

CLOSE-UPS OF JESUS THROUGH THE LENS OF MARK - Part three

Wednesday, July 8th, 2020 - 7:00 p.m.

Pastor Don Horban - Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket ON

- 1) **Mark 2:13-17**- *See the grace and power of Jesus* - "He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. [14] And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.[15] And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. [16] 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?" [17] 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."

Matthew was a hated man because, while he was a Jew, he worked very closely with the tyranny of the Roman government. The tax collectors were frequently very crooked, taking more money than was right just to line their own wallets. This is the man Jesus chose to become one of His followers, an evangelist, a writer of the very first book in our sequence of the New Testament.

The call of Jesus is a call of grace. It always starts with us where we are. It isn't based on this world's class system or moral merit. Down comes before up, and that's a good thing. It means nobody is beyond the reach of Christ's love. No situation is hopeless. See also **I Corinthians 1:26-31** - "For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. [27] But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; [28] God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, [29] so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. [30] He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. [31] Therefore, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

- 2) **Mark 2:17** - *Notice how Jesus describes the nature of His mission in His own understanding* - "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."

Many experts have tried to define the nature of Christ's life and work. Fortunately, we are not left to guesswork. The heart of the Christian faith is clearly defined in these words. Jesus didn't come primarily to be a great teacher. He did not come to add to man's collection of religious systems. He defines man as desperately sick. Not just misinformed or ignorant. Sick. This Doctor is needed because man can't heal or save himself. Jesus is the only hope. Man hates this message because he doesn't like to hear the truth about his condition and his true need - **John 3:20** - "For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."

- 3) **Mark 2:17** - *The first task of those who would follow Jesus* - "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."

How does this verse relate to **Mark 1:15**? - "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is

at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." To what are we first called? Why were the Scribes and Pharisees not able to receive God's grace (**Matthew 3:7-12**). This text shows why mankind, outside of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, always uses religion to his own undoing. Any religious system that lifts up human effort, while minimizing the reception of sheer grace in Jesus Christ, can never bring anyone closer to God.

- 4) **Mark 2:18-21 - *The teaching of Jesus on fasting* - "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?" [19] 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. [20] The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. [21] 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."**

We have a pretty clear picture of how the Pharisees liked to demonstrate their fasting - **Matthew 6:16-18** - "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [17] But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, [18] that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

So they tried to appear gloomy and hard done by. They just couldn't grasp the idea that Jesus' Presence was something like the feast of a wedding banquet. It was marked by supreme joy!

To Jesus, fasting wasn't a dry, mechanical practice. There had to be an understanding of the times and seasons of the prayer life. Fasting should be done more on the basis of discernment than habit or routine. There would be a time for fasting (**20**). Right now, however, it was time to celebrate the arrival of the long awaited Messiah.

- 5) **Mark 2:21-22 - *The radical nature of Christ's new life* - " 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. [22] And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins."**

Jesus' life is constantly new and fresh. Unfortunately, man's religious systems are not. That is why Jesus never mixed very well with man-made structures of religious routines. Jesus constantly labored to recenter our attention on the reality of His life and Spirit in our heart. He calls us to this constant reality check in our walk with Him. It's the genuineness of the life inside that counts. And it's the life inside that is the first to leak out and evaporate if we're not careful.