

HWMR - Crystallization Study of the Gospel of Mark

Book One, Week 5

Message Five

A Life Fully according to and for God's New Testament Economy

(1)

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:1-11, 35; 10:45

- 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 1:35 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 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.

A LANDMARK

If we read 1:1 and 2 carefully, we shall see that **the beginning of the gospel** was the coming of John the Baptist to preach the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. When John came out in an uncultured and unreligious way announcing repentance, that was the beginning of the gospel. As we have seen, the beginning of the gospel involves **the termination of the dispensation of law** and **the germination of the dispensation of grace**. The dispensation of law ended with the coming of John the Baptist, and the dispensation of grace began also with him.

Among theologians there has been a debate about the beginning of the dispensation of grace. Some say that this dispensation began at the day of Pentecost, and others claim that it began with the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Others hold still different opinions. According to the Bible, the beginning of the gospel, which is the beginning of the dispensation of grace, was the coming out of John the Baptist. Hence, the coming of John the Baptist was a **landmark** dividing the dispensation of law and the dispensation of grace. His coming marked the end of the dispensation of law and the beginning of the dispensation of grace. (Life-Study of Mark, Chapter 4, Section 2)

I. In the Gospel of Mark we see a person, the God-man, who lived a life that was fully according to and for God's New Testament economy; the Lord's life was His work, and His work was His move; His work was His living and His move was His being—Mark 1:35; 10:45; cf. John 6:38; 4:34:

- A. The Lord Jesus lived in a **new dispensation**, having the old dispensation terminated; the New Testament dispensation, **the dispensation of grace**, that is, the dispensation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, began from the preaching of John the Baptist—Mark 1:1-8; Matt. 11:13; Luke 16:16; Acts 10:37:
1. Instead of serving with his father Zachariah in the temple, **John** stayed in a wild place, wore wild clothing, ate wild food, and did a wild work; where he lived, what he wore, what he ate, and how he worked ended the Old Testament priesthood; **his work was the beginning of the priesthood in the New Testament**—Mark 1:1-8.
 2. The first New Testament priest of the gospel of God was John the Baptist; he did not offer bulls and goats as sacrifices (Heb. 10:1-4), but he **offered sinners** saved through his preaching as sacrifices, **bringing them to Christ** as the One stronger than he was and as the One baptizing the repentant people in the Holy Spirit for **imparting life** (Mark 1:4-8).
 3. In the New Testament the **saved sinners are spiritual sacrifices** offered to God in Christ, **with Christ**, and **one with Christ** as members of Christ, the enlargement and increase of Christ—Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9.
- B. When the Lord Jesus was about to begin His ministry, He had Himself **buried**, baptized, by John the Baptist—Mark 1:9-11:

1. John came in “*the way of righteousness*” (Matt. 21:32); **to repent and be baptized** according to John’s preaching and practice was ordained by God according to the righteous requirements of God’s eternal economy; hence, it **is to fulfill the righteousness of God** as a matter of eternity (2 Pet. 3:13).
 2. **As a man in the flesh** (John 1:14; Rom. 8:3), the Lord recognized that **He needed to be a dead man buried** in the death water to fulfill God’s New Testament requirement according to His righteousness, and He did it willingly, considering it as **the fulfilling of God’s righteousness** (Matt. 3:15).
 3. By His **baptism** He declared to the whole universe that He did not depend at all upon the flesh for God’s ministry; instead, He **rejected** Himself, **put** Himself **aside**, in order to live by God; this is the intrinsic significance of the base of Jesus’ baptism.
 4. We all should declare in our life and work: “*I am a person in the flesh, worthy of nothing in the eyes of God but death and burial; so I want to have myself terminated, crucified and buried.*”
- C. Immediately after His baptism the Lord Jesus was thrust into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:12-13); from that time onward He fulfilled His ministry by **living, moving, and working** in the Holy Spirit:
1. He **preached** the gospel (vv. 14-20), **taught** the truth (vv. 21-22), **cast out** demons (vv. 23-28), **healed** the sick (vv. 29-39), and **cleansed** the leper (vv. 40-45); the result of such a life, fully according to and for God’s New Testament economy, was for people to **experience** the Lord as their **forgiveness** (2:1-12), **enjoyment** (vv. 13-17), **joy** (vv. 18-22), **satisfaction** (vv. 23-28), and **freedom** (3:1-6).
 2. While the Lord Jesus was carrying out such a gospel service, He was also **binding** Satan and **plundering** his kingdom (vv. 22-30), **denying** any natural relationship (vv. 31-35), **suffering** the world’s rejection and hatred (6:1-6), and **exposing** man’s inward evil condition (7:1-23).
 3. Then He presented Himself **as the bread of life** to be the life supply to His seeking one—vv. 24-30.
 4. He healed the hearing, speaking, and seeing organs of the enlivened ones—vv. 31-37; 8:22-26.
 5. He revealed Himself as our universal and entire **replacement** through His **all-inclusive death and wonderful resurrection**—8:27—9:13.
 6. He accomplished an **all-inclusive death to bear our sins** (1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Cor. 15:3), **condemn sin** (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3), **crucify the old man** (6:6; Gal. 2:20), **terminate the old creation** (Col. 1:15; Exo. 26:31; Matt. 27:51), **destroy Satan** (Heb. 2:14), **judge the world** (John 12:31), **abolish the ordinances** (Eph. 2:15), and **release the divine life** (John 12:24; 19:34).

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE DEATH OF CHRIST		
As the Lamb of God; In the Likeness of the Flesh of Sin (John 1:29)	Bear our sins	1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 15:3
As Brass Serpent; In the Likeness of the Flesh of Sin (Num. 21:9; John 3:14)	Condemned Sin	2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 8:3
As the Last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45)	Crucified the old man	Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20
As the Firstborn of Creation (Colossians 1:15)	Terminate the old creation	Colossians 1:15; Matthew 27.51
As the Son of Man; Partook of blood and Flesh (Hebrews 2:14, 17)	Destroy Satan	Hebrews 2:14
As the Son of Man (John 5:27)	Judge the world	John 12:31
As the Son of Man; In the Likeness of the Flesh of Sin (Hebrews 10:20)	Abolished the ordinances	Ephesians 2:15
As the Grain of Wheat (John 12:24)	Release the divine life	John 12:24; 19:34

7. He then entered into His **wonderful resurrection** to regenerate His followers and **germinate the new creation**—1 Pet. 1:3; 2 Cor. 5:17.
8. After His resurrection the Lord Jesus “*was taken up into heaven and sat at the right hand of God*” (Mark 16:19); He now remains in His **ascension** to execute what He has accomplished through His death and resurrection.
9. By **bringing** His followers into His death, resurrection, and ascension (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:6), He **brought forth the new man** (v. 15) as the **reality** of the kingdom of God, **issuing** in the church, **developing** into the millennium, and **consummating** in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth; this will be our **eternal destiny**, and this is also the **conclusion** of the Scriptures (Rev. 21:9—22:5)

II. The Gospel of Mark conveys a heavenly vision of a life that lives and expresses God as a complete, whole, perfect, and entire pattern of God’s New Testament economy; this governing vision directs our steps, controls our living, and brings us into God’s consummation—Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:19:

- A. The life that the Lord Jesus lived is **now our life**; today we are His **expansion, increase, and continuation**, and we should **continue to live the kind of life He lived**; God has put us into Christ that we may live a life of Christ **to carry out His New Testament economy**—1 Cor. 1:30; Gal. 2:20.
- B. This **life indwelling our spirit** is a law that **automatically lives and expresses Christ to produce the Body**; any other way of living is a factor of division that damages the Body—Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:3-6.

- C. **The life we live today should be Christ Himself; only a life that is Christ is fully according to and for God's New Testament economy**—Col. 3:4; Phil. 1:21a.

THE LORD'S CONTINUATION

The life the Lord Jesus lived is now our life. Today we are His **expansion, increase, and continuation**, and **we should continue to live the kind of life He lived.**

After Christ's ascension, **His disciples continued His life**, a life of preaching, teaching, casting out demons, healing the sick, and cleansing the lepers. This is the significance of 16:20: *"But those went out and preached everywhere, **the Lord working with them** and confirming the word by the accompanying signs."* Here **we have the continuation of the life of the Lord Jesus** recorded in the Gospel of Mark. This life, a life according to and for God's New Testament economy, has not ceased, for it is continued by those who believe in the Lord.

In the past nineteen centuries, many matters have come in to frustrate, damage, and even replace in the lives of Christians the unique life that is according to God's New Testament economy. These hindering matters include culture, religion, ethics, morality, philosophy, the improvement of character, and the effort to be spiritual, scriptural, holy, and victorious.

We need to have a clear view of **the kind of life we should be living.** Are you living a life of culture and religion? A life of ethics, morality, philosophy, and the improvement of character? Are you trying to be spiritual, scriptural, holy, and victorious? All of us have been **distracted** from God's economy by certain of these things. Where can you find Christians today who are not living a life of one or more of these ten items?

GOOD THINGS REPLACING THE TREE OF LIFE

All Christians have been frustrated and damaged by the good that is related to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree that is versus the tree of life is not merely the tree of the knowledge of evil; it is **the tree of the knowledge of both good and evil.** In fact, the word **"good"** is mentioned before evil in Genesis 2:17. This indicates that good things as well as evil things can keep us from enjoying the tree of life. In our experience as Christians, **good things may actually hinder us much more than evil things.** Those who love the Lord may not touch what is evil, but day by day they may allow something good to replace the tree of life in their experience. Are not culture, religion, ethics, morality, philosophy, and the improvement of character good things? Certainly they are. To be sure, trying to be spiritual, scriptural, holy, and victorious is good. Nevertheless, **anything apart from the life-giving Spirit is a frustration to the life that is fully according to and for God's New Testament economy.**

God has put us into Christ not that we may live a life of good things, **but that we may live a life** that is **uniquely, wholly, and absolutely** of Christ. **God has put us into Christ so that we may live a life of Christ to carry out His New Testament economy.**

Although more than nineteen centuries have passed since Christ's ascension, He still has not come back. God's people are not yet ready for the Lord's coming. For centuries those who love the Lord Jesus have been **hindered by different kinds of good things.** These good things have occupied those who love the Lord and seek Him. Christians who love God and seek the Lord do not care for worldly things. Once they have been caught by the Lord to love Him and seek Him, they may be **hindered** by things they think are related to being spiritual, scriptural, holy, and victorious. Some Christians are preoccupied with ethics, morality, and improvement of character; others are distracted from the Lord by their efforts to be spiritual, scriptural, holy, and victorious. How few really care for the living Person of Christ Himself! (Life-Study of Mark, Chapter 61, Section 3)

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT, THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

Today Christ as **the indwelling Spirit indwells our spirit.** First Corinthians 6:17 says, *"He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit."* The very Christ who is made everything to us is **now in our spirit**, and **we are one spirit with Him**, continually enjoying His indwelling. This is made clear by the above-mentioned verses and the last part of 1 Corinthians 15:45: *"The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit."* We can never forget this verse.

We have seen that **the Spirit of God dwells in us.** Now we see that this Spirit is Christ as the life-giving Spirit. Then 1 Corinthians 12:13 shows us something more: *"In one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit."* Now we have the Spirit who dwells in us, the life-giving Spirit, and the Spirit who is **good for drinking.** Do you believe that these are three Spirits? Of course not. We all know that these three are just one Spirit. The Spirit of God is the life-giving Spirit, and the life-giving Spirit is the Spirit for drinking. Eventually, we see that Jesus is just a kind of drink to us. **Day by day we are drinking of Him.**

We all know that baptism is to put people into the water, and drinking is to put the water into people. This is exactly what 1 Corinthians 12:13 says. We have been **baptized in one Spirit**, and now we are all **drinking of that one Spirit.** (The Indwelling Christ in the Canon of the New Testament, Chapter 8, Section 3)