



Bible Study
2014-2015

Heart of a Servant

The Gospel of Mark

LESSON 2

Years ago, there was a Christian boarding school whose primary reason for establishment was to provide a Christ-centered, excellent education to the children of missionaries who were serving the Lord around the world. From their mission statement to the doctrinal beliefs, the Word of God was pre-eminent and all of those on staff were required to be Spirit-filled believers in Jesus. But over the years, as students came in that brought the world with them, rules were developed that became more and more restrictive with Bible verses justifying the position. The children couldn't listen to any music with rhythm saying Satan could provoke the flesh even in gospel or worship music. All outside reading was restricted to pages cut out of a liberal news magazine screened by the teachers. The girls were not allowed to touch boys more than 3 seconds or they would be punished publicly and forced to silence outside of classes for a week. There was even a rule regarding the way to put butter on bread during meals in order to glorify the Lord in their eating.

The school is closed today, but the more the laws were exalted, the more the children lost sight of Jesus and the beauty of grace. In the school's final years before closing, it seemed that the fruit that was produced within the students hearts was either very legalistic and self-righteous or kids that resented a harsh, punitive, never-able-to-please God.

In Mark chapter two, we have our first introduction to the scribes and the Pharisees. The scribes were prolific teachers and held powerful positions of leadership during Jesus' day. They were responsible to copy the scriptures precisely and adhere to a rigid standard of holy rituals when they would do so. The Pharisees were a prominent "sect" of the Jews, who were primarily concerned with upholding all of the law of Moses plus traditions that had been developed over the years. Though not all of the Pharisees were adversaries of Christ, the vast majority were. Jesus came to fulfill the law, but in their preoccupation with details and man-made traditions, they became blind to the weightier matters of God (i.e. love, mercy, etc) and would actually nullify the Word.

Read Mark 2:1-12

1. It didn't take long for Jesus to draw a crowd. As soon as "it was heard that He was in the house," describe the scene in your own words from verse 2.

a. Verse 4 says, “And when they COULD NOT COME NEAR HIM because of ...”. What was standing between these four men carrying a paralytic and Jesus’ presence?

b. Have you ever experienced a time when you craved to get alone with the Lord, or you wanted to pray, go to a Bible study, or go away on a retreat, yet “people,” or your children, your family, employees, homework or some other kind of responsibility seemed to get between you and Him? Explain.

c. Fill in the blank with key words from verse 4 that shows the perseverance and faith of the four men.

...they _____ the roof where He (Jesus) was. So when they had _____, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

d. They removed an obstacle and they continued to do what it took until they “broke through.” Write out what these verses say about our attitude and responses to prayer.

- Colossians 4:2

- Psalm 55:17

- Luke 18:1

- Romans 12:12

2. List the 10 things that are identified as powerless and unable to separate us from Jesus and His love from Romans 8:38-39.

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

- a. There is nothing in all of creation, seen or unseen, that can separate you from His love. Turn to Hosea 11:3-4 and observe how the Lord worked in an unseen, yet very real way with Ephraim. Write out what He did in your own words.

b. Though the Lord is always with us (Matthew 28:20), His love will gently draw our hearts to spend time, quality time, with Him. There will be occasions when we must persevere in our attempts to respond and if there is an obstacle blocking this (like the roof or a crowd of people), He will show us what is required to “break through.” Look up His promise to you from Lamentations 3:25-26 and write a prayer of response to this.

3. As we pointed out in chapter 1, God doesn't see on the outward appearance. When He looked at the paralytic, He saw a greater need than the use of his limbs. It was a deeper need than the man's inability to walk through his home, carry children on his back, or work in the fields. Jesus saw his need for what according to Mark 2:5?

a. In your own life, what do you believe is your greatest need that you would like Jesus to heal or address? Write out a personal prayer to the Lord about this and ask Him to fill you with faith to trust that HE knows and will meet the deepest needs in your life.

4. The Lord's infinite knowledge and love for a human life will always draw Him to identify its greatest need. And because He heals the man's soul in an unseen way, the scribes criticize His credentials. 1 Corinthians 1:25 in the NLT says "This foolish plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength." Considering this, what encouragement do you find for when the Lord wants to work through YOUR life from 1 Corinthians 1:27-29?
- a. Notice that the Lord works in this way so that NO flesh should ever touch His glory. What did Jesus want the people to understand about their abilities from John 15:5 and 2 Corinthians 3:5?

***"Deny your weakness, and you will never realize God's strength in you."
~ Joni E. Tada***

***"So many times we say that we can't serve God because we aren't whatever is needed.
We're not talented enough or smart enough or whatever.
But if you are in covenant with Jesus Christ,
He is responsible for covering your weaknesses, for being your strength.
He will give you His abilities for your disabilities!"
~ Kay Arthur***

Read Mark 2:13-17

According to the text, after Matthew (or Levi) has responded to Jesus' request to follow Him, he has a meal and invites many people that are identified as either "tax collectors," "sinners," or the "righteous."

5. Remember that the scribes and Pharisees were experts in the law. What does 1 Timothy 1:8 say?
- a. Notice that in order for God's law to work for the good, there is a condition "if." In your own words, who is the law for according to verses 9 and 10?

- b. Now read Romans 3:9-12 then write out what verse 10 says here.
- c. What does Romans 3:23 say?
- d. The motivation behind God's law for all of mankind was and is to do what according to Galatians 3:24?
6. As long as any man or woman walks in their own righteousness, proclaims their own "wellness" and self-sufficiency, they will never be granted the gracious fellowship and communion that Jesus offers to those who know they have need of Him. Reflect back to when you realized that you were truly a sinner and sought the Lord with a repentant heart. Briefly summarize here.

Read Mark 2:18-22

The Pharisees were openly known for their fasting twice a week (Luke 18:12) and since John's ministry focused on repentance and fulfilling Isaiah 58, it only made sense that his disciples would fast also. Please notice that Jesus speaks of those who are true disciples, that "...they will fast..." (Mark 2:20). But Jesus was trying to show them that His arrival brought a new work that was different than the old.

7. In verses 21 and 22, what two things happen when something new is applied or poured into some thing old?
- a. Since you've been a Christian, has there ever been a time when He wanted you to let go of old beliefs, old ways of thinking, old habits, or old traditions of how you serve or worship Him? Did it tear you apart or make you burst out the doors of a church? Did you struggle yet find freedom in being flexible to the Lord's new work? Explain.
8. Though Jesus was targeting Judaism, no one wants to become an "old wineskin." A hardened vessel. Resistant and inflexible to a new work of grace. Unyielding to the work of God's Spirit that is newly being poured in. One "possible" symptom that this may be happening in your life is a harsh, critical attitude towards a change made in the church or the ministry your involved in. Another possible sign is anger and great disappointment with things that are happening, even though it is not sinful nor does it violate God's Word.
- a. Is there something in your church or an issue with a ministry or someone you know, that you are or have struggled with in the past, that was NOT a sin issue?

- b. Reflecting back on God’s children who were murmuring and complaining about His ways and His leading, what exhortation is there for us in Psalm 95:8-11?

- c. Turn to Numbers 12 and read verses 1-3. Moses’ sister Miriam and his assistant in the ministry (Aaron) began to speak against Moses because they disagreed with a decision that he made regarding his personal life. This decision was not sinful, but rather exposed prejudice in their hearts. Since THEY sinned with their mouth and by ascribing a ministry to themselves that the Lord never gave to them, what happened in verses 9-10?

Write out word for word God’s assessment of Moses’ character in verse 3.

- d. Even though Pilate was not a believer in Who Jesus was, what are the shocking differences between Pilate’s declarations about Him and the spiritual leaders who knew the scriptures in John 19:4, 6?

- e. What does Satan do night and day before God according to Revelation 12:10?

9. If we are in the place of being a new “wineskin” and wanting a new outpouring of the Lord’s wine, we may be tempted to be frustrated with older wineskins who have been seasoned and adhere to the “old” wine. And in like manner, if we’re an older piece of cloth that has endured much “wear and tear” over the years in the ministry, we may come to resent or look down upon the new, possibly younger “cloths” that have never been through trials that “shrink them down to size” nor storms that can break them by wave after wave washing over their hearts. How does the Lord describe the damage made to an old cloth that is set when the new pulls away?

a. The Lord says what two things happen to an old wineskin if new wine is poured in?

*****The Lord’s compassion is seen that He doesn’t want people torn apart, broken and ruined, by traditions and man-made forms of religion and worship.*****

Read Mark 2:23-28 and 1 Samuel 21:1-6

If we heard in the news that a woman was pulled over for speeding and then arrested since she would not cooperate with the police officer, we would believe that she deserved her punishment for breaking the law. But if we then heard that she was speeding because she was rushing to the hospital with her baby who was blue in the backseat, and as the officer tried to give her a ticket, the baby had a seizure and stopped breathing...well, any further details would be irrelevant. We’d be furious at the cold-hearted, callousness of the officer and the actual injustice of the whole incident. The needs of a life usurped the letter of the law. And so it was in the case of Jesus’ disciples plucking and eating grain and David and his men whose lives were in jeopardy.

10. Read Colossians 2:20-23.

a. Fill in the blanks of verse 23 below and note the missing words for emphasis.

“These things indeed have an _____ of wisdom in _____
-imposed religion, _____ humility, and _____ of the body, but
are of _____ against the indulgence of the flesh.”

Looks impressive to others on the outside, but meaningless in power to deal with the wicked desires that come from the inside.

b. What else did Jesus have to say about the scribes and Pharisees from Matthew 23:27-28?

11. Though we will focus on hypocrisy more in other chapters, isn't it comforting to hear how Jesus was the complete fulfillment of the law, but His heart of compassion and recognition of human needs was pre-eminent? How does John 6:63 and 2 Corinthians 3:6 further emphasize what Jesus meant in these last few verses of Mark 2?
12. Reflecting back over your lesson, what has the Lord either shown you about your own heart or about Himself, that you'd never seen before?

***“Trying to work for God without worshipping God results in joyless legalism.
Work minus worship magnifies your will power not God’s worth.
If you try to do things for God without delighting in God
you bring dishonor upon God.
Serving God without savoring God is lifeless and unreal.”
~ J.P.***