

Life Group Notes 9/28/2025

Pastor Mark Warren Taking up our Cross.

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found clearly written in the Word of God given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time.

– Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

Please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group.

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 9/28. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. ***The purpose is to minister to one another.*** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnote speaks:

1. [On a response to Charlie Kirk and his example.](#)
2. [On Satan, the meaning of the name.](#)
3. [On being a witness.](#)

Important: At [the very end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

✠ Pastor opened with this question: "If my faith never stretches me into discomfort, am I truly making an impact for the Kingdom of God?"

1. What does this question mean?
2. Why stretch? Why discomfort?
3. What kind of an impact can one person have?

Luke 9:22 *"The Son of Man must suffer many things," He said. "He must be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."* 23 *Then Jesus said to all of them, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."* 24 *For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.*

1. What did you think the first time you heard these words?
2. Whom do we imitate?
3. What does taking up your cross daily mean to you? What would be your "cross?"

4. How do you “save your life?” How do you “lose” it?

Look ahead: *25What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, yet lose or forfeit his very self? 26If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*

1. What do you see? Answer Jesus’ question in verse 25?
2. Have you ever been ashamed of Jesus. Where is it most uncomfortable to speak of Jesus?
3. Pastor mentioned Charlie Kirk. Have you ever watched him?
4. (Please be cautious, and respectful.) If you did watch him, can you describe his methodology in pursuing the revelation of the gospel to a hostile crowd?
5. Pastor says, “It’s incumbent upon me as your pastor to present a message that is biblical and therefore true, not just my opinion.” Does he succeed? Explain.

“We need to come to terms with how we are living our faith.”

1. Have you committed your life to Christ and a life of faith?
2. What has that cost you? Can you take the time to pray for each other?
3. Are you living your life in the fulness that God has promised, or do you anticipate more to come shortly? Explain

✠ The tactics of the enemy.

1. Who is the enemy? (See [footnote 2 below](#).)
2. Is Satan real?
3. Where does he first appear in the Bible?

Examine Genesis 3:*1Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field that the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” 2The woman answered the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, 3but about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You must not eat of it or touch it, or you will die.’” 4“You will not surely die,” the serpent told the woman. 5“For God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom, she took the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.*

1. What is the enemy’s first tactic?
2. When he questions what God said, what is he targeting in Eve?
3. Why did the serpent approach Eve, first?
4. Which of the First Couple had heard God speak directly? Which was not yet even present?
5. Why does this matter?
6. How did the serpent change Eve’s focus? What can we learn of caution?
7. Has Satan’s tactic changed?
8. Do you find yourself questioning God’s Word?
9. Mark says, “The enemy is twisting facts. He is trying to get your eyes off of Jesus.” How? Why?

✠ In light of Charlie Kirk’s assassination (see [footnote 1, below](#)), Mark presented certain facts, trying to filter out social media’s many angles: A father, a husband, went boldly to hostile turf, presented the gospel message, and was taken from us too soon.

"It's probably not fair to say, 'There is only one person who seems to be bold enough in their faith.' Then he asked:

1. What do I need to do to become more bold in my faith? Answer him.
2. "Not everyone is called to a stage, but everyone is called to witness." What does that mean? (See [footnote 3 below](#).)

He goes on, "We are not all called to debate on college campuses, but we are all called to be a witness to the power and work of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, and His Kingdom values."

1. What is a "witness."
2. What is a witness required to have done, before qualifying as a witness?
3. What have you seen and heard to which you can testify in a court of law?
4. What is an "expert witness?" Do you qualify as an expert witness?
5. What is a false witness?
6. Have you ever seen anyone invent false testimony? What is the impact?

Look up 1 Peter 2: ¹⁴*But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be shaken."* ¹⁵*But in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give a defense to everyone who asks you the reason for the hope that is in you. But respond with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who slander you may be put to shame by your good behavior in Christ. ¹⁷For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

1. Respond to what Peter is saying here.
2. List the steps Peter outlines.
3. Why do you have hope? Why do you have peace?
4. Is he saying you always must speak? Then what must you do?
5. Can you comfort others?
6. Review 2 Timothy 2: ¹⁵*Make every effort to present yourself approved to God, an unashamed workman who accurately handles the word of truth. ¹⁶But avoid irreverent, empty chatter, which will only lead to more ungodliness, ¹⁷and the talk of such men will spread like gangrene.* What must you do?
7. How do you study? Do you have suggestions for others?
8. What must you avoid? How is "irreverent, empty chatter" like so much false testimony? What is the impact of such speech?
9. Look at this past week. How was your chatter? Is this a fair question?

Mark says, "I don't blame people for believing what they believe. They're just believing what they've been told...what they think they know. As a church, as believers, we owe it to our friends and family to share what we know. And what we know should bring life, light, joy and freedom into their lives. But we know this brings resistance because darkness loves to stay dark."

1. What do you see in this light?
2. Look at what Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3: ¹⁹*"And this is the verdict: The Light has come into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than the Light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come into the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹But whoever practices the truth comes into the Light, so that it may be seen clearly that what he has done has been accomplished in God."* What do you see?

3. Explain the animosity to the gospel?
 4. Do you change your methods and tactics if someone is hostile to your message?
 5. What if their hostile to Christ's message?
 6. Did you ever watch how Charlie Kirk responded to those who were hostile to him and his message? Describe his method and tactics.
 7. Have you ever been in an environment so dark, you could not see your hand close up? What happens to the darkness when a single light, even a match, is lit?
 8. Can the darkness put light out? Can the darkness even resist light?
 9. How does that encourage us?
 10. Mark talked about the impact, being in a darkened room, when someone flicks on a bright light. Why is it painful?
 11. What happens if you increase the light gradually? How does this guide a Christian through a conversation?
 12. Why are gentleness, goodness, kindness, peace, love, joy and patience essential fruit of the Spirit as we deal with our neighbors and family?
 13. Do we have to have all the answers? Explain.
- ✠ Mark says, **"It's not about having answers.** It is about being someone around our friends where they notice a difference in our life. They want to know the reason for the hope that so clearly lies in us. If we're living like the world, I would argue that we have not submitted ourselves to the fullness of the authority of God's life in our life. We have not fully submitted to the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we're one foot in the world and one foot trying to do the 'Christian' thing, it will be confusion to the people we love and care about."
1. Explain.
 2. How does hypocrisy set stumbling blocks and destroy the work of the church from within? Do you have a testimony?
 3. How important is this season...and how vital are the choices we make today?
 4. Explain. Has the Truth ever changed in any way?
 5. Have you ever said, after stumbling, "Oh there's grace for that," and not held yourself accountable? What was the fruit?
 6. What is the difference between saying, "Oh, there's grace for that," and repenting?
 7. What steps are necessary to restore healing and wholeness in our lives.
 8. Is each step comfortable? Or will taking these steps cause discomfort? Explain.
 9. Look back at what Jesus said: What does it mean to deny yourself? What does it mean to "take up your cross?"
- ✠ Mark prophesies, **"These moments are not comfortable.** But each one of them is impactful. It does something for the Kingdom of God. It does something for eternity. I believe that Jesus, today, is calling us to say, 'Maybe right now is not a time for comfort, but it's a time for us to get a little uncomfortable.'"
1. What do you think about that?
 2. What have you been feeling recently?
 3. Mark says, "My challenge is to move us to that place." Be specific. What place?
 4. Look at Acts 4:¹⁸*Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.* ¹⁹*But Peter and John replied, "**Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than***

God. ²⁰For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

After further threats they let them go. They could not find a way to punish them, because all the people were glorifying God for what had happened. What do you see?

5. What were the apostles speaking about? Why did they get arrested?
6. What "place" did the apostles find themselves in? What demands were being imposed on them?
7. What was their initial response?
8. Was there any hesitancy? Explain.

Look at what their next immediate response was in the same chapter, after leaving the Sanhedrin: ²³*On their release, Peter and John returned to their own people and reported everything that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴When the believers heard this, they lifted up their voices to God with one accord. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "You made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them. ²⁵You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of Your servant, our father David: 'Why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His Anointed One.' ²⁷In fact, this is the very city where Herod and Pontius Pilate conspired with the Gentiles and the people of Israel against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed. ²⁸They carried out what Your hand and will had decided beforehand would happen. ²⁹And now, Lord, consider their threats, and enable Your servants to speak Your word with complete boldness, ³⁰as You stretch out Your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." ³¹After they had prayed, their meeting place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

1. Why did they pray, if they were so confident?
2. What enabled the apostles to have complete boldness?
3. What did the apostles know. What had they seen? What had they heard?
4. How was their boldness maintained?
5. Are you in the same place? What have you seen? What have you heard?
6. Review what Jesus told Thomas in John 20: ²⁷*Then Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Stop doubting and believe."* ²⁸*Thomas replied, "My Lord and my God!"* ²⁹*Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* What do you see?
7. According to this promise, who is more blessed? Thomas? Or we?
8. Do you know you are more blessed, believing though you have not seen what Thomas saw?
9. Is there something we should be praying to enhance our own boldness? Will God work with us as with the apostles?
10. How encouraged would you be if you saw God's hand outstretched every time you pray?
11. Have you ever seen God's hand outstretched when you prayed?

Mark points out that the assassination of Stephen, the Church's first martyr, sparked the spreading of the gospel out from Jerusalem. Look at these passages: Acts 8: ¹*On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles*

were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ²God-fearing men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him. ³But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. ⁴Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Acts 11: ¹⁹Meanwhile those scattered by the persecution that began with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message only to Jews. ²⁰But some of them, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks as well, proclaiming the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

1. What do you notice? Describe the impact of Stephen's assassination on the early church. How far did the news travel?
2. Can you explain that? What was the church's response to the first real threat of persecution unto death? Did they talk less? Or did they talk more?
3. What does this mean when Luke says, "The hand of the Lord was with them?"
4. What was "the good news about the Lord Jesus?"
5. How soon after the resurrection was this? How fresh was the news of the resurrection?
6. How fresh is that news today?
7. Is the resurrection debatable? Do you ever feel the need to debate it? Explain.
8. What did boldness cost Stephen? What did it call Paul?
9. What did their obedience bring? What is the last thing Stephen saw?
10. Mark spoke of his own discomfort having a "Jesus conversation" with his neighbor. Do you recognize that discomfort? Can we pray for boldness...and for God's direct involvement in our outreach, as the apostles did?
11. What is our greatest fear?
12. Mark asks, "If we're not willing to share the truth with our neighbor, we're not going to share the hope that we have...who will?" Answer him.

† Mark says, I want to give you some encouragement: **Discomfort is a sign of growth.**

1. What does he mean?
2. In your own walk, which has produced most growth: personal comfort? Or discomfort? When times were easy? Or when times were hard?
3. Review James 1: ²Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you encounter trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴Allow perseverance to finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. ⁶But he must ask in faith, without doubting, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. Why joy?
4. Describe the growth that James is talking about. How important is it?
5. What does the discomfort produce in you, and what does it produce in the kingdom of God?
6. Remembering that James was in that room where they prayed upon Peter and John's return in Acts 4 above, look at verse 5 here. What role does prayer play?

Mark again spoke of the aftermath of Charlie Kirk's death and what it has sparked in revelation and in disinformation. He says, "It has created a lot of confusion. The enemy is trying to squelch what God is doing at this moment."

1. Have you had any conversations, different from the norm, because of his death?
2. Is God doing anything in this moment that you have never seen before?
3. What is the essential takeaway from incidents like this?
4. Pastor says, "We have to consider what God is calling us to do, knowing that we were the ones chosen to be born for a purpose in this moment in time." Respond.
5. Is this concept biblical? Look at Jeremiah 1: *4The word of the LORD came to me, saying: 5"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as a prophet to the nations."* When did God first know Jeremiah? When were God's plans for Jeremiah made?
6. How does this apply to you, then?
7. Mark calls these times "phenomenal" and "exciting." What do you call them?
8. How will the step of faith you take push back darkness?
9. How important is it that those around you know that God loves them and has a plan and purpose for them? What changes when they come to realize this message is true?

✠ Mark says, "**Outreach requires graciousness, and wisdom and discernment from the Holy Spirit.** If we only live where it is safe, we risk becoming ineffective and stagnant. There is no growth. The enemy wants us to think, 'You don't really know enough. You really aren't qualified to say anything.'"

1. Do you have a testimony?
2. How much did Peter know when he stood up on the day of Pentecost and brought thousands to understanding and faith?
3. Did Peter do it on his own? How much did the Holy Spirit add to Peter's words? Explain.
4. How much did Peter and John know on their way into the temple to pray in Acts 3?
5. How does experience help? How do you gain experience?
6. Mark insists, "You have something to say." What do you have to say?

Examine Paul's confession to the Corinthians concerning his first appearance on their "campus": 1 Corinthians 2: *1When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. 4My message and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5so that your faith would not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*

1. What did Paul have that you don't have?
2. What do you know of Jesus Christ and Him crucified? Can you learn more?
3. How much knowledge did Paul need? How much personal power was required?
4. Who accompanied him? Explain.
5. Cite a Bible verse that proves that God loves us all, without exception.
6. Why does the gospel demand courage?
7. What does it mean to surrender? How is that different from believing?

8. Review what Paul told the Romans in chapter 1, *"¹⁶I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, then to the Greek. ¹⁷For the gospel reveals the righteousness of God that comes faith to faith, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."* What is going on here? What power is in the gospel?
 9. How does faith progress from "faith to faith?" Describe the impact of increasing faith.
 10. What is gained every time you exercise faith?
 11. What power is in a gospel that does not get shared?
- ✚ **The kingdom is not advanced through comfort, but through faithful, sometimes uncomfortable obedience.**
1. Review these notes. How was the gospel advanced through discomfort and obedience from the first day of the Church?
 2. Where are you willing to get uncomfortable?
 3. What does it mean to be a Christian?
 4. What changes over the course of the years? What trials are expected?
 5. What trials have been unexpected?
 6. What do you expect in the days ahead? Pray it through.
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Follow up application:

1. Use the [Soap study below](#) to pursue your own understanding.
2. List the steps needed to restore healing and wholeness in your life. Watch this list this week, and pray each day in the direction you set down.
3. Take a step of faith, and get a little uncomfortable. Write down what that will mean.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Footnotes:

1. **On a response to Charlie Kirk and his example**—Without seeking to stir up debate, I want to share my response to a longtime active missionary friend who posted an article critical of the emotional outpouring at Charlie Kirk's funeral. Like so many recent articles I have read, this one missed what I think Charlie would want people to see, something Pastor Mark pointed out in today's message. I said, "First, looking to the man, Charlie Kirk, he is the first in recent memory to understand and answer the Pauline call and to go to those areas in the English Speaking West most hostile to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the college campus, with the express purpose of challenging the modern, anti-Christian mindset ensconced in one of the most dangerous narratives ever enforced since Sodom. And his weapons were a table, a microphone and a sign that invited any who differed to 'prove him wrong.' With these alone, was able to cast down imaginations, and address every high thing that exalted itself above the knowledge of God, even in Oxford, and often we witnessed thoughts and imaginations get taken captive by the gospel of Christ despite initial hostility to his message. If his words carried 'wounds' it was because he took a scalpel to the mindset that seeks to limit what a Christian can say in response to the world's deadliest teachings. Watch his videos. There are

hundreds, if not thousands. Each begins and ends with 'Jesus matters...prove me wrong.' Tell me where you have seen such boldness. I can tell you, having been thrown in jail in Morocco for 'possession of subversive literature' and then getting scolded by Christian missionaries who preferred anonymity and longevity in a hostile Muslim environment, that Charlie's boldness was absent there. His message was not inherently political, although he addressed dangerous trends and exposed those who backed them...and those trends tend to be political. Trans issues are entirely democrat issues and trans issues are ultimately salvation issues as well. As to the funeral...we saw on display degrees of immaturity...and infrequent maturity. The author spoke of President Trump's words, that were neither healing nor conciliatory. Trump is not a pastor, but he's been harassed, threatened, pursued and shot at since the day he decided to seek office. He lacks Charlie's maturity. His words were raw. He confessed his own, personal sin publicly, deliberately or not, on an international stage, while acknowledging Charlie's clear righteousness. No one will emulate Trump. Few deal with spiritual matters as with reality itself. For Charlie, spiritual IS the ultimate reality. What we saw was a national call by US leaders to acknowledge God as God in a way unprecedented in our history. The funeral invoked God's grace to remove from us the promised depravity of Romans 1, because until that day, we have not as a nation, acknowledged Him. There is a takeaway that this article brings up that is important. Besides the fact that we've been friends forever, I really want to see if I can put this into words that mean something for you guys as well: During the vigil I attended here in Concord, NH, someone said, 'Charlie will never be replaced.' I heard a voice inside me say, 'They were saying that about me right up to Pentecost...even after I rose from the dead. That changed at Pentecost.' I bet it did. Pentecost didn't create 120 little 'Jesus's.' But He put something in each of us that would one day result in a movement being called 'Little Christs,' or 'Christians.' On a lesser scale, but no less important, the one who set as a standard and exemplified Charlie's method said, 'Be imitators of me as I imitate Christ.' Paul didn't want a lot of little 'Pauls.' He gave the Corinthians a springboard, a place to begin. Someone with a standard to imitate. Charlie's example can be imitated... and his end, as the martyrs before him, reminds us of the nature of the conflict. Charlie played for keeps. Imitating him is a good place to start. Not little Charlies. Just Christians. Hope this helps."

2. **On Satan, the meaning of the name**—The word "Satan," according to Strong's, *appears only in the Greek New Testament, its roots lie in the Hebrew שָׂטָן (śāṭān, "adversary")*. Old Testament passages such as [Job 1–2](#) and [Zechariah 3:1–2](#) portray him accusing and opposing under divine restraint. [Isaiah 14:12–15](#) and [Ezekiel 28:12–19](#), while directed to earthly kings, unveil the prideful rebellion that typifies Satan's fall, echoed by Jesus in [Luke 10:18](#). It is really not a name, but a statement of purpose and a title. He is the adversary, recognized as such by Jesus throughout the days of his testimony. The Greek has another word, διάβολος, *diabolos*, which we translate as "devil." This, too, is not a name, but it has a meaning: false accuser, devil, slanderer. For our own awareness and caution's

sake, it is essential to remember that the enemy's purpose is no mystery, and it is easily distinguishable from the Good.

3. **On being a witness**—The Christian church has a language of its own, and this word is no exception. When I first became a Christian, I had friends who invited me to go out “witnessing.” This meant, for them, to go out and hand out gospel tracts that had been written by someone I did not know, and thus, “spread the gospel.” If you have ever seen old “Chick” tracts, you know the instrument. In those days, what I witnessed was a lot of litter strewn behind after our passage. In the field, as missionary to France working and translating and interpreting two languages, I began to examine the meaning of the word, and I discovered a vital principle: There is a requirement to witnessing. When the apostles speak of witnessing, they speak of what they have “...seen and heard.” They witnessed with their eyes and ears, not their lips or pre-written tracts. This is simple English. (Review the notes above from Acts 4.) Look how John opens his first letter: *¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have gazed upon and touched with our own hands—this is the Word of life. ²And this is the life that was revealed; we have seen it and testified to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us.* John gives witness to what he has seen with his eyes, heard with his ears and what he has touched and handled. We are not required to divulge someone else's testimony. We are required to be comfortable recounting our own experience, our own knowledge...what we understand to date. The authenticity of the gospel is the foundation of its strength. The authenticity of our eye-witness testimony will carry that message, and reproduce His life.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—Write what God is saying. / **P**ray—Write what your response is.) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Luke 9:22-26 Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 11:1 Wednesday: Genesis 3:1-6 Thursday: 1 Peter 3:14-16 Friday: 2 Timothy 2:15-16 Saturday: John 3:19-21 Sunday: Acts 4:18-21
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Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and examine these using the SOAP steps.