

Island Group Discussion Guide

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Week of November 16, 2025

BOOK OF MARK • WEEK 42



HAY OR GOLD: WHAT'S YOUR FAITH MADE OF? • MARK 13:1-13

OPENING PRAYER TIME

Begin your meeting with 10-15 minutes of prayer using these prompts:

- Thank God for His presence with us today and His desire to work in our hearts
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our discussion and open our minds to His truth
- Pray for strong faith that can withstand the trials and pressures of life
- Invite Jesus to show us what spiritual "material" we're building with
- Ask for courage to endure when difficulties come
- Pray for our church to be faithful witnesses sharing the gospel

DISCUSSION

- **Ice breaker:** Have you ever been cleaning house and had to decide what to keep and what to throw away? What made something worth keeping?
- **Read Mark 13:1-2.** The disciples were amazed at the temple buildings, but Jesus said not one stone would be left upon another. What does this reveal about the difference between what impresses us and what matters to God?
- Brother AL noted that Mark begins chapter 13 with "and" - connecting it to chapter 12. This was still the same intense day when religious leaders had been attacking Jesus like "grievous wolves." How does understanding Jesus' exhaustion at the end of this day help us relate to His humanity?
- We heard that 35 of Jesus' 37 miracles happened outside the temple or synagogue buildings.
Application question: How does this challenge our tendency to focus on what happens inside church buildings rather than out in the world?
- **Read 1 Peter 2:4-5.** AL explained that Jesus is the chief cornerstone and we are "living stones" being built into a spiritual house. What does it mean to be a "living stone" in God's building?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.** The sermon used the story of the three little pigs to illustrate building with hay, wood, or precious stones. The question was asked: "*What kind of material are you putting into your stone?*" How would you answer this question about your own spiritual life?
- The message emphasized that when trials come, they test what we're made of: "*When the temptations come, when the pressures of this life*



want to squeeze the very life out of you, are you standing in faith or are you just giving up?" What helps you stand firm when pressures increase?

- **Read 1 Peter 1:6-7.** AL reminded us that "*the trial of your faith*" is "*more precious than gold that perishes.*" Why does God allow our faith to be tested by fire?
- The sermon included a powerful moment where we practiced breathing exercises and were invited to pray: "*Holy Spirit, fill me with your goodness, with your peace, with your grace. And I exhale the stress of life.*" **Application question:** How can you build regular moments of quiet breathing and prayer into your busy schedule?
- In the sermon, we learned that Jesus "sat down" on the Mount of Olives after an exhausting day. The point was made: "*When pressures do get to us in our life, to take a moment, turn off the TV, turn off these things, mobile devices... and quiet yourself.*" Why is it so hard for us to simply stop and breathe?
- **Read Mark 13:5-6.** The sermon noted 35 different people in the last 200 years who claimed to be Christ. How can we guard against deception in our own lives?
- **Read Mark 13:7-8.** AL emphasized that wars, earthquakes, and famines are "just the beginning of birth pains" - not the end. Why is it important not to get overly focused on predicting end times?
- **Read Mark 13:10.** The message gave us a sobering statistic: "*There are three billion people who have not heard of Jesus Christ. Over 7,000 people groups all across the world that has not had a chance to hear the gospel.*" How should this reality affect our priorities as a church?
- The sermon stated clearly: "*Our mission isn't just to huddle in our little caves and find out who the Antichrist is and figure it out. That's not what we're called to do. We're called to go out there and say, hey, Jesus loves you just as much as he loves me.*" **Application question:** In what specific ways can you be part of reaching people who haven't heard about Jesus?
- **Read Mark 13:11.** Jesus promises that when we face persecution or difficulty, we don't need to worry about what to say because "it is not you that speaks, but the Holy Spirit." How does this promise give you confidence?
- **Read Mark 13:12-13.** The message concluded with this encouragement: "*Don't give up. Don't ever give up on your faith. It will be worth it.*" What area of your faith journey requires the most endurance right now?
- **Application question:** AL's final challenge was: "*What's your material made of? How much gold, silver, and precious stones are in your stone? It's up to you. Stand on your faith.*" What specific step will you take this week to build with eternal materials rather than temporary ones?

CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Share prayer requests and concerns with the group. Be sure to write these down and send them to all group members so everyone can pray throughout the week, including those who were absent today.