

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

Wednesday, July 15th, 2020 - 7:00 p.m.

Pastor Don Horban - Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket ON

JESUS, THE SABBATH, AND YOUR NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIAN LIFE

- 1) **Mark 2:23-3:6** - "One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. [24] And the Pharisees were saying to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" [25] 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: [26] how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the 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?" [27] And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. [28] So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."[3:1]....Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. [2] And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. [3] And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come here." [4] And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. [5] And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. [6] The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him."

Confrontations revolving around the Sabbath - Nowhere did Jesus have a harder time with the religious leaders of His day than over the subject of the proper use of the Sabbath. This was one of the key issues that triggered their desire to eventually kill Jesus (3:6-7). The word "Sabbath" has nothing to do with the number seven or seventh. The word actually has to do with the concept of *rest* or *cessation of activity* (as when God "rested" after the six days of creation activity).

2) WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT THE SABBATH DAY:

- a) **The principle of the Sabbath was demonstrated before it was officially taught - Exodus 16:4-5** - "Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. [5] On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily" (see also 13-30). There was something different about the Sabbath. The people were to *prepare* for it in advance. No manna would be sent that day. But they weren't just to lay around at the beach. They were to use that entire day *to think back on the goodness of God and center their lives around Him all over again*. The test with the manna proved that they could honor God for that day and still trust Him to meet their material needs.
- b) **The diligent keeping of the Sabbath was commanded by God - Exodus 20:8-11** - "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 a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. [11] For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

In the NT the *day* changes to the Lord's Day but the *principle* remains the same. The New Testament Lord's Day is the *fulfillment* of the Sabbath in the same way the death of Christ on the cross is the *fulfillment* of the Old Testament sacrificial system. The purpose of the Sabbath is manifested in the *placement* of the command in the Old Covenant. This is the day that will be needed to properly do what the first three commandments instruct about honoring God and giving Him proper place in our lives. **The first three commands set up the meaning of the kind of rest God is requiring on the Sabbath.**

This is the *ultimate sense* in which the Sabbath was made for mankind. It's not merely a day to stretch and relax. It was designed to attend, not to our *perceived* needs, but to our *ultimate* needs. It is clearly not merely the rest of *leisure* (God certainly wasn't *tired* after creation). It is the resting from the *concerns of self* so I can take up the *concerns of my Creator and the proper worship of Him*. It is to be a time of *inventory and examination and confession*. It is a day when I take the time and effort to relearn the business of rightly relating to God.

- c) ***The keeping of the Sabbath was to serve as a sign to all generations - Exodus 31:12-18*** - "And the Lord said to Moses, [13] "You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, 'Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. [14] You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. [15] Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. [16] Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. [17] It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.' "[18] And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God."

Keeping this day was a sign of **God's authority and ownership** over their lives. This works the same way today. We honor the Lord by laying aside our own desires, pleasures and timetables to proclaim His Lordship over our most cherished possession - our time.

- d) ***We are to use this day to show mercy to those in need - Isaiah 58:13-14*** - "If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; [14] then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Here God promises to bless those who honor the Sabbath. **How** we honor it is described in verses **6-10** - "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? [7] Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? [8] Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. [9] Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, [10] if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday."

Notice how important this matter is. If the day is not properly honored **we will seek God in prayer but not find Him (2-6)**. This is where the Scribes and Pharisees come in. They had a list of unscriptural, external regulations ("You can go for a walk, but you can't ride a bike") that they had created. Yet they intentionally missed much of what the Bible said the Sabbath was designed for.

Because of this, they couldn't stand the way Jesus came and totally fulfilled God's original intent for His special day. He was "Lord of the Sabbath", not in the sense of destroying or doing away with it, but rather, putting into the Sabbath all that God initially intended.

3) **THE PERMANENT PRINCIPLES OF THE SABBATH:**

- a) Rest from self to pursue God (**Exodus 20:1-11**)
- b) Worship of our Creator (**Exodus 20:1-11**)
- c) Separation from our own pleasures (**Isaiah 58:13-14** - (very important and neglected verses)
- d) Showing mercy (**Isaiah 58:6-10, Mark 2:22-3:6**)
- e) Giving of resources to God (**1 Corinthians 16:1-4**)
- f) Celebrating in joy (**Isaiah 58:13-14**)
- g) Teaching from God's Word (**Acts 20:7-12**)
- h) Fellowship and Communion (**Acts 20:7-12**)