



THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Seeing Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God



Part 9

"The Questioning of the Messiah"

4-11-21

Introduction: Self-righteousness & Identity Markers

- We live in a polarized time where more and more things in life are becoming politicized. Because human nature does not change we have found ways to set ourselves apart from others by the use of certain identity markers. These markers represent certain beliefs and practices that we believe to be 'good' and to identify ourselves with these beliefs is therefore to see ourselves as 'good.'
- Believers are just as prone to these acts of performative righteousness as anyone else. We must be careful, therefore, that what sets us apart from the world is not merely external, but is instead the manifestation of the work of His Spirit in and through us.

Key Point: Although Jesus faced increased _____ from religious leaders, He refused to affirm or live in accord with their traditions and instead called all to live worshipfully as those who recognize that they have been graciously served by God.

The Question About Fasting – Mark 2:18-22

- At some point in His ministry, some of the people of the region asked him about the _____ practices of His followers as compared to those of John the Baptist and the Pharisees.

Mark 2:18—*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?"*

⇒ Fasting was a practice that was common among the most devout of the day that was associated with the recognition of sin and the petitioning of God's favor. Those who ask the question seem genuinely curious as to why Jesus' disciples do not appear to evidence the same religious fervor as those of John and the Pharisees.

- Jesus' response illustrated that His followers were _____ and of necessity set apart from all others.

Mark 2:19-20—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.

⇒ The wedding imagery that Jesus employed was intended to be both culturally relevant and theologically rich (Isa. 61:10; Isa. 62:4-5; Hos. 2:14-20). The other illustrations (new cloth on an old garment & new wine in old wine skins) were intended to show the incompatibility of faith in Him with anything that had come before.

"The old skins and old garments are, in the narrative context, the structures or religious tradition, as represented especially by the Pharisees and their scribal teaching, whether in theology (the forgiveness of sins) or in practice (the purity of table fellowship; fasting)."
—R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*

Key Point: The coming of Messiah had brought about a radical change in the _____ between God and His people and how they conducted themselves in the world was to evidence that new reality.

The Sabbath Controversies

The Plucking of Grains – Mark 2:23-28

- In light of His disciples picking grains to eat on the Sabbath, the Pharisees questioned whether He _____ such "unlawful" activity.

Mark 2:23-24—²³ 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?"

⇒ There was no question that the Sabbath was to be regarded as a holy day and that on it no work was to be done (Exod. 20:8-11). Although Scripture contains some illustrations of Sabbath prohibitions, much debate centered on the definition of 'work.'

- Jesus did not engage in debate, but instead referred to similar incident in Scripture involving _____.

Mark 2:4-5—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?"

⇒ This event illustrated that the purpose of the OT Law was to give life (Lev. 18:5; Deut. 32:44-47) and that the specifics of the Law could be set aside in certain circumstances in order to preserve life (something many rabbis acknowledged to be true).

- **Jesus then authoritatively proclaimed the true _____ of the Sabbath and His own lordship over it.**

Mark 2:27-28— 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.”

⇒ The Pharisees had structured so much of religious life around obedience to the Sabbath Law as expressed in their traditions that the true intent of the Sabbath had been lost to them.

“In its spiritual and eternal element, the Sabbath Law embodied the two thoughts of rest and worship, and worship which pointed to rest. The keeping of the 7th day, and the Jewish mode of its observance, were the temporal and outward form in which these eternal principles were presented.” —Alfred Edersheim, *The Life & Times of Jesus the Messiah*

Key Point: As Messiah, Jesus was the Greater David who had come to bring the promised Sabbath _____ for the people of God.

“If the strict regulations regarding the bread of the presence could be set aside for David, who was fleeing for his life, how much more can holy regulations be set aside for Jesus (and His companions)...who is in a situation of far greater urgency in proclaiming the coming of the kingdom of God.” —David Garland, *A Theology of Mark's Gospel*

The Healing in the Synagogue—Mark 3:1-6

- **On a subsequent Sabbath, the Pharisees came to the synagogue looking for an opportunity to _____ Him.**

Mark 3:1-2—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.

⇒ The Jewish views of healing on Sabbath were fairly complex. Certain life-threatening ailments could be treated, but generally speaking all applications to the outside of the body were forbidden.

- **Jesus’ question to them and His act of _____ towards the man were intended to highlight for all the true purpose of the Sabbath.**

Mark 3:3-5—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.

⇒ The refusal of the Pharisees to recognize the good work of God in their midst elicited an emotional response from Jesus that further demonstrated the increasing tensions between the religious leaders and Himself.

- **The response of the Pharisees to this miracle demonstrated the extent of their hardness of _____.**

Mark 3:6—The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Key Point: As Messiah, Jesus had come to exercise His _____ for the good of His people in order that they might experience the promised restoration that the observance of the Sabbath anticipated.

“The Savior had broken their Sabbath-Law, and yet He had not broken it, for neither by remedy, nor touch, nor outward application had He healed him. He had broken the Sabbath-rest, as God breaks it, when He sends, or sustains, or restores life, or does good: all unseen and unheard, without touch or outward application, by the Word of His power, by the presence of His life.”

—Alfred Edersheim, *The Life & Times of Jesus the Messiah*

Concluding Thoughts

1. **Legalism (self-righteousness) is always _____ to God.**

Job 22:2-3—² “Can a man be profitable to God, Though he who is wise may be profitable to himself? ³ Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous? Or is it gain to Him that you make your ways blameless? (NKJV)

2. **Legalism (self-righteousness) is _____ for ourselves and for others.**

Gal. 3:1-2—¹ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. ² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

3. **As those who are recipients of God’s grace, we can be characterized by _____.**

Col. 4:5-6—⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.