

Mark 2:14-3:12
November 8, 2009
Lynchburg, Virginia

EXHORDIUM

The gospel is that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus is the Son of God. Therefore, He is the King of the Jews and more.

This message is a declaration for all the Earth.

The gospel is not simply that Jesus died on the cross so that you can choose to follow Him. Jesus died on the cross and rose again from the dead, so that He would be declared the Son of God. This one is the King of all the Earth.

Why do I keep hammering this point home? Because we have settled for a smaller gospel, one that is mostly or maybe even only about a personal relationship with the Lord. We forget about the grand and glorious story that God is telling. So, let's not forget that.

But having said that, we are expressly told that Jesus has authority on Earth to forgive sins. And we ought never to forget that. If we receive the forgiveness of the Lord, then we can enter into this grand and glorious story. And, if you do not submit to the Lord Jesus, then it will not help you to know that He is, in fact, King of all the Earth.

So, let's not forget the really big story of the gospel but let us also not forget that each of us needs to submit to the Lord Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.

As we think about this, it helps us to get a handle on what Jesus is saying to the scribes and Pharisees. They believed in the Messiah. They believed that Messiah would come and be the Savior of Israel. But they also took offense at Jesus forgiving sins and sinners. This means that they, themselves, were not the recipients of the forgiveness of Jesus.

So, we need to recognize that Jesus is the Christ but we also need to come to Him for forgiveness so that we can enter into His Kingdom.

EXEGESIS

Mark 2:14-28

And as he passed by, he saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

Jesus again asserts His authority but He also calls different men. He does not call upon the professional religious men of the day. He calls fishermen and tax gatherers. The one from the working class, the other, a bit of a professional but despised as one who fraternizes and colludes with Gentiles.

¹⁵**And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.** ¹⁶**And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and**

sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

This is also an illustration of the kind of men that Jesus is pursuing. Like Levi the tax gatherer, so does Jesus also call publicans and sinners.

Sinners are common people of low degree. Of course, we good Calvinists think of all men as sinners. But this has a more specific meaning here. This would be like hanging out with some really rough folks.

¹⁷When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Jesus is agreeing the Pharisees and accusing them at the same time. He agrees that the people that He is eating with are publicans and sinners. They are vile and in need of cleansing and healing. He can provide that.

But He is also accusing them. He is saying that, “These are dirty and need me to clean them. I can do that. You are clean and in no need of cleansing so I cannot cleanse you.”

Of course, we understand that Jesus was making this comparison to condemn them. They were not clean. They, too, were vile. But because they refused to recognize or admit this fact, then they were not able to embrace the cleansing and healing that Jesus presented to publicans and sinners.

The scribes and Pharisees are the righteous and are left outside. The unrighteous are brought inside. Remember the story of the Prodigal Son. This is the same story.

Of course, we know that Jesus is mocking them. You, who say you are righteous, you have no need of cleansing. You are not righteous, you are wicked, for I know your thoughts that you seek to kill me. Only wicked people would do that. But see these vile people? Tax gatherers and sinners? They know that they are a vile and their only hope is what they seek from me, forgiveness of sin, cleansing and healing. So, the unrighteous are righteous and the righteous are unrighteous.

¹⁸And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? ¹⁹And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. ²⁰But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

You say you are righteous but you do not even fast. We fast. Even John’s disciples fasted. We are more spiritual than you. Who do you think you are?

The wedding day is a feast day. When Jesus dies, that is the day of fasting. But Jesus said that He would be with us always, even unto the end of the age. So, we should not say that he bridegroom is now away thus this is the time of fasting. We have the bridegroom so feasting is in order, especially on the feast day, the day of rejoicing that the bridegroom is, in fact, with us.

²¹No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. ²²And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

Fasting in that old way has given way to something new and better. Specifically, if the fasting was related to the expectation of the Messiah, now He is here. Why fast? You have to get your mind around this new thing.

Jesus is accusing the scribes and Pharisees of being foolish people who would sew new cloth on an old garment. As the cloth shrinks, it will tear the old garment. Also, like those who would put new wine into old wineskins. Old wineskins are already stretched out. They cannot stretch further. When you make wine, it expands as it ferments. It would burst old wineskins but expand nicely in new wine skins.

Jesus is saying that the old, tired views of the scribes and Pharisees cannot handle the new healing and life giving views of Christ. His views are tearing their garments and bursting their wineskins. No wonder they are upset.

Why did Jesus give an illustration about making wine if He did not want anybody to drink it?

Here is some new wine. Here is a new patch.

²³And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. ²⁴And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

Actually, Jesus is doing what is lawful. The Jewish laws allow for gleaning. But we should remember that even in the days of manna from heaven, the people were not allowed to gather on the Sabbath. They had to gather enough for the Sabbath on Friday. Here is something that does not fit into their strict gnat strangling, Sabbath choking views. But Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath and can therefore feed His sheep on the Sabbath.

²⁵And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him? ²⁶How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the showbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

Was what David did lawful or not? Yes, because God had anointed him King. This is Jesus making another astounding claim that He is like David, the one from whom the Messiah would come.

²⁷And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: ²⁸Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

A great principle: The Sabbath was made for man. Jesus, Himself, is the Sabbath, being Lord of the Sabbath. He, also, has come down for man.

Mark 3 ¹And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. ²And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

Such wicked men. On the Sabbath, Jesus heals. On the Sabbath, they hurt and kill. In the synagogue, Jesus finds scribes and Pharisees full of vileness. The tax-gatherers and sinners are more righteous than they are. On the Sabbath, they watch Jesus, so that they might accuse Him.

³And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. ⁴And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?

This is not a hard question. I will ask our children. Children, on Sunday, is it lawful to do good? Or to do evil? Should pastors, elders, and you save the lives of other people on the Sabbath or should you kill people?

But they held their peace.

Our children will answer this question but why would the scribes and Pharisees not answer? Because they knew the answer and they did not like it. They knew that they were plotting to kill Jesus, even that very day. They also knew that Jesus was doing good things and that the people gladly received Him. Yet, they would not answer Him a word. Sometimes silence is exceedingly wicked.

⁵And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. ⁶And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

Jesus is mad at the Pharisees because they were so hard hearted. What were they being hard-hearted about?

Two things:

1) Towards Jesus and His teaching. They would not listen to Him even if all of His works confirmed His goodness.

2) Towards their own people. The people were like sheep without shepherds. The priests could not heal but their condition was worse. If they could not heal, then they did not want anyone else to heal, either. This is envy and the source of all wickedness.

⁷But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, ⁸And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

The scribes and Pharisees could not control the events leading up to the death of Jesus. He was in control.

The language here is similar to the language in Acts where we are told that the gospel is to go from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria and the ends of the Earth. The gospel of the Lordship of Jesus Christ is for all the Earth.

⁹And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. ¹⁰For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. ¹¹And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. ¹²And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

Even the demons confess that Jesus is the Son of God. Thus, Jesus is God on the Earth and ruler of the Earth.

EXHORTATION

Jesus is King of all things. He is Lord of men, of the Sabbath, over the synagogue.

Now we see Jesus calling men that we would not expect. He calls fishermen, tax collectors and he hangs out with sinners.

Later, we get some idea of the kinds of sinners Jesus eats with. He eats with prostitutes and visits with loose women. Think about this for a minute. What would you think of your pastor, or elders if they did this? Be honest. Shouldn't it be the other way round? Shouldn't you think less of me for not hanging with sinners? You guys don't count. You are all respectable. When the Bible says that Jesus was eating with tax collectors and sinners, it means that he was eating with people who manifestly were NOT respectable.

Something is wrong with our religion when it is only spent with people who are respectable. I am guilty. I admit it. I pray that God would give me and you new wineskins for our wine, new cloth for our new patches. If He doesn't, if we don't change, then we are being just like the scribes and Pharisees.

How do we deal with Jesus? He changes things. What will we do with Him?