

Mark 2 - Jesus with His people

V.1-2

Capernaum - a Galilean city frequently mentioned

Immediately - Mark's recurring theme, things are happening and happening quickly - certainly that makes sense when we consider that the record of Christ's earthly ministry occurred over just three years!

AND, we don't have a complete record of His works.

[Jhn 21:25 NKJV] 25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

But, we dare not enter into the realm of conjecture but rather take as sufficient that which the Lord has left for us and has kept for us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Many gathered - Jesus drew a crowd, for one reason or another. Many came to see him. How he responded to them was nothing short of miraculous. He showered them with grace and compassion AND often challenging instruction

He preached the word - This is so important. What does this mean? He preached the word to them. What word we are not sure. But THE word - (τον λογον)

We do this still, there is a place and a purpose for God's Word to be proclaimed - no matter WHY people come the Word must go forth.

V.3-5

Paralytic - one who is paralyzed to the extent that they are dependent upon the kindness of others to live - in fact four people had to carry this person. AND THEY DID! ALL the way up on top of a house and through the roof! What love.

Uncovered the roof - What exactly this looked like we don't know but it is certainly a feat!

Your sins are forgiven you - the big moment is met with...FORGIVENESS.

Wait a minute! That's not what we came here for!

They came here for healing. They got forgiveness AND they ended up being included in Jesus' lesson to the whole congregation.

Jesus has something to teach these people about who He is - aside from the miraculous healings.

That's part of it, but that's not the whole of it.

So here Jesus begins to teach them about who he is - the healer, and the one who has authority to forgive sins.

V.6-12

Reasoning in their hearts - this is where most of our critical moments and judgments lie - our hearts. Especially those with a form of self-assured knowledge - it's difficult for them to sit and receive the Word because they are reasoning in their hearts - picking apart every little thing that is said, certainly some of the scribes were doing this as Jesus taught and interacted with the people.

Jesus perceived in his spirit their reasoning - while it was unspoken it was not unknown. We think sometimes that our unspoken, unacted upon thoughts are hidden - they are to men but not to God. We think that our unspoken unacted upon thoughts excuse us from sin/judgment - maybe to men but not to God.

[Mat 5:28 NKJV] 28 "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

By this we are all convicted because none of us has a perfectly righteous thought life - we are sinners in need of forgiveness.

Which is easier to say? Think about it.

A man comes into your church, home, whatever who is paralyzed? Which is easier to say to that man?

It's easier to say "your sins are forgiven." Why? It doesn't require any action on our part? We have no responsibility for it. You can't see it. You can't give proof that it happened.

AND, sometimes we live our ministries like this - we say, with varying degrees of conviction - your sins have been forgiven all of the time.

And we know that Christ is responsible for that - he has made forgiveness possible and those who believe in Him have experienced that forgiveness.

BUT, what if that person is looking for healing? Dare I say rise up and walk? Admittedly I don't have the faith to do that. I believe God has, God can, and God does heal people. But who am I to speak something like that not being sure of the results?

My knowledge, my faith, my authority are quite limited. Even when I assure somebody that they are forgiven I am relying on Christ completely because He is the one who paid for our sin.

BUT, Jesus Christ uses this as opportunity to teach.

He's saying to the skeptical and all present - you can't see what I just did in forgiving this man so perhaps you don't believe I can. BUT watch this - rise up and walk. In the healing Jesus is declaring that he has authority to say the harder things and they still come to pass. The same way he eradicates disease and heals he also abolishes sin and has the authority to do so.

His authority, his faithfulness, his knowledge are completely boundless.

V.13-15

He taught the multitude - again, the work of Christ included/includes teaching.

Levi, the tax collector - Levi is a Jewish name, his vocation was to collect money for the Roman government.

The Jews at this time were ruled over by the Roman Empire - their reach stretched quite far. They collected taxes just like everybody else.

The Jews generally resented the fact that they were ruled over by the Romans. For a Jew to collect taxes for the Roman government was seen as problematic in the Jewish community.

For one reason they were seen as disloyal to their own people - for another the tax collectors made their living off of robbing taxpayers. The Roman government allowed them to keep whatever they could collect above and beyond the prescribed rates.

This caused for quite shady business practices and essentially government sanctioned extortion.

ALSO, Jews who took on this job, could be excommunicated from their synagogue. What must have been going on in Matthew's life for him to just pull the trigger!? And in some ways we are called to this too.

Jesus makes no discrimination between the criminal, the government employee, the fisherman, the pharisee, the nationalist, rich, poor, regardless of tribe or tongue - His call is the same for all - Follow Me.

Dining in Levi's house w/ many tax collectors and sinners and Jesus and disciples - the meal was an important part of demonstrating community and oneness.

To share in a meal with somebody was and is intimate, close, meaningful.

Jesus desires to do this with us still. We have the reminder of communion that we observe as a church to remember that by His death we are brought to His table and we are invited to the eternal table.

Tax collectors, sinners, disciples - for there were, and there are many. That's the glorious thing about Christ's kingdom!

[Rev 19:7-9 NKJV] 7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed [are] those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

V.16-17

The scribes - experts in the Law, all of the Talmudic tradition - the commentary on the Old Testament - body of Jewish civil and ceremonial law and legend

The pharisees - the religious leaders of the day, strict legalists with a focus on strict adherence to the Law/Talmudic tradition.

Together they question Jesus' disciples about Jesus - maybe sowing discord, maybe trying to remind these Jewish boys that "if your teacher were really good he wouldn't associate with people of low moral character, he would only associate with good people." That is not Jesus' heart.

We have seen this too - somebody finds Jesus by grace, they come to Him and receive new life and they are just overjoyed by that and then....some modern day Pharisee comes along and says...well actually there's a whole list of stuff for you to do. So sad.

The heart of the Pharisee is illustrated in Matthew's own gospel actually in chapter 23:

[Mat 23:4, 13, 15 NKJV] 4 "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay [them] on men's shoulders; but they [themselves] will not move them with one of their fingers. ... 13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in [yourselves], nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. ... 15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

Jesus heard the questions too so he jumps in to confront them - Quite simply - Not the well, but the sick. What an indictment against these men who are so close to God's Word but they haven't cared for the spiritually sick who would benefit most from that very same word.

They had created a societal echo chamber to get together, pontificate, pat each other on the back for being so good and so holy but never reaching people for fear of soiling their robes.

Not the righteous but the sinner to repentance - btw there is no one righteous, no not one - but in concurrence with Jesus' statement it is only the one who comes to a place where we realize that we are the sinner, the paralytic, the tax collector - that we can even hear the call. Otherwise, we think we are above it. We don't need a savior. That makes us altogether deaf to the call of Jesus.

V.18-20

John the Baptist's disciple AND the pharisees disciples question about fasting - strange bedfellows, we love John the Baptist!

BUT, here they are sharing in that same critical spirit of the Pharisees - we shouldn't rush to judgment each of us may have more in common with the Pharisees than we like to admit.

What hangups do we have that we like to impose on people: fasting?
Outward forms of dress/appearance (formal or informal)? Music forms?
Certain foods or diets? Any other strong personal conviction that is not

explicitly outline scripturally - that can be the thing that takes our eyes off of the Bridegroom, Jesus - rather than focusing on Him.

Jesus actually explains that fasting will come but for now His disciples are with the Him, they are learning so much more about the Kingdom of Heaven from their time with Him than they would by giving up food or drink for a couple of days. -- there's a lesson there for us too.

V.21-22

New cloth for new garments, New wine for new skins.

EXPLAIN - The explanation of the New Testament passages is that the new wine, still liable to continue fermenting to a small extent at least, was put into new, still expansible skins, a condition that had ceased in the older ones.

Which are we? Old or new? Jesus makes us knew - but do we pick up some crust from the road? Have we become rigid and dry and impliable? Unyielding? Are we liable to burst if God wants to do something new? I pray not.

V.23-28

Again, the Pharisees and their hyper critical spirit

It was lawful to glean, but not on the Sabbath

Even snacking was considered work

David and the showbread - law has limits

What does God care about?

What's the point of the law anyway?

The Sabbath is a gift to men, not men for the Sabbath.

[Exo 20:8-11 NKJV] 8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day [is] the Sabbath of the LORD your God. [In it] you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who [is] within your gates. 11 For [in] six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that [is] in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

The Son of Man is Lord of all creation, even the Sabbath - He's the one who set the law in unity with the Father.

