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One Person's Decision

2

A Scripture Story



FAITH FOCUS

How does learning about Saint Mark the Evangelist help us understand the Gospel?

FAITH VOCABULARY

Evangelists

Who helps you make decisions?

We turn to many people for advice when we are faced with making important decisions. Many people came to ask Jesus' advice when they had questions about their lives. We too are faced with making decisions each day about how we are to live as followers of Jesus. We can find answers to many of our questions in the Scriptures.

How can reading the Gospels help you make decisions about life?

Depiction of Jesus and the rich man (Mark 10:17–31), stained glass

"Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

MARK 10:21

Bible Background

The Evangelists

After Jesus died and ascended to his Father, the Apostles became proclaimers of the Gospel. They traveled around telling everyone about the life-death-Resurrection-Ascension and teachings of Jesus. Eventually, the teachings of the Apostles about Jesus began to be written down. This enabled the Church to preserve the authentic teachings of the Apostles for all ages.

The inspired writers of the Gospel are called **Evangelists**, or “Tellers of the Good News.” The Church recognizes four written

accounts of the Gospel as inspired by God. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the first four books of the New Testament.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, each of the four Evangelists authentically presented the Gospel. Each Evangelist wrote his account of the Gospel to bring others to faith in God the Father through his Son, Jesus, with the help of the Holy Spirit. Each Evangelist took a slightly different path to get this message across to his listeners and readers. Understanding the writing style and technique of each Evangelist can help us understand and enjoy the message of each account of the Gospel.

What might have happened if the Gospel stories of Jesus had not been written?



Details from *Christ and the Four Evangelists*, stained-glass window. Henry Holiday (1839–1927), British artist.



View of Ancient Rome. Antonio Basali (1774–1848), Italian artist and theater designer.

The Gospel According to Mark

The Gospel according to Mark was written sometime after A.D. 64 and before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Saint Mark's Gospel was written to Gentile, or non-Jewish, followers of Christ living in Rome.

Mark tells the story of Jesus in a fast-paced style, describing Jesus moving rapidly from one place to another to preach. There is a definite urgency to Mark's message.

The Christians in Rome for whom Mark wrote were being persecuted because of their faith. Mark's

Gospel was a powerful source of comfort and a call to faith for these Christians.

Saint Mark the Evangelist is often depicted by Christian artists as writing his account of the Gospel with a winged lion near his side. The image of a winged lion comes from Mark 1:3. In this passage Mark describes John the Baptist as "[a] voice of one crying out in the desert." Christian artists used the idea of a roaring lion to capture the meaning of this passage. The wings come from the prophet Ezekiel's vision of four winged living creatures (see Ezekiel 10:20–21), which Christians have come to identify with the four Evangelists.

FAITH CONNECTION

Look up and read these Gospel passages. Summarize how Jesus' teaching in each passage is a source of courage for Christians to live their faith in Christ. Discuss your reflections with a partner.

Mark 8:34–37

Mark 9:30–32

Reading the Word of God



Rich Man Who Went Away Sorrowful.
James J. Tissot (1836–1902), French painter.

“Come, Follow Me!”

Making decisions is part of everyone’s day. Some decisions are more important than others. Some are easier to make than others. Saint Mark the Evangelist calls his listeners and readers to make the decision to follow Christ.

Saint Mark vividly drives home this point in his story about the wealthy young man who asked Jesus, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17). Jesus answered him,

“You know the commandments: ‘You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.’” He replied and said to

him, “Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, “You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through [the] eye of [a] needle than for one who is rich to

enter the kingdom of God." They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God." Peter began to say to him, "We have given up everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age: . . . eternal life in the age to come. But many that are first will be last, and [the] last will be first."

MARK 10:18-31

Jesus invited the wealthy young man to follow him. By making the decision to follow Jesus, the young man would find the happiness, eternal life, for which he was searching—that perhaps his wealth

was not bringing him. The young man was not ready to make that decision.

Describe the wealthy young man's response to Jesus. In what way is the young man's response similar to what yours would be? Unlike yours?



Understanding the Word of God

Did you Know...

The first disciples chosen by Jesus are also called the Twelve. They are "Simon called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus; Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him" (Matthew 10:2-4).

The Cost of Being a Disciple of Jesus

Saint Mark devotes a whole section, chapters 9 through 15, of his brief Gospel to being a disciple of Jesus. He paints a very vivid and detailed picture. Disciples of Jesus must give up everything to follow Jesus—they must give 100 percent. A disciple of Jesus is called to place total, unconditional trust in God the Father, as Jesus did.

The Rewards of Discipleship

Jesus told the wealthy young man the formula for discipleship: "Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor" (Mark 10:21). Mark reminds us that *everything* means *everything*. What a huge sacrifice—to give up everything! A great sacrifice does not go without a reward. The reward of being a disciple of Christ is eternal life—true wealth! Any sacrifice that is made now is surpassed by the future glory of heaven. The glory and happiness of heaven far exceed anything we can think of or comprehend in this life.

Mark concludes this Gospel story with a statement that summarizes a key point in Jesus' teaching:

"[M]any that are first will be last, and [the] last will be first."

MARK 10:31

People in Jesus' time saw persons of wealth as most often having the first place. Today we see persons of wealth, fame, and power as having seats on the fifty-yard line, vacationing in places most people can only dream about, or sending their children to the finest of colleges. Jesus asks us to take a second look at our lives. The measure for success here on earth that disciples of Jesus use is not the same measure that others use.



Heart in Hand. Larry Moore, contemporary painter.

FAITH CONNECTION

Think about a situation in your life when it cost you to be a disciple of Christ. Write and then say a prayer of thanksgiving to God for giving you the grace to make the decision to follow Jesus faithfully.

OUR CHURCH MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Saint Martin de Porres

Each of us will have to make the decision as to what to do to live a successful life. The Church offers many models of people who have listened to the words of Jesus to "Go, sell what you have . . . then come, follow me" (Mark 10:21). Saint Martin de Porres (1579–1639) is one of those models.

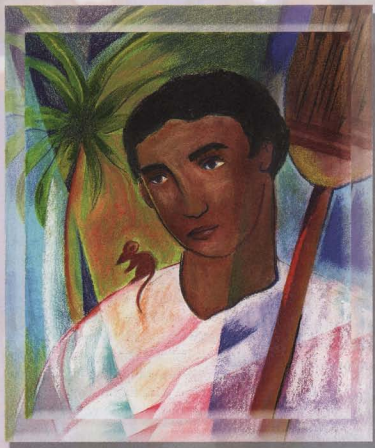
After the Spanish explorer Pizarro (1471–1541) conquered Peru, Spain came

to rule the Indians and blacks living in Peru. There were three very distinct groups of people in society: the Spanish, the Indians, and the blacks. And all of these groups despised anyone of mixed race. It was into this society that Martin de Porres was born in 1579 of a Spanish nobleman and a free black woman.

Martin learned a trade, that of a barber. In those times a barber was also a doctor, a surgeon, and a pharmacist. He became a success, being known as a healer and a hero to both blacks and Indians. But as fast as he made money, he gave it to the poor. By the time he was eighteen, Martin realized he wanted to dedicate his life to God.

Martin entered the Dominican monastery and was assigned to the infirmary to care for the sick. But not all people wanted to accept Martin's help since he had one white and one black parent. Martin understood that all his material goods were merely a means to an end. That end was to help others. His strong prayer life gave him the endurance needed to serve the poor throughout his sixty years of life.

In what ways can you put into practice the Gospel values modeled by Saint Martin de Porres?



Saint Martin de Porres. M. P. Wiggins,
contemporary American artist/illustrator.

**“Go, sell what you have ...
then come, follow me.”**

Mark 10:21

WHAT DIFFERENCE

Does Faith Make in My Life?

What Is a Simple Life?

Saint Martin de Porres is one model of someone who responded to Jesus' call to be a disciple. Jesus also calls you to discipleship. As Jesus invited the wealthy man to "sell what you have . . . then come, follow me" (Mark 10:21), he is calling you to live a life free of clutter and unnecessary material possessions. This means instead of clinging to worldly things such as money, power, games, and expensive clothes, you are asked to be

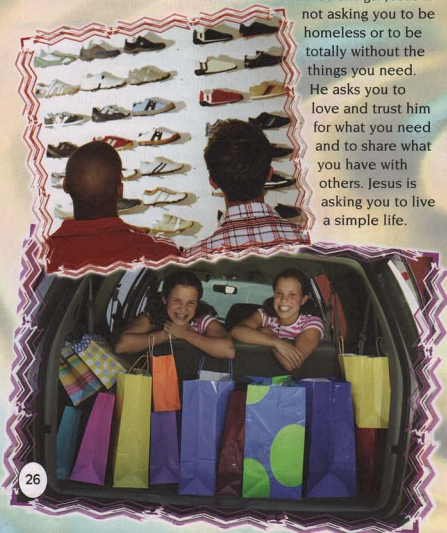
detached from these things. Jesus is not asking you to be homeless or to be totally without the things you need.

He asks you to love and trust him for what you need and to share what you have with others. Jesus is asking you to live a simple life.

Time Is Money

There is a popular saying that "time is money." Living a simple life means that you are more concerned with having time to share with those you love and living as a disciple of Jesus in all you do. It means that money is used to acquire the things you really "need" rather than to squander it on possessions that you do not really need. For example: Can you feel free to buy a regular pair of shoes, rather than feel you absolutely must have the expensive designer shoes? Why would you buy the name-brand clothes? Is it because it is a status symbol to have expensive and popular things?

To live a simple life means to have an attitude of gratitude for what you have and a philosophy of life that you choose to follow. Jesus asks you to put your faith and trust in him and your God-given ability to do what you have to do to make things work out for the best. To be a true disciple of Jesus, your God, you are asked to follow him and not to follow the path that makes money, possessions, or fame your god.



What Can You Do?

Simplify your life; start now to free yourself of attachments to possessions.

Internalize your happiness; develop an attitude of gratitude as your goal.

Money can be used for needs, not just for more things you want.

Positively look at your choices; be free of society's pressures.

Live a life free of clutter and without tons of stuff.

Identify what is really important to you by looking inside yourself.

Freedom is to own your life and your choices so you can live a full, happy life.

You choose what is important to you, what you need to buy or own.

Limit your desire for more stuff; live freely and simply.

Involve yourself with family and friends, and things you like to do.

Faith in God, in life, and in people will lead you to trust that things will work out.

Enjoy your experiences, enjoy living simply, and use your energy for good.



Faith Decision

- Pick one thing on the "What Can You Do?" list that you are already doing. Share with a partner how you are doing it.
- Choose one thing from the list that you would like to *begin* doing to simplify your life.

This week I will choose to _____

I will begin to do it by _____

PRAY and REVIEW

A Prayer of a Disciple of Jesus Christ

All: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Leader: Father, you have sent us the
gift of the Holy Spirit
to teach and guide us to
live as disciples of your
Son, Jesus.
We gather in his name
to thank you.

All: Amen.

Reader: Proclaim John 15:13–14.

All: Silently reflect on the choices
they have made to live as
disciples of Christ and silently
give thanks for the gift of
being a disciple of Jesus.

Leader: Let us join together and pray
as Jesus taught us.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who
trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Share a sign of peace with
one another.

FAITH VOCABULARY

Define the faith term *Evangelists*.

MAIN IDEAS

Choose either (a) or (b) from each set of items.
Write a brief paragraph to answer each of
your choices.

1. (a) What does Jesus tell the wealthy
young man he has to do to gain
eternal life?
(b) Describe the wealthy young man's
response to Jesus.
2. (a) Describe what it means to be a
disciple of Jesus.
(b) Explain the reward for faithfully
following Jesus.

CRITICAL THINKING

Using what you have learned in this chapter,
briefly explain this teaching of Jesus:

"Whoever wishes to come after me must
deny himself, take up his cross, and follow
me. For whoever wishes to save his life will
lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake
and that of the gospel will save it. What
profit is there for one to gain the whole world
and forfeit his life? What could one give in
exchange for his life?"

MARK 8:34–37

FAMILY DISCUSSION

In our family what do we work at the hardest?
Compare your answers to this question with Jesus'
answer to the wealthy young man's question.

For more ideas on ways
your family can live your
faith, visit the "Faith First
for Families" page at
www.FaithFirst.com. Also
click on the Teen Center and
check out "Bible Zone."



UNIT ONE

REVIEW REVIEW

A. The Best Response

Read each statement and circle the best answer.

1. What do we call the gift or power to know God and to reflect on how he is part of our lives?
 - A. free will
 - B. intellect
 - C. revelation
 - D. power

2. What is Christian morality?
 - A. the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Christ
 - B. the way of living for those who have been joined to Christ through Baptism
 - C. the way of life for a group of teenagers
 - D. the root of all morality

3. What is conscience?
 - A. a little man inside our heads
 - B. a persistent voice that helps us make choices
 - C. the Holy Spirit
 - D. our soul

4. What are the four cardinal virtues?
 - A. prudence, love, justice, and temperance
 - B. hope, charity, justice, and peace
 - C. prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance
 - D. prudence, hope, charity, and peace

5. What does the goodness or evilness of an act depend on?
 - A. morality, virtues, and actions
 - B. object, intention, and circumstances
 - C. intentions, actions, and emotions
 - D. none of the above

UNIT ONE

REVIEW REVIEW

B. Matching Words and Phrases

Match the terms in column A with the descriptions in column B.

Column A

- ___ 1. Evangelists
- ___ 2. sanctifying grace
- ___ 3. actual grace
- ___ 4. justification
- ___ 5. social sin
- ___ 6. merit
- ___ 7. theological virtues
- ___ 8. grace
- ___ 9. Paschal Mystery
- ___ 10. mortal sin

Column B

- a. our personal participation in the life of the Trinity
- b. divine help empowering us to live as children of God
- c. inspired writers of the Gospel
- d. deadly sin
- e. faith, hope, charity
- f. Passion, death, Resurrection, and glorious Ascension of Jesus Christ
- g. abortion, mercy killing, poverty
- h. making things right through Christ
- i. to deserve
- j. our participation in the very life of God

C. What I Have Learned

Using what you have learned in Unit One, write a two-sentence reflection about each of the following statements.

Jesus calls us to holiness and happiness.

Every society has a responsibility to be just.

D. A Scripture Story

Saint Paul the Apostle made an attempt to quiet conflict when he wrote about love to the early Church in Corinth. Write a reflection telling how Saint Paul's words can help resolve conflict in your school or community.