

## HWMR - Crystallization Study of the Gospel of Mark

Book One, Week 4

Message Four

### The Ways of the Slave-Savior's Gospel Service

Scripture Reading: Mark 2:1—3:6

- Mark 1: 1 And he entered again into Capernaum after *a few* days; and it was heard that he was at home.
- Mark 1: 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even at the door. And he spoke to them the word.
- Mark 1: 3 And they came, bringing to unto Him a paralytic carried by four men.
- Mark 1: 4 And being unable to bring him to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof where he was. And when they had dug through, they lowered the mat on which the paralytic was lying.
- Mark 1: 5 And Jesus seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, Child **your sins are forgiven**.
- Mark 1: 6 But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,
- Mark 1: 7 Why is this *man* speaking this way? He is blaspheming! **Who can forgive sins except One, God?**
- Mark 1: 8 And immediately Jesus, knowing fully in his spirit that they were reasoning this way within themselves, said to them, Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?
- Mark 1: 9 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, Your sins are forgiven, or to say, Rise and take up your mat and walk?
- Mark 1:10 But that you may know that the **Son of Man has authority** to forgive sins on earth - He said to the paralytic,
- Mark 1:11 To you I say, Rise, take up your mat and go to your house.
- Mark 1:12 And he arose and immediately took up the mat, and went out before *them* all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, We have never seen *anything* like this.
- Mark 1:13 And he went out again beside the sea side; And all the crowd came to Him, and He taught them.
- Mark 1:14 And He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and He said to him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him.
- Mark 1:15 And as He reclined at *the table* in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining together with Jesus and His disciples, for there were many, and they were following Him.
- Mark 1:16 And the scribes of the Pharisees, seeing that He **ate with sinners** and tax collectors, said to His disciples, Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?
- Mark 1:17 And when Jesus heard *this*, He said to them, Those who are strong have no need of **a physician**, but those who are ill; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.
- Mark 1:18 And the disciples of John and the Pharisees were fasting. And they came and said to Him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?
- Mark 1:19 And Jesus said to them, The son of the bridechamber cannot fast while the **bridegroom** is with them, can they? For as long a time as they have the bridegroom with them **they cannot fast**.
- Mark 1:20 But days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will fast in that day.
- Mark 1:21 No one sews a patch of **unfulled cloth** on an old garment; otherwise, that which fills it up pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made.
- Mark 1:22 And no one puts **new wine** into old wineskin; otherwise, the wine will burst the wineskin, the wine is ruined as well as the wineskins; but the new wine *is put* into new fresh wineskins.
- Mark 1:23 And He passed through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to go *along*, picking the ears of grain.
- Mark 1:24 And the Pharisees said to Him, Look! Why are they doing on the Sabbath what is not lawful?
- Mark 1:25 And He said to them, Have you never read what David did when he had need, and became hungry, he and those with him;
- Mark 1:26 How he entered into the house of God during time of Abiathar the high priest, and **ate the bread of presence**, which is not lawful *for anyone* to eat except the priests, and gave also to those who were with him?
- Mark 1:27 And He said to them, The Sabbath came into being for man, and not man for the Sabbath.
- Mark 1:28 So then the **Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath**.
- Mark 3: 1 And He entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man who had a **withered hand**.
- Mark 3: 2 And they were watching Him closely *to see* if He would **heal him on the Sabbath**, so that they might accuse Him.
- Mark 3: 3 And he said to the man who had the withered hand, **Rise and stand** in the midst.
- Mark 3: 4 And He said to them, Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill? But they remained silent.
- Mark 3: 5 And looking around at them with anger and greatly grieved with the hardness of their heart, He said to the man, Stretch out your hand. And he stretch *it out*, and his hand was restored.
- Mark 3: 6 And the Pharisees went out and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against Him *as to* how they might destroy Him.

In 1:14-45 we have seen that the **contents of the gospel service** include five matters: **preaching** the gospel (vv. 14-20), **teaching** the truth (vv. 21-22), **casting out** demons (vv. 23-28), **healing** the sick (vv. 29-39), and **cleansing** the leper (vv. 40-45). Following this, in 2:1—3:6 we see the **ways of carrying out the gospel service**. In this section of the Gospel of Mark we have five incidents: **forgiving** the sins of the sick (2:1-12), **feasting** with sinners (2:13-17), causing His followers to **be merry** without fasting (2:18-22), **caring for His followers' hunger** rather than for the regulations of religion (2:23-28), and **caring for the relief** of the suffering one rather than for the ritual of religion (3:1-6). These five cases form a single group. (*Life-Study of Mark, Chapter 7, Section 1*)

## DAY 1

**I. The five incidents recorded in Mark 2:1—3:6 reveal the five merciful and living ways taken by the Slave-Savior to carry out His gospel service:**

- A. As God with divine authority, He forgave the sins of the victim of sickness that He might release him from Satan's oppression (Acts 10:38) and restore him to God; the scribes considered this to be against the theology of their religion—Mark 2:1-12:
1. The Lord Jesus was both the God-Savior and the Slave-Savior, possessing deity and humanity; He had not only the ability to save sinners but also the authority to forgive their sins—Luke 5:21, 24.
  2. Receiving the forgiveness of our sins causes us to fear God (Psa. 130:4) and to love God (Luke 7:36-50); in the Lord's salvation He not only forgives our sins but also causes us to rise and walk, to "go in peace" (v. 50), and to "go, and from now on sin no more" (John 8:11).

## DAY 2

- B. As a Physician to the sick and miserable people, He feasted with the tax collectors, who were disloyal and unfaithful to their race, and with sinners, who were despised and isolated from society, that they might taste the mercy of God and be recovered to the enjoyment of God; this was condemned by the self-righteous yet merciless scribes of the Pharisees—Mark 2:13-17:
1. The self-righteous Pharisees considered themselves strong; hence, blinded by their self-righteousness, they did not know that they were ill and needed Christ as a Physician—Matt. 9:12-13.
  2. The Lord as the Physician takes care of His "patients" by causing them to feast with Him, bringing them into the enjoyment of God; the joy of salvation, the enjoyment of God, is a feast—1 Cor. 5:7-8; Psa. 51:2, 12.

## DAY 3

- C. As a Bridegroom with the sons of the bridechamber, He caused His followers to be merry and happy without fasting; thus, He annulled the practice of the disciples of John (the new religionists) and the Pharisees (the old religionists) so that His followers could be delivered from the practices of their religion into the enjoyment of God's Christ as their Bridegroom, with His righteousness as their outer clothing and His life as their inner wine in God's New Testament economy—Mark 2:18-22:
1. The real meaning of fasting is to stop eating all things other than the Lord Jesus and to not have a taste for anything other than Him—Matt. 6:16-18; Isa. 58:3; John 6:57; cf. Num. 11:4-7.
  2. Christ as the Bridegroom gains us to be His overcoming bride as His duplication by being our Physician to organically heal us in our entire tripartite being by His complete salvation—Rom. 5:10; cf. Mal. 4:2:
    - a. He is our new cloth as our new garment to clothe us and beautify us with Himself as our God-given righteousness through the shedding of His precious blood applied to us for our judicial redemption—Luke 15:22; 1 Cor. 1:30; Matt. 9:16.
    - b. He is our new wine as our new life to fill us and cheer us with Himself as our God-given portion through the dispensing of His priceless life into us for our organic salvation—Judg. 9:13; Matt. 9:17; Col. 1:12.
  3. We are not only the bride of Christ but also "the sons of the bridechamber" (Mark 2:19) to be the corporate "best man" of Christ as the Bridegroom; by enjoying Him as our new garment and new wine, we become His corporate "best man," the Body of Christ as the new man.

## DAY 4

- D. The Lord allowed His followers to pick the ears of grain in the grainfields on the Sabbath so that they could satisfy their hunger; thus, apparently they broke God's commandment concerning the Sabbath, but actually they pleased God because the hunger of Christ's followers was satisfied through Him, as the hunger of David and his followers had been satisfied with the bread of the Presence in the house of God; this indicates that in God's New Testament economy, it is a matter not of keeping the regulation of religion but of enjoying satisfaction in and through Christ as the real Sabbath rest—vv. 23-28:
1. The real meaning of keeping the Sabbath is that we cease from our doing, stop our work, and enjoy what the Lord has done for us by eating Him as the bread of the Presence for our nourishment and supply—Exo. 25:30.
  2. Man was not created for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was ordained for man so that he might enjoy it with God; God first worked and then rested; man first rests and then works—Gen. 2:2-3.
  3. Keeping the Sabbath is a sign that God's people work for God not by their own strength but by enjoying Him and being filled with Him to be one with Him; it is also an eternal covenant assuring God that we will be one with Him by first enjoying Him and then working with Him—Exo. 31:12-17.

## DAY 5

- E. On the Sabbath the Lord healed a man who had a withered hand, caring **not** for the keeping of the Sabbath **but** for the health of His sheep; thus He indicated that in God's New Testament economy it is a matter **not** of keeping regulations **but** of **imparting life**—Mark 3:1-6:
1. This is the case of a person who is partially free but not wholly **free**; like the man with the **withered hand**, we need to be fully liberated.
  2. The Slave-Savior is our **Emancipator**, **setting us free** from religious ritual and from the slavery of sin; **we may be liberated** to a certain extent, but in certain parts of our life we still need to be freed by the Slave-Savior—John 8:32, 36; Rom. 6:12-23; 8:2.

## DAY 6

**II. The above five ways of the Slave-Savior's gospel service can be summarized by five words: forgiveness (Mark 2:1-12), enjoyment (vv. 13-17), joy (vv. 18-22), satisfaction (vv. 23-28), and freedom (3:1-6); we can experience Him as our full salvation in all these aspects by touching Him (5:24-34):**

- A. When we contact the Lord directly, having a **direct touch with Him**, He is **transfused** into us as the power of God to become our **healing**; the genuine way to help people is to bring them into a direct touch with the Lord.
- B. We all have to **contact** the Lord, to **fellowship** with Him, and to **touch** Him moment by moment in our spirit so that He can be **our daily salvation and moment-by-moment supply for the building up of His Body**—John 4:24.

The five incidents recorded vividly in **2:1—3:6** form one particular group, showing how the Slave-Savior **as the Slave of God carried out His gospel service** to care for the need of fallen people, who were captured by Satan from God and the enjoyment of God. The Lord cared for their need so that they might be rescued from their captivity and brought back to the God of enjoyment.

**First**, the Lord **forgave** the sins of the victim of sickness. He did this **as God** with divine authority so that He might **release** the sick one from Satan's oppression (Acts 10:38) and **restore** him to God. The scribes considered this to be against the theology of their religion (2:1-12).

**Second**, as **a physician** to the sick and miserable people, He **feasted** with the tax collectors, those who were disloyal and unfaithful to their race, and with sinners despised and isolated from society, that they might **taste the mercy of God and be recovered to the enjoyment of God**. This was condemned by the self-righteous yet merciless scribes of the Pharisees (2:13-17).

**Third**, He caused His followers **to be merry and happy** without fasting, **as a bridegroom** with the sons of the bridechamber. Thus, He annulled the practice of the disciples of John (the new religionists) and the Pharisees (the old religionists), so that His followers might **be delivered from the practices of their religion into the enjoyment of God's Christ** as their Bridegroom, with His **righteousness** as their outer **clothing** and His **life** as their inner **wine** in God's New Testament economy (2:18-22).

**Fourth**, He allowed His followers to pick the ears of grain in the grainfields on the Sabbath that they might **satisfy their hunger**. Thus, they apparently broke God's commandment concerning the Sabbath. But actually they pleased God, for the hunger of Christ's followers was satisfied through Him, as the hunger of David and his followers was satisfied with the bread of the presence in the temple. This indicates that in **God's New Testament economy it is not a matter of keeping the regulation of religion, but of enjoying satisfaction in and through Christ as the real Sabbath rest** (2:23-28).

**Fifth**, the Lord **healed** a man with a **withered hand** on the Sabbath. He did not care for keeping the Sabbath, but rather **cared for the health** of His sheep. Thus, He indicated that in God's New Testament economy it is not a matter of keeping regulations but of **imparting life**. For this, He was hated by the Pharisees—the religionists (3:1-6).

All the five **merciful and living ways** taken by the Slave-Savior to carry out His gospel service contradicted the formal and traditional religion and were thus abhorred by its fleshly and stubborn leaders, who were spiritually dead.

We need to be deeply impressed with the fact that **chapter one of the Gospel of Mark** is concerned with the gospel. This chapter tells us what the gospel is, when the gospel began, and what the **contents** of the gospel are. In this chapter we see the **nature, substance, essence, element, contents, and reality** of the gospel. I believe that the churches will carry out this rich gospel through their gospel service. (*Life-Study of Mark, Chapter 7, Section 1*)