

The Gospel of Mark – Chapter Two

Collect for Lent

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness. May obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

I would remind you that we ended the first chapter with the healing of the leper and the paradox of obeying or not obeying the Law.

Are there questions or comments on Chapter One?

Mark 2:1-12

And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" -- he said to the paralytic -- "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

When he returned to Capernaum, after some days – where was Jesus? – neighboring towns wandering in the wilderness from settlement to settlement

I. The Next Section of Mark 2:1-3:6 – The Five Controversy Narratives

A. Characteristic is the difference between the crowd's reaction and the opposition to Jesus

B. The Opposition to Jesus

1. Scribes – 2:6 – Less educated teachers (B.S.)
2. Scribes and Pharisees 2:16 less and more educated teachers – (B.S. and M.A.)
3. The Pharisees 2:24 – Better educated teachers (PhD) in leadership positions
4. The Pharisees and the Herodians - The leadership and those supporting Herod

C. The Controversies

1. Healing in the house, forgiving sin
2. Calling a Tax Collector – eating with sinners
3. The Bridegroom interlude
4. Healing on the Sabbath

II. What is Mark doing?

A. More than a biography or a travel book – Mark is collecting and ordering the events of Jesus life and ministry

B. Writing in the Post-Resurrection Time he places opposition to Jesus as part of God's Plan

C. He notes the involvement of the Jewish authorities in Jesus death, but it is only in reading all four Gospels that we get the complete picture (In John Jesus is in complete control of the situation) – remember he is writing to a community that is being oppressed by the Jews

D. There existed in the time period of Jesus ministry and the writing of the Gospels strong and derisive elements within Judaism. There was occasional violence because of these diverse points of view. Mark is reflecting that in first person as the events were reported to him (This is part of the Messianic Secret)

II. Ordering of the Controversy Narratives – (similar to the miracles)

- A. An Action by Jesus
- B. An objection to this action
- C. A response often a question is asked by Jesus
- D. A teaching that is the real point of the dialogue

III. Examining the longest of these Events – Healing the Paralytic

- A. Jesus is teaching
- B. The friends destroy the roof to lower their friend

Is this symbolic of tearing apart the house that Judaism built? Is it preview of the destruction of the Temple?

- C. Jesus praises the faith of the men
- D. The man's sins are forgiven – (The connection between evil spirits, sin and sickness)
- E. The conflict – Who but God can forgive sins? – Who but God can heal a paralyzed man?

Mark 2:13-17

He went out again beside the sea; and all the crowd gathered about him, and he taught them. And as he passed on, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. And as he sat at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were sitting with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

I. The Second Narrative – Two events

- A. Calling the Tax Collector – a sinner in the eyes of the Jews – a collaborator
- B. Table fellowship with sinners – breaking the religious instruction of being clean

II. The Accuracy of the Event

When an event is recorded in all the Gospels or in one the likelihood of the accuracy is accepted. In this case there is ample evidence with all four Gospels recording the event

III. The Events

A. Calling Levi – the tax collector

B. Gathering with him and his friends for a meal – table fellowship is important in ancient times – family relationship

1. Jesus embraces those outside the law

2. Jesus bring them into the family of the Son of Man – a sign of God's Mercy

C. There is a connection to the early church where the Jews and gentiles would have mixed at the Eucharist

IV. A Further Understanding – the contrast between Jesus and J. Bap.

A. John preached repentance of sins, public confession and then washing as a symbol

B. Further he preached that the stronger one was coming

C. Jesus is the stronger one, the one who comes after

1. He forgives the sins

2. He extends God's Mercy to include those who have sinned

3. He shares the divine life with those who were previously excluded by their actions and by the community with no hope of returning to fellowship

Forgiveness is not a matter of judicial pronouncement or a ritual act, but now is about relationship

Mark 2:18-22

Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come, when the bridegroom is

taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins."

I. Another Bridge Narrative

A. The dispute is about fasting – questions for us today

1. When are people are living – Lent or Easter?
2. What is the proper response for living in Jesus presence or the Holy Spirit?

B. The first response is a question about wedding day etiquette

1. Do we not stay at a wedding banquet until the Bride and Groom are gone?
2. **What symbolism are we to understand from this statement?** Jesus is the bridegroom – church is the bride

C. The teaching is about the time when the bridegroom is gone

1. This is the time after the death of Jesus when mourning and fasting were the proper response
2. **How does the Resurrection change this?**

D. The second response is about wineskins and patching clothing

1. The practical
 - a. The old and the new are not compatible – Mark
 - b. Both are preserved in Jesus - Matthew (Jewish Christian)
 - c. The new is to be preserved – Luke (rejecting Judaism's traditions)
2. Theological – The New Creation is both and more than we can imagine or understand - Trust

Mark 2:23-28

One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" And he said to them, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath."

I. The Narrative about Sabbath Observance

- A. Jesus defend the actions of His disciples rather than His own
- B. This issue is an important one because of the central tenant of the Sabbath for Jews

II. The Simple with Complex Issues

- A. People are hungry they eat – end of story, Right?
- B. The Quote, Have you not read.....

What this passage relates:

1. David was in need and hungry
2. And those who were with him
3. He entered the house of God, the Temple
4. When Abiathar was High Priest
5. Ate the bread of the presence and those who were with him

Do you all see these statements in this passage?

1Samuel 21:1-6

Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest; and Ahimelech came to meet David trembling, and said to him, "Why are you alone, and no one with you?" And David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has charged me with a matter, and said to me, 'Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.' I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. Now then, what have you at hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here." And the priest answered David, "I have no common bread at hand, but there is holy bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women." And David answered the priest, "Of a truth women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition; the vessels of the young men are holy, even when it is a common journey; how much more today will their vessels be holy?" So the priest gave him the holy bread; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before the LORD, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away.

1. David had no companions with him
2. There is no mention of hunger
3. David did not enter the House of God
4. The priest is Ahimelech not the Abiathar
5. Neither David nor his companions eat the Bread of the Presence

C. What is the real issue of this passage?

1. Did Jesus make a mistake?
2. Is the Scripture faulty?
3. How did Jesus relate to the Sabbath?

II. The Resolution

A. Mark puts a Christian interpretation on the issue of things Sacred.

1. The Jewish concept is setting Holy Things aside
2. The segregation of people into clean and unclean
3. Mark is relating the understanding that we share in the divine life and in the Holy Eucharist we eat the bread of life, not because we are worthy, but by God's Mercy and because of Jesus command to do so.

B. Jesus and the Sabbath

1. Jesus never questions the sacred nature of the Sabbath
2. The women who come to prepare His body do so after the Sabbath Rest
3. The question that Jesus is addressing is not a question about the nature of Sabbath, but about what work is proper on the Sabbath

This equates to the issue of Divine Law vs. human law. The Divine Law can never be superseded by human law.

Thus the chapter ends with Jesus proclaiming: "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath."