

In Between

January 19-24, 2026

Monday January 19, 2026

Scripture – Mark 2:18 John's disciples and the Pharisees were keeping a fast, when some people came to him and said to him, 'Why is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not?'

Observation: The Pharisees were advocating that the stringent rules that applied only to those of the temple should apply to everyone. John and his disciples however, were fasting as a clue that something completely different would be seen and necessary in the future (aka Jesus).

Narrative: Sorting out similar but conflicting values or ideas is often difficult until you personalize the true motivations behind each side of the conflict.

Question: Have you ever been confused by two sides of a controversy, but decided on your best course of action after looking deeper into the motivation behind each side?

Tuesday January 20, 2026

Scripture – Mark 2:27-28 And he (Jesus) said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of man is master even of the Sabbath.'

Observation: This was the end of the discussion with the Pharisees over why they (disciples) were taking corn (doing work on the Sabbath was forbidden) out of the cornfield on the Sabbath. Jesus would give them a couple instances from past history when exactly this behavior was allowed.

Narrative: There are big rules and little rules; from the example from creation and in Jewish writing recording the Exodus, God rested on the seventh day and called for the Jews to rest on the Sabbath day respectively. Therefore some, including the Pharisees, would see it as a big rule, while Jesus would say it depends and there are times when a rule must be put aside.

Question: Have you ever had to deal with the conflict over an ideal/rule vs. how to practically apply it or whether exceptions are allowed?

Wednesday January 21, 2026

Scripture – Mark 3:1-6 Another time he went into the synagogue, and there was a man present whose hand was withered. And they were watching him to see if he would cure him on the Sabbath day, hoping for something to charge him with. He said to the man with the withered hand, 'Get up and stand in the middle!' Then he said to them, 'Is it permitted on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to kill?' But they said nothing. Then he looked angrily round at them, grieved to find them so obstinate, and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and began at once to plot with the Herodians against him, discussing how to destroy him.

Observation: Jesus was not only posing a question of morality and compassion when dealing with a stringent religious observance, but by doing so in public Jesus was challenging the direct authority and agenda of the Pharisees.

Narrative: Challenging power and culture is very risky business; those with the power rarely are willing to give it up easily.

Question: When have you experienced or witnessed the heavy hand of power when it is challenged.

Thursday January 22, 2026

Scripture – Mark 3:11-12 And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw him, would fall down before him and shout, 'You are the Son of God!' But he warned them strongly not to make him known.

Observation: Jesus had just come to the lakeside of Galilee and his popularity was spreading widely beyond that region. There is scholarly conjecture that people with "unclean spirits" would include those with significant mental illness such as bipolar, manic depressive, schizophrenia, etc.

Narrative: Symbolically perhaps, those in their "right minds" were too caught up in their own cultural and religious assumptions to see the uniqueness of who Jesus was. Those, including people with "unclean spirits" were not as restricted by such conditioning and therefore could grasp who Jesus was more easily.

Question: Have you experienced in yourself or someone else a strong limitation to see "outside the box" due to engrained assumptions?

Friday January 23, 2026

Scripture – Mark 3:13-14 He now went up onto the mountain and summoned those he wanted. So they came to him and he appointed twelve; they were to be his companions and to be sent out to proclaim the message.

Observation: Early in Jesus' ministry, Jesus chooses his closest disciples (12 out of a larger group), and would name them shortly after these verses.

Narrative: Tradition has it that other disciples provided other necessities for the ministry, such as occasional shelter, food, etc. The important realization for me is that while the teaching ministry and the twelve were central to the gospel writing, a larger number of others quietly and effectively supported Jesus and all that his ministry entailed.

Question: Who in your life exemplifies the quiet and often unseen or recognized service on behalf of others?

Saturday January 24, 2026

Scripture - Mark 3:20-21 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

Observation: Jesus' popularity skyrocketed at this point according to the author of Mark, to the point of being "suffocating" and dangerous to the point that family members questioned whether Jesus was in his right mind to continue on.

Narrative: Family are affected as well when a family member takes an unusual course or tactic in life. Few people readily accept behavior far outside the norms.

Question: How have you or your family dealt with a family member who exhibited unusual behavior or attitudes?