or where I think I should be. Help me receive your grace fully this week. Give me eyes to see people the way you do and the courage to move toward them with love. I love you, I trust you, and I worship you. Amen.

Series Theme Verse:

2 Corinthians 5:20

So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"

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