



Bible Study
2014-2015

Heart of a Servant

The Gospel of Mark

LESSON 3

“The traffic. The boss. The baby. The dog! That does it! Calgon®, take me away!” Not everyone will remember this ’80s commercial, but it launched a luxury bath soap into quick popularity when it targeted the growing frustration and fatigue of women who were trying to maintain a career, a home and a family. The desire to “escape” from the multitudes echoed across America and Calgon® became a household name.

As we come to chapter three, Jesus’ popularity draws the multitudes everywhere He goes. Despite His attempts to momentarily get alone or sneak away with His disciples, little time will pass before He is thronged by the needy, the broken, the curious and the critical.

Mark’s gospel gives us such a vivid portrait of Jesus’ heart and how He responds to the desires and demands of people on numerous levels. In this chapter, you will find that the word “multitude” is written five different times. Pay particular attention to the distinction He draws between those who are followers, those who are disciples and those He defines as members of His family. One thing you will *not* read about the Lord, despite the continual needs of the people amidst a subtle, yet constant uprising of opposition, is any desire in Him to “escape.”

Read Mark 3:1-6

A notable distinction about the Jews, in comparison to all other peoples and cultures, was their firm understanding that they served the only True God and He was good. They would sing about His goodness in the Psalms, count on it in their supplications and reflect on it throughout their history. Yet, the men that knew the scriptures the best would look into the face of God in Jesus Christ and call His goodness “evil.”

1. Write out what Isaiah says about this approximately 700 years earlier in Isaiah 5:20a.

- a. It says in Isaiah 64:6a “But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.” Fill in the blanks below from portions of Romans 3:10-12 (quoting Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3 with emphasis mine). “As it is written:

There is NONE _____, no, not one;

There is NONE who _____;

There is NONE who _____ after God.

There is NONE who does _____, no, not one.”

This solidifies the prophet’s words that within man, there is no inherent goodness that can be boasted about. Even man’s best deeds resemble dirty cloths. All goodness comes from God and is God. But this does not eliminate a believer’s responsibility to **do good** towards others.

2. What does James 4:17 say?

- a. All sin falls under two categories: sins of “commission” or “omission.” Use a dictionary and define both of these words. Then circle which category James 4:17 falls under.

- b. Turn to Luke 10:30-37. As a lawyer sought to justify himself in regards to the law, Jesus masterfully tells a parable about a man who was brutally attacked. Please describe any “sins of omission” you may find in this story.

- c. Is there a specific circumstance in your life today (or one recently) that the Lord has prompted you to “do good” towards another? Briefly describe.

3. It is probably safe to assume that there were sincere people in the synagogue who wanted to do “what was right and good” in God’s eyes, but the religious leaders had defined what that meant and the people knew no different. So Jesus wanted to hold up a true example of what goodness looked like that would contradict what they had been taught. What reflective question did He ask everyone in the synagogue that day?

a. What do you read about that made Jesus angry? (Selah)

b. In Hebrews 3:7-15, we read that the Holy Spirit is speaking a very strong exhortation to us “to day.” Write out these verses in your own words and note specifically what things anger the Lord.

- c. Notice that a result of hardening one's heart disqualifies the person from entering into what Jesus calls "My rest" in verse 11 of Hebrews 3. Jesus' rest was incomparable to the counterfeit rest proposed by the Pharisees' legalism and traditions. Can you personally describe a time when you were able to "rest in the Lord" despite circumstances to the contrary?

4. Switching our focus to the man with the withered hand, imagine yourself in his place. It was probably a typical day and he expected a typical service, but when the Lord's eyes of grace turned to him for his specific need, the ordinary changed into the extraordinary. What promise is given to us in Isaiah 30:18?

- a. The Lord didn't just go to the man and heal him. He asked the man to respond to His call by stepping forward, which meant that others would be watching. He could have said "no" to Jesus because of fear of the unknown, embarrassment, disbelief, or being anxious over what the leaders would do to him. Has it ever been hard for you to respond to Jesus when He's asked you to "stand" or "step forward" in the midst of tense circumstances? Explain what happened and what made it hard to respond.
- b. There is a phrase that is repeated in Joel 2:26-27. What is it?
- c. Peter also reassures us in 1 Peter 2:6c that as Jesus is the precious cornerstone, what happens to those who believe in Him?

5. *Reflection Question:* When Jesus did not give the man specific directions of which hand to stretch out when commanded to do so, it's significant that the man exposed his need. It would seem that everyone else in the synagogue had normal hands and if the man compared himself to others, he could have chosen to only show the hand that was normal. But there are times when the Lord says that in order to heal, He wants us to humble ourselves in His sight and before others and expose our weakness and withered area. Remember, it will not be to shame you.

How is the Lord speaking to your heart right now? Is it regarding a time in the past, something current, or do you see a withered area in your life that you pray the Lord may heal one day? Write out your testimony here.

Read Mark 3:7-12

6. Though Jesus wanted to withdraw and just spend time with His disciples, a multitude from all around Galilee came after Him. But what was the reason according to verse 8?

a. In every true believer's walk, there will be times when the Lord will challenge the person's heart as to their motivations for following Him. Is it for what He will do for them, save them from, or merely for Who He is? Have you had this happen in your life? Explain.

7. Jesus was not only fully God, but in His humanity, we see His vulnerability as He was made like us in all ways. He gave us a very practical example to free us from condemnation in our lives from verse 9. What did Jesus tell His disciples to do for Him and "why" was it needful?

a. God could be physically crushed? What does it say about Jesus in Hebrews 2:17 and 4:15?

- b. As was discussed in the introduction, the Lord sees the “multitudes” that can crowd us and the weight of burdens that can nearly crush us. If Jesus needed a small boat of safety to prevent that from happening, how much more will He provide a vehicle of safety or a small place of refuge so that we don’t get crushed ourselves? Pray about this principle and look up one or two scriptures that speak to your heart regarding God’s promise of refuge and protection.
- c. Have you ever experienced a time when the Lord provided some kind of “boat” for you practically? Has He ever provided a place of refuge where you were able to get away from the “multitudes” for a season? Has He ever miraculously delivered you from being “crushed” by circumstances too heavy or too numerous to handle?

Read Mark 3:13-19

8. Here we read of the Lord choosing twelve disciples who were called to be apostles. Eleven of them would be used to turn the world upside down for the gospel. But the Lord specifies that they were chosen for what reason FIRST?

- a. This is important for all of us to remember. We are first called to be WITH Jesus, then fulfill His calling to serve Him. We cannot give what we do not first receive from the Lord (1 Cor. 4:7) and serving Him is never to replace your fellowship with Him. They are to walk hand-in-hand. Read Luke 10:38-42 and write out Jesus' own words in verse 42.

Read Mark 3:20-30

9. The history of America's "*Pledge of Allegiance*" is very interesting. When our nation was under a Communist threat in 1954, President Eisenhower encouraged Congress to add the words "under God" in the beginning of the pledge. It reads, "...one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Our nation used to proclaim its unity in subjection to God's authority, assuring freedom and righteous judgement to those who abide therein. What does Jesus say three times will happen when division happens, whether in a nation, a house, or in the spirit (vs. 24-26)?

10. There are many scriptures about division, some are positive and some are negative. Some division is required by God and some is condemned. Look up these verses and give a short description regarding division or unity.

- Amos 3:3

- Ezekiel 11:19

- Acts 4:32

- Proverbs 6:16, 19 (discord is division)

- Jeremiah 15:19

- Psalm 133:1

***“Give me one pure and holy passion
Give me one magnificent obsession
Give me one glorious ambition for my life
To know and follow hard after You”
~ Mark Altrogge***

11. Because of this brief demonic accusation made by the scribes, the Lord pulls aside His disciples and teaches them a powerful truth about division and forgiveness.
- a. Think back to the times when you did not know Jesus as your Savior and were living according to your own will. Do you remember what your thoughts were about sin in general? Did you see them on a scale, such as big ones (like murder) versus small ones (stealing a friend’s pencil)? Did you believe God could forgive some things people did wrong but not others? Write a brief reflection.

- b. In verses 28-29 and Luke 12:10, the Lord does make a division with sin and separates them. Which ONE sin is unforgivable?
- c. It is amazing that they looked in the face of God, watched perfect love in action, listened to pure grace and truth and still called Him evil. Yet, even this could be forgiven. Jesus spoke of what the Holy Spirit's ministry was in John 15:26 and 16:8-10. Write out these four roles of the Holy Spirit.
- d. It is the continual rejection against the work of the Holy Spirit that Jesus spoke about when David Guzik wrote, "it's not because it is a sin "too big" for God to forgive, but because it is an attitude of heart that cares nothing for God's forgiveness. It never has forgiveness because it never wants forgiveness God's way." Take a few minutes to pray for someone that you know who is still rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. End by thanking the Lord for someone He used to help bring you to salvation.

"Our love for God and our appreciation of His love and forgiveness will be in proportion to the recognition of our sin and unworthiness."

~ Dave Hunt

14. Some people find the love of a family they've always longed for when they join a local church and develop relationships with other believers. Some people have very close families and are raised with the unspoken emphasis that "blood is thicker" than anything. As we wrap up our lesson in Mark 3, despite our experience, background, and feelings, the Lord says that those who are true believers, who DO the will of God, and walk according to His ways, are closer as a family than those who are your own blood relatives that do not live like this.

a. What does Romans 8:15 say to you?

b. Write in your own words what 1 Peter 1:22 encourages.

c. Not only are we a member of the best family on the planet, it is to be the most loving, though imperfect family. There will still be disagreements and problems that need to be worked through until heaven. But our Father has given His family instructions for every difficulty. Look up the Father's heart in Matthew 5:23-24 and the encouragement given in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. What does it mean that a "threefold cord is not easily broken?"

d. Is there anyone in God's family that you need to speak to or make things right with? (Ask the Holy Spirit in prayer to search your heart and life before answering this question too quickly.)

e. Remember the Lord's words as you write out Romans 12:18.

“In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity.”
~ R. Baxter

“To a true child of God, the invisible bond that unites all believers to Christ is far more tender, and lasting, and precious; and, as we come to recognize and realize that we are all dwelling in one sphere of life in Him, we learn to look on every believer as our brother, in a sense that is infinitely higher than all human relationships. This is the one and only way to bring disciples permanently together. All other plans for promoting the unity of the Church have failed.”
~ A. T. Pierson