

HWMR - Crystallization Study of the Gospel of Mark

Book One, Week 2

Message Two

The Slave of God

Scripture Reading: Mark 10:45;
Phil. 2:5-9; Isa. 42:1-4; 50:4-5, 7; Exo. 21:1-6

- Mark 10:45 For even the **Son of Man** did not come to be served, but to serve and to **give His life** as a ransom for many.
- Philippians 2: 5 **Let this mind be in you**, which was also in Christ Jesus,
Philippians 2: 6 Who, existing in the form of God, **did not consider being equal with God** a treasure to be grasped,
Philippians 2: 7 But **emptied** Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;
Philippians 2: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, He **humbled** Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.
Philippians 2: 9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
- Isaiah 42: 1 Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, **My chosen One** in whom My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon Him, And He will bring forth justice to the nations.
Isaiah 42: 2 He will not cry out, nor lift up His voice, Nor make His voice heard in the street.
Isaiah 42: 3 A bruised reed He will not break; And a dimly burning flax He will not extinguish; He will bring forth justice in truth.
Isaiah 42: 4 He will not faint, nor will He be discouraged, Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait for His instruction.
- Isaiah 50: 4 The Lord Jehovah has given me **The tongue of the instructed**, That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. He **awakens me morning by morning**; He awakens my ear **To hear as an instructed one**.
Isaiah 50: 5 The Lord Jehovah has **opened my ear**; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn back.
- Exodus 21: 1 Now these are the ordinances which you shall set before them.
Exodus 21: 2 If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; but in the seventh **he shall go out free** without payment to you.
Exodus 21: 3 If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him.
Exodus 21: 4 If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.
Exodus 21: 5 **But** if the servant plainly says, **I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free**;
Exodus 21: 6 Then his master shall bring him to God and shall bring him to the door or to the **doorpost**, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and **he shall serve him forever**.

A SLAVE OF GOD

God's Choice and His Delight

Isaiah 42:1 says, "Behold **my servant**, whom I uphold; mine **elect**, in whom my soul delighteth." Jesus Christ, the Slave Of God, was **God's choice** from among billions of human beings. Because He was God's choice, God delighted in Him. Hence, He became the delight of God's heart.

Growing Up before God as a Tender Plant

Isaiah 53:2 and 3 say, "*For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a **dry ground**: he hath **no form nor comeliness**; and when we shall see him, there is **no beauty** that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*" If you read chapter two of the Gospel of Luke, you will see Christ growing up like a tender plant and as a root out of dry ground. The Lord was raised in the home of a poor carpenter in the despised town of Nazareth and in the despised province of Galilee. This was the **fulfillment** of the dry ground in Isaiah.

The Lord had **no form or comeliness, no physical beauty**, that He should be desired. Rather, He was **despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows**, who was acquainted with grief. The Lord's life was a life of sorrows and of grief.

DAY 1

I. The subject of the Gospel of Mark is the Slave of God as the Slave-Savior of sinners—10:45:

- A. Mark's purpose is to provide a detailed record to show the beauty of the Lord Jesus as the **Slave of God in His human virtues**—5:34; 6:34; 8:23; 10:14-16.
- B. In New Testament usage, the word **slave** refers to one who has **sold himself and has lost all human rights**—Rom. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1; Rev. 1:1:
 - 1. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He was a slave who had **no rights**.
 - 2. In His gospel service He was a slave not only to God but also to man—Matt. 20:28; Phil. 2:7; Acts 3:13.
- C. A key to understanding the Gospel of Mark is that in this Gospel we see much more of the **Lord's acts than of His words**—3:10-11; 4:39; cf. Acts 10:36-42.
- D. Mark's record concerning Christ as the Slave of God is a record of the **Lord's excellent deeds**, which displayed both His **lovely humanity** in its virtue and perfection and His deity in its glory and honor—1:14-15, 21-22, 25-26, 30-31, 38-41; 2:10-11; 7:31-37.
- E. Mark 10:45 reveals that, as the Slave of God, He served sinners even with His life, His soul; by giving His life as a ransom for sinners, the Lord Jesus accomplished the eternal purpose of God, whom He **served as a slave**.
- F. As the Slave of God, the Lord Jesus taught His disciples, at the very time they were striving to be first, to take the **position of a slave**—vv. 35-45.

DAY 2

II. In the Gospel of Mark are the details of the teaching regarding Christ as the Slave of God in Philippians 2:5-9:

- A. Although the **Lord was equal with God**, He did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped and retained; rather, He **laid aside the form of God and emptied Himself**, taking the **form of a slave**—vv. 6-7.
- B. In His incarnation the Lord Jesus did not alter His divine nature; He **changed only His outward expression**, from the form of God, the **highest form**, to that of a **slave**, the **lowest form**—v. 7.
- C. Christ's work in **His human living** to **build up the fashion of a man** and **take on the form of a slave** was the foundation and background of His ministry—v. 8a.
- D. The Lord Jesus humbled Himself, "becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross," which was the climax of His **humiliation**—v. 8b.
- E. The Lord **humbled** Himself to the uttermost, but God exalted Him to the highest peak—v. 9.

Paul's Word concerning Christ as a Slave

In Philippians 2:5-11 we have the word of the Apostle Paul concerning Christ as the **Slave Of God**.

Subsisting in the Form of God

In Philippians 2:5 and 6 Paul says, "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who subsisting in the form of God did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.*" Here we see that the Lord not only **existed** with God, but **subsisted** in the form of God. The Greek word rendered "subsisting" denotes existing from the beginning. This implies the Lord's eternal preexistence. To say that Christ existed in the form of God means that He subsisted in the expression of God's being (Heb. 1:3), that He was identified with the essence and nature of God's Person. This refers to Christ's deity.

According to Philippians 2:6, although Christ subsisted in the form of God, **He did not regard equality with God** a thing to be grasped. He was equal with God, but He did not consider this equality a treasure to be grasped and retained. Rather, He was willing to come to earth as a man.

Emptying Himself, Taking the Form of a Slave

In Philippians 2:7 Paul goes on to say, "*But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men.*" The Lord **emptied Himself of His position and glory and of other matters related to His Godhead**. Of course, **He did not empty Himself of His deity**. Having emptied Himself, the Lord came as a man, taking the form of a slave and becoming in the likeness of men.

In Philippians 2:7 we have two important words: **form** and **likeness**. In His incarnation the Lord did not alter His divine nature, but **altered only His outward expression of the form of God to that of a slave**. This was not a change of essence but of state. The form of God implies the **inward reality** of Christ's deity; the likeness of men denotes the **outward appearance** of His humanity. He appeared outwardly to men as a man, but inwardly He had the reality of deity. He took the form of a slave and became a man in the likeness of men.

Humbling Himself, Becoming Obedient unto Death

In Philippians 2:8 Paul says, "*And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.*" The Lord's humbling Himself was a further step in His emptying Himself. Christ's self-humbling manifests His self-emptying. The Lord became obedient even unto death, the death of a cross. The Lord's death on the cross was the climax of His humiliation. To the Jews the death of a cross was a curse (Deut. 21:22-23), and to the Gentiles it was a death sentence imposed upon malefactors and slaves (Matt. 27:16-17, 20-23). Hence, it was a shameful thing (Heb. 12:2). (Life-Study of Mark, Chapter 2, Section 4)

DAY 3

- F. The pattern presented in Philippians 2:5-9 is now the life within us; there is an urgent need among us to experience Christ as such a pattern.
- G. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”—v. 5:
1. This is the mind that was in Christ when He **emptied** Himself, taking the form of a slave, and **humbled** Himself, being found in fashion as a man—vv. 5-8.
 2. To have such a mind requires us to be one with Christ in His inward parts, in His tender inward feeling and in His thinking—1:8.

DAY 4

III. In the Gospel of Mark is the fulfillment of the detailed prophecies in Isaiah concerning Christ as the Slave of Jehovah; by considering these prophecies, we can understand more fully what is recorded in Mark concerning Christ as a slave:

- A. Jesus Christ, the Slave of God, was God’s choice; God delighted in Him—Isa. 42:1.
- B. The Lord’s life was a life of sorrows and grief—53:2-3.
- C. Instead of crying out and making His voice heard in the street, He was **calm and quiet**; He did not strive with others or promote Himself—42:2; Matt. 12:18-21.
- D. Because He was full of mercy, He would not break those who are like a bruised reed, which cannot give a musical sound, or quench the ones who are like burning flax, which cannot give forth a shining light—Isa. 42:3-4.
- E. The Lord Jesus did not speak His own word, but having the **tongue of the instructed**, He spoke according to God’s instructions—50:4-5:
 1. The Lord Jehovah **awakened Him every morning**, **awakening His ear to hear as an instructed one**—v. 4b.
 2. The Lord Jesus was never rebellious; rather, He was always obedient, listening to the word of God—v. 5.
 3. Because the Lord Jesus had the ear and the tongue of an instructed one, He knew how “to sustain the weary with a word”—v. 4a.
- F. The Slave-Savior trusted in God and set His face like a flint; in fulfilling God’s purpose, He was strong—v. 7.

Isaiah 50:4 and 5 speak of the instruction received by Isaiah as the servant of Jehovah—“*The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens me morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one. / The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; / And I was not rebellious, / Nor did I turn back.*” We should not go to speak to others as professors. **We should go to speak as learners, as trainees, as instructed and taught ones.** To speak a word to sustain the weary, we must have the tongue of an instructed one. Sometimes I am a little concerned for myself and for the trainers in the full-time training. We may speak like teachers who know something. This actually means that we know nothing. **We need to speak with the tongue of an instructed one, a learner.** Even though I am teaching, I should teach in humility, considering and confessing that I myself do not know much.

As the instructed ones, **we need to be awakened by the Lord morning by morning.** This is the **real morning revival.** He awakens our ear to hear as an instructed one. When the Lord Jehovah opens our ear and speaks to us, we should not be rebellious or turn back. We should **take His word and obey.** This was Isaiah’s attitude as a learner serving Jehovah. This also typifies Christ. The four Gospels show that the Lord Jesus held such an attitude. (Life-Study of Isaiah, Chapter 45, Section 6)

DAY 5

IV. The servant in Exodus 21:1-6 is a type of Christ as the Slave of God, who sacrificed Himself to serve God and God’s people—Matt. 20:28; Eph. 5:2, 25:

- A. As the Slave of God, the Lord Jesus **stood in the position of doing nothing on His own** but acting only according to the word of the Father—Exo. 21:6; Psa. 40:6; John 5:19, 30, 36; 6:38; 7:16; 8:26; 12:49; 17:4.
- B. **Love is the motive and the prerequisite for a slave’s continual service** (Exo. 21:5); because the Lord Jesus loved the Father (His Master—John 14:31), the church (His wife—Eph. 5:25), and all the believers (His children—Gal. 2:20b; Eph. 5:2), He was willing to serve as a slave.

DAY 6

- C. All who believe in Christ, belong to Him, and have His serving life should take Him as their pattern by **learning to be slaves**, loving God, the church, and God’s people—Mark 10:42-45; Phil. 2:5-8; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 1:1:
 1. A **slave** does not care for his own interests but is always **willing to empty himself, humble himself, lower himself, sacrifice himself, and serve others.**
 2. As a slave of Christ and of God, Paul was willing to empty himself, humble himself, and sacrifice his rank, rights, and privileges—1 Cor. 9:19-23.
 3. Like Paul, we can become such slaves by the serving and sacrificing life of Christ—2 Cor. 12:15; Phil. 2:17.
 4. In carrying out God’s New Testament economy, **we need to have the spirit of a slave, the love of a slave, and the obedience of a slave**—v. 5; Rev. 22:3b.

A SLAVE'S POSITION

Exodus 21:6 speaks of the slave being **brought to the door or to the doorpost**. In ancient times slaves were to stand by the doorpost waiting for the master's orders. Instead of doing anything on their own, they were **to act only according to the word of the master**. Today our position as slaves of Christ should also be at the doorpost. Furthermore, in 21:6 we are told that the master bored his slave's ear through with an awl. This indicates that the slave's ear was opened to listen to the master.

Many Christians are serving God, but they do not stand by the doorpost, and their ear has not been bored through with an awl. They act on their own, not in accord with what they hear from the Master. They do many things according to their own concepts, desires, and intentions.

SLAVES OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH LIFE

As those who believe in Christ, we all must be His slaves. We should say, "*O Lord, I love You. Even if I have the freedom to go out, I do not want to leave. I love You, I love Your church, and I love Your children.*" On the one hand, we may testify of how **enjoyable** and glorious the church life is. On the other hand, in the church life **we all must become slaves**. The New Testament as well as the Old indicates that God's people need the spirit of a slave.

The elders in the churches need to realize that if they are not willing to be slaves, they cannot be proper elders. Every elder must be a slave. This was the reason the Lord Jesus taught His disciples not to seek to be above others, but instead to place themselves lower than others and be their slaves. In the church life there is no rank. We are all brothers, and we all must serve as slaves.

In the past we have given hundreds of messages on life, the Spirit, Christ, and the church. However, if we would apply these messages, we must be slaves. Those who are not willing to have the spirit of a slave cannot enter into all these messages in a practical way. In the past certain ones testified that they loved the church and were willing to consecrate themselves to the church. However, eventually these very ones left the church life, and some even became opposers of the church. Deep within them they had the ambition for position. Because this ambition could not be fulfilled in the church life, they left the church. **Only those who are willing to be slaves can remain permanently in the church life. No matter how I may be treated by the saints, I have no choice but to remain in the church life.** The church is the home of my Father and of all His children. I am simply one of His slaves, loving Him, loving the church, and loving His children. After giving so many messages on life, the Spirit, Christ, and the church, I am glad to give this message on slavery. This word is for us all.

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE

If we have the spirit of a slave and the love of a slave, it will be easy for us to obey. Love is always followed by obedience. This can be illustrated by the relationship between parents and their children. In a very real sense, good parents must sometimes obey their children. Often parents obey their children more quickly than the children obey the parents. The point here is that love produces obedience. Only a slave can obey. A good parent is one who has the love and obedience of a slave. Deep within, a mother who loves her children is willing to be a slave to them and do anything for them. Why do parents sometimes obey their children? They obey out of love. Love is the prerequisite of obedience.

My burden in this message has been to emphasize three matters: **the spirit of a slave**, the **love of a slave**, and the **obedience of a slave**. If we have a slave spirit, a slave love, and a slave obedience, we shall be able to keep the commandments. At first, this word may sound strange. But if you consider it honestly, you will see that it is true in our practical experience. **Only a person with the spirit, love, and obedience of a slave can keep God's ordinances.** In the New Testament economy, as well as in the Old Testament, there is the need of such a spirit, love, and obedience.

Now we can see why God puts the ordinance concerning slaves first and why the slave here is a type of Christ, the true slave. As those who believe in Christ, belong to Him, and have His life of sacrifice, **we also must be slaves loving God, the church, and God's people.** With such a love as our motivation, we need to be slaves sacrificing and serving. (Life-Study of Exodus, Chapter 68, Section 3)