

HWMR - Crystallization Study of the Gospel of Mark

Book One, Week 3

Message Three

The Contents of the Slave-Savior's Gospel Service

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:14-45

1. Proclaiming the Gospel vv.14-20

Mark 1:14 And after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, **proclaiming the gospel** of God,

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has drawn near. **Repent and believe in the gospel.**

Mark 1:16 And passing beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, Simon's brother, casting a net in the sea, for they were fishermen.

Mark 1:17 And Jesus said to them, Come after Me, and I will cause you to become **fishers of men.**

Mark 1:18 And immediately **leaving** the nets, they followed Him.

Mark 1:19 And going on a little, He saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who also were in their boat, mending the nets.

Mark 1:20 And immediately He called them, and **leaving** their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, they went after Him.

2. Teaching the Truth vv.21-22

Mark 1:21 And they went into Capernaum, and immediately, on the Sabbath, He entered into the synagogue and **taught.**

Mark 1:22 And they were **astounded at His teaching**, for He taught them as One having **authority** and not like the scribes.

3. Casting Out Demons vv.23-28

Mark 1:23 And immediately, there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, saying,

Mark 1:24 What have we to do with You, Jesus, Nazarene? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are -- the Holy One of God.

Mark 1:25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be quiet and **come out of him!**

Mark 1:26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and shouting with a cloud voice, came out of him.

Mark 1:27 And they were all amazed, so that they discussed among themselves, saying, What is this? A new teaching! With authority He orders even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.

Mark 1:28 And immediately the report concerning Him went out everywhere into all the surrounding region of Galilee.

4. Healing the Sick vv.29-39

Mark 1:29 And immediately, going out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John.

Mark 1:30 And Simon's mother-in-law was lying down with a fever, and immediately they told Him about her.

Mark 1:31 And He came to her and raised her up, holding her hand, and **the fever left her**, and she **served** them.

Mark 1:32 And when evening fell and the sun had set, they brought to Him all those who were ill and those who were demon possessed.

Mark 1:33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door.

Mark 1:34 And He **healed** many who were ill with various diseases, and He cast out many demons and did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

Mark 1:35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still night, He went out and went away to a deserted place, and there He prayed.

Mark 1:36 And Simon and those with him hunted for Him,

Mark 1:37 And they found Him and said to Him, All are seeking You.

Mark 1:38 And He said to them, Let us go elsewhere into the nearby towns that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I came out.

Mark 1:39 And He went preaching in their synagogues in the whole of Galilee and casting out the demons.

5. Cleansing the Leper vv.40-45

Mark 1:40 And a leper came to Him, entreating Him and falling on his knees and saying to Him, If You are willing, You can cleanse me.

Mark 1:41 And He was moved with compassion, and stretching out His hand, He touched him and said to him, I am willing; **be cleansed!**

Mark 1:42 And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

Mark 1:43 And sternly charging him, immediately He thrust him out,

Mark 1:44 And said to him, See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.

Mark 1:45 But he went out and began to proclaim it much and to spread the matter abroad, so that He could no longer enter openly into a city, but He stayed outside in deserted places. And they came to Him from everywhere.

We all need to be deeply impressed with the five matters comprised in the Slave-Savior's gospel service: **preaching** (vv. 14-15, 38-39) to announce the glad tidings to the miserable people in bondage; **teaching** (vv. 21-22) to enlighten the ignorant ones in darkness with the divine light of the truth; **casting** out demons (vv. 25-26) to nullify Satan's usurpation of man; **healing** man's sick condition (vv. 30-31) that man may serve the Slave-Savior; and **cleansing** the leper (vv. 41-42) to recover sinners to the fellowship with God and with men. What a wonderful and excellent work! (Life-Study of Mark, Chapter 6, Section 3)

DAY 1

I. Christ as the Slave-Savior did not come to be served, but to serve; He served us in the past, He still serves us in the present, and He is going to serve us in the future—Mark 10:45; Luke 22:26-27; 12:37:

- A. The story of the gospel and the meaning of salvation are that **Christ loves and serves us first**, and then we love and serve Him; whenever we have a need, we can come to the Lord and let Him serve us so that He can serve others through us—Matt. 26:13; 1 John 4:19; John 13:12-17; Rom. 1:1; Gal. 6:17; 1 John 3:16.
- B. As the life-giving Spirit, the Slave-Savior serves us **by dispensing Himself as life into us** so that we can become the means by which He dispenses Himself as life into others—John 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 1 John 5:16a; 2 Cor. 3:6.

Let us consider the first passage: "*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*" (Mark 10:45). This verse mentions that the **Son of Man came to serve** everybody. Whoever comes to the Lord, the Lord always serves them. The Lord feeds the hungry; He heals the sick ones. Without regard to the time and place, the Lord always serves us. The **highest service of the Lord** was giving His life as a ransom for many. **He gave His life to serve man**. So many times, we are so eager to serve the Lord that we ignore the fact that our Lord went to the cross and gave His life to serve us. **While we were yet sinners, He served us**.

Let us consider the second passage: "*But you shall not be so; but let the greatest among you become like the youngest, and the one who leads like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am in your midst as the one who serves*" (Luke 22:26-27). The book of Mark concerns Christ serving the sinners. Here it concerns Christ serving His disciples. "I am in your midst as the one who serves." We should remember that **the Lord is among us to serve us**. This is grace!

We still have the third passage: "*Blessed are those slaves whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Truly I tell you that he will gird himself and will have them recline at table, and he will come to them and serve them*" (Luke 12:37). This is too gracious! How can this be possible? However, the Lord said He will **serve us again in the future**. Once we were indebted to the Lord and received His grace freely. We will forever be indebted to the Lord and will forever enjoy His grace.
(Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 1) Vol. 17: Notes on Scriptural Messages (1), Chapter 20, Section 1)

DAY 2

II. We need to see and enter into the reality of the contents of the Slave-Savior's wonderful and excellent gospel service—Mark 1:14-45:

- A. The **first thing** the Slave-Savior did in His gospel service was to **proclaim the gospel**—vv. 14-20:
 1. Christ Himself, with all the processes He passed through and all the redemptive work He accomplished, is the content of the gospel—v. 1.
 2. Christ came not only as the Messenger of God, bringing a word or a message from God to God's people, but also as the message sent by God; **He Himself is the living message of God**—vv. 1-8; Mal. 3:1-3; cf. 4:1-2.
 3. The Slave-Savior's proclaiming was to announce God's glad tidings to the miserable people in bondage; His **teaching** (Mark 1:21-22) was to **enlighten the ignorant ones in darkness with the divine light of the truth**.
 4. His **proclaiming** implied teaching, and His **teaching** implied proclaiming—Matt. 4:23; Mark 1:38-39; 3:14; 6:12; 14:9; 16:15, 20.

DAY 3

- B. The **second thing** the Slave-Savior did in His gospel service was to teach the truth—1:21-22:
 1. The **truth is the shining of the divine light** on the facts of the Bible to televise a heavenly vision of those facts into our being; the **truth** is the shining of the light, the **light** is the light of life, and the **life** is the Spirit; thus, truth, life, and the Spirit (which are all Christ Himself) are inseparable—John 8:12, 32, 36; 1:4; 14:6a; 2 Cor. 3:6, 8, 17; cf. Rom. 8:2
 2. The Lord's teaching of the truth (Mark 2:13; 4:1; 6:2, 6, 30, 34; 10:1; 11:17; 12:35; 14:49) was to **bring people out of the satanic darkness into the divine light** (Acts 26:18); the Slave-Savior, as the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5), came as a great light to Galilee, the land of darkness, to shine on the people who were sitting in the shadow of death (Matt. 4:12-16).
 3. His teaching released the word of light to enlighten those in the darkness of death that they might receive the light of life—John 1:4.

DAY 4

- C. The **third thing** the Slave-Savior did in His gospel service was to **cast out demons** from the possessed people—Mark 1:23-28:
1. The demons' **possession** of people signifies Satan's **usurpation** of man, whom God created for His purpose.
 2. The Lord Jesus came **to destroy the works of Satan** (1 John 3:8), and His casting out of demons (Mark 1:34, 39; 3:15; 6:7, 13; 16:17) was for people **to be delivered from Satan's bondage** (Luke 13:16), out of Satan's authority of darkness (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13), into God's kingdom (Mark 1:15).
- D. The **fourth thing** the Slave-Savior did in His gospel service was to **heal the sick**—vv. 29-39:
1. Sickness issues from sin and is a sign of man's abnormal condition before God; the Lord **healed** people's sick condition and **restored** them to normality that they might serve Him—v. 34; 3:10; 6:5, 13, 56.
 2. We must learn to preach the gospel and teach the truth like a physician, giving people a heavenly prescription and the divine medicine for their healing—Matt. 9:11-13; Luke 10:33-37; cf. Prov. 4:20-23; Exo. 30:25.

DAY 5

- E. The **fifth thing** the Slave-Savior did in His gospel service was to **cleanse the leper**—Mark 1:40-45:
1. **Leprosy** signifies the sin of **rebellion**, the serious sin issuing from within man, such as willful sin, presumptuous sin, and opposing God with determination—1 John 3:4; cf. Isa. 14:12-15; Lev. 13:2; 14:9.
 2. As seen in the cases of Miriam (Num. 12:1-10), Gehazi (2 Kings 5:20-27), and Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:16-21), **leprosy issues from rebellion** against God's authority, God's deputy authority, God's regulation, and God's economy.
 3. In Leviticus 14:33-57 the house typifies the church as our real home, and the **leprosy in the house** signifies sins and evils in the church; the priest signifies the Lord or His deputy authority, and the examining of the house is not for condemnation but is a grace for healing—1 Cor. 1:11:

DAY 6

- a. The removing of the infected stones after seven days (Lev. 14:40) signifies that after the observation of a complete period of time, if the problem of the church is still spreading, the believer or believers involved in the problem should **be removed from the fellowship of the church and be considered unclean**, like the outsiders; this is done to stop the spread of the disease and to eliminate the disease—Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:10.
- b. Putting other stones in the place of the removed stones (Lev. 14:42a) signifies using other believers (1 Pet. 2:5) to fill in the gap; the replastering of the house with other plaster (Lev. 14:42b) signifies the **renewing** of the church with new experiences of the Lord's gracious works; this is **needed for a new start in the church life**.
- c. The breaking down of the house after the infection of leprosy returns (v. 45) signifies that if the situation of a church reaches the point where it cannot be cured, that church should be terminated (cf. Rev. 2:5).
- d. If no sin is spreading after the renewing of the church with the new experiences of the Lord's gracious works, the church is clean and has no problem; the whole church needs to be cleansed with the eternally efficacious blood of Christ and His eternal and living Spirit so that the church is **fully clean to be the mutual dwelling of God and man**—Lev. 14:48-53; Heb. 9:14; 10:22; 1 John 1:9; Titus 3:5; John 14:2, 23.

The House Being Clean

Leviticus 14:53b says, "Thus he shall make propitiation for the house, and it shall be clean." The house being clean signifies that **the church is fully clean to be the mutual dwelling of God and man**.

We need to realize that **the church is the best place on earth**. What, then, shall we do about the problems in the church? **We should pray to be renewed in the experiences of Christ**. We should not pray too much for others or about the situation. Instead, **we should pray for ourselves that we might be able to bring something new of Christ into the church life**. This is the way for a diseased church to be healed. Sometimes a church will be healed through the new experiences of the new ones.

The more we experience Christ in a new way, the more the church will be healed. A **diseased church** cannot be healed by discussion, argument, and debate. The more we engage in these things, the more trouble there will be. **We need to pray for ourselves and for the church that through the new experiences of Christ we as members and the church as a whole may have a new start and enter into a new age**. This is the only way for a diseased church to be healed. (Life-Study of Leviticus, Chapter 44, Section 4)