

Mark Chapter Two (Part Two) – Teaching Notes

Introduction: A key idea in Mark is that we should be servants of God, as Jesus was. Today, we hope to discuss Jesus' power of a tax collector, the old religion, and the Sabbath.

Body:

Read Mark 2:13-20

5. Over a Tax Collector. Jesus calls Levi the tax collector and spends time with sinners. The Pharisees ask Jesus' disciples about Jesus' spending time with sinners. Jesus talks about how He came to heal the sick, not the healthy. Jesus also talks about how His disciples can fast after He leaves. While He is present, they should enjoy His presence.

Questions/Applications –

What should believers do, in light of the importance of staying focused on God's assignment for our lives?

- Notice in vss. 16-17 that Jesus spent time with sinners because that was His mission and not arguing with or complying with the religious leaders. First, we should realize that what we do to help people get saved is not what we do to help them grow in the Lord or be religious. *Let's seek the wisdom, compassion, and courage to help the lost accept Christ as savior and start the journey of submitting to His lordship.* Our strong feelings towards worship style, dress code, ineffective and unfocused services, surplus of choir members and deficit of mentors, ministry managers, and Training Union students make me suspicious about are we really ready for this point. Second, we should stay focused on our mission, which may not be understood or appreciated by others. As Jesus focused on the sick, instead of the supposed well, *we must focus on what God is calling us to do and not what tradition, popularity, or anything else is calling us to do.* Southern is not Friendship, Inspirational, or Bethel.

What should believers do, in light of the importance of the helpers having the leader's spirit?

- Notice in vss. 16, 23-24 that when the leader is not challenged then the helpers often are. It is important for the helpers to have the leader's spirit, so that there can be a unified presentation. It is a sign of immaturity for the leader to be saying one thing, the helpers/officers saying something different, and the followers saying something all together different. *Let's work on being in accord with the spirit that God gives the leader (see Num. 11:16-17).*

What should believers do, in light of the mention of fasting in our text?

- Notice in vss. 18-20 the discussion on fasting. There is no commandment to Christians to fast. It seems that fasting is good for helping us feel as if we are doing all we can to get God to do what we think He ought to be doing. Sometimes it may be our way of mourning or showing God that we are serious. However, more important than fasting is living. If fasting helps us live more obedient lives then we should fast. If fasting doesn't help us live more obedient lives then it may not be worth the trouble, especially if you have health challenges that make fasting difficult. *Let's seek wisdom about our fasting.*

Read Mark 2:21-22

6. Over the Old Religion. Jesus talks about how new patches and new wine call for new cloths and new wineskins. Trying to put the new with the old leads to both being ruined. It appears that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was the new, and Judaism was the old.

Questions/Applications –

What should believers do, in light of how the new and old are not compatible in our text?

- Notice in vss. 21-22 that the old and new are not compatible. In this context, the gospel of Jesus being the savior of the world was incompatible with living by the Law to be right with God. First, to be saved, one doesn't need to be reformed (i.e., fixed up), one needs to be transformed (i.e., made all over). That is why we need to be born again. Good works will not work. We need Jesus' payment. Our good works are our way of saying "Thank You," of positioning for blessings, and to stay out of the punishment line. *Let's make sure we have been transformed. Let's help others experience the same.* Second, beyond the context of what we see is the reality that some programmatic efforts cannot be reformed. They have to be transformed. Some of the relationships that we are in need to be transformed, not just reformed. *Let's seek the wisdom and courage to seek transformation in our lives, where God wants transformation to take place.*

Read Mark 2:23-28

7. Over the Sabbath. Jesus' disciples were seen eating some corn in a field on the Sabbath. The Pharisees challenged Jesus on the issue. Jesus shared with them how David did something similar. And He talks about how the Sabbath was made for people, not visa versa.

Questions/Applications –

What should believers do, in light of the importance of being able to defend our position with scripture?

- Notice in vss. 25-26 that Jesus used scripture to defend His point. *We should work on knowing the scriptures so well and living in obedience to the scriptures that we too can use them to defend our point.* Being in church sponsored Bible studies and giving effort to personal study are essential. Needless to say that the church should give serious effort to providing quality Bible studies.

What should believers do, in light of the importance of discerning and going after the greater good?

- Notice in vss. 25-28 that Jesus considered human needs to be a greater good than religious ritual. There will be times in our lives when we will need the wisdom to discern the greater good. The mid wives of Exodus 1:15-21, Rahab of Joshua 2:3-14; 6:25; Hebrews 11:31, and Jesus in our text had to grapple with the greater good. *Let's seek God's wisdom and courage to discern and follow after the greater good in our lives.* It may be divorce over life threatening abuse. It may be reporting friends instead of getting fired as an accessory to thief. It may be letting a young person bear the consequences of his/her mistakes instead of enabling irresponsibility.

Conclusion: Let's work on being servants of God. God has much for those who obey His will.