



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Prayer

Lord, I want to get Your Word so deep into my heart that it becomes MY word. I want to see things the way You see them, hear things the way You hear them, and feel things the way You feel them. I want to get so aligned with You that our hearts beat in syncopation together. I thank You that once Your Word gets that deeply rooted in my heart, my spoken words will release rivers of power and authority against the works of the devil that he has designed for my destruction. I thank You that just as Your words created the universe, my spoken words of faith create a change in my atmosphere. Lead me and guide me Your will for me and plans, in Jesus' name.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

"The Cross"

Billy Graham

" The Cure "

Pastor Chuck Smith

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Mark 1:1-45 (AMP)

1 THE BEGINNING [of the facts] of the good news (the Gospel) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 Just as it is written in the prophet Isaiah: Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will make ready Your way— 3 A voice of one crying in the wilderness [shouting in the desert], Prepare the way of the Lord, make His beaten tracks straight (level and passable)! 4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness (desert), preaching a baptism [obligating] repentance (a change of one's mind for the better, heartily amending one's ways, with abhorrence of his past sins) in order to obtain forgiveness of and release from sins. 5 And there kept going out to him [continuously] all the country of Judea and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, as they were confessing their sins. 6 And John wore clothing woven of camel's hair and had a leather girdle around his loins and ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, After me comes He Who is stronger (more powerful and more valiant) than I, the strap of Whose sandals I am not worthy or fit to stoop down and unloose. 8 I have baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. 9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 And when He came up out of the water, at once he [John] saw the heavens torn open and the [Holy] Spirit like a dove coming down [to enter] into Him. 11 And there came a voice out from within heaven, You are My Beloved Son; in You I am well pleased. 12 Immediately the [Holy] Spirit [from within] drove Him out into the wilderness (desert), 13 And He stayed in the wilderness (desert) forty days, being tempted [all the while] by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered to Him [continually]. 14 Now after John was arrested and put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the good news (the Gospel) of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The [appointed period of] time is fulfilled (completed), and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent (have a change of mind which issues in regret for past sins and in change of conduct for the better) and believe (trust in, rely on, and adhere to) the good news (the Gospel). 16 And passing along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon [Peter] and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net [to and fro] in the sea, for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, Come after Me and be My disciples, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18 And at once they left their nets and [yielding up all claim to them] followed [with] Him [joining Him as disciples and siding with His party]. 19 He went on a little farther and saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were in [their] boat putting their nets in order. 20 And immediately He called out to them, and [abandoning all mutual claims] they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and went off after Him [to be His disciples, side with His party, and follow Him]. 21 And they entered into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 And they were completely astonished at His teaching, for He was teaching as One Who possessed authority, and not as the scribes. 23 Just at that time there was in their synagogue a man [who was in the power] of an unclean spirit; and now [immediately] he raised a deep and terrible cry from the depths of his throat, saying, 24 What have You to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God! 25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hush up (be muzzled, gagged), and come out of him! 26 And the unclean spirit, throwing the man into convulsions and screeching with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 And they were all so amazed and almost terrified that they kept questioning and demanding one of another, saying, What is this? What new (fresh) teaching! With authority He gives orders even to the unclean spirits and they obey Him! 28 And immediately rumors concerning Him spread [everywhere] throughout all the region surrounding Galilee. 29 And at once He left the synagogue and went into the house of Simon [Peter] and Andrew, accompanied by James and John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law had for some time been lying sick with a fever, and at once they told Him about her. 31 And He went up to her and took her by the hand and raised her up; and the fever left her, and she began to wait on them. 32 Now when it was evening, after the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those under the power of demons, 33 Until the whole town was gathered together about the door. 34 And He cured many who were afflicted with various diseases; and He drove out many demons, but would not allow the demons to talk because they knew Him [intuitively]. 35 And in the morning, long before daylight, He got up and went out to a deserted place, and there He prayed. 36 And Simon [Peter] and those who were with him followed Him [pursuing Him eagerly and hunting Him out], 37 And they found Him and said to Him, Everybody is looking for You. 38 And He said to them, Let us be going on into the neighboring country towns, that I may preach there also; for that is why I came out. 39 [So] He went throughout the whole of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. 40 And a leper came to Him, begging Him on his knees and saying to Him, If You are willing, You are able to make me clean. 41 And being moved with pity and sympathy, Jesus reached out His hand and touched him, and said to him, I am willing; be made clean! 42 And at once the leprosy [completely] left him and he was made clean [by being healed]. 43 And Jesus charged him sternly (sharply and threateningly, and with earnest admonition) and [acting with deep feeling thrust him forth and] sent him away at once, 44 And said to him, See that you tell nothing [of this] to anyone; but begone, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your purification what Moses commanded, as a proof (an evidence and witness) to the people [that you are really healed]. 45 But he went out and began to talk so freely about it and blaze abroad the news [spreading it everywhere] that [Jesus] could no longer openly go into a town but was outside in [lonely] desert places. But the people kept on coming to Him from all sides and every quarter.

Mark; Jesus the Wonderful

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:34-37

• For a general introduction to all four Gospels, see *The Four Gospels* . • For an overview of the life of Jesus, see *The Life of Jesus: An Overview* . Mark's Emphasis: The Superhuman Power of Jesus

The special emphasis of Mark is the superhuman power of Jesus, demonstrating His deity by His miracles. Mark narrates the things Jesus did rather than the things Jesus said . That is why he omits most of Jesus' discourses. It appears that Mark wrote his Gospel for non-Jews.

Mark

From the beginning, and by unbroken tradition, this Gospel has been regarded as the work of Mark. John Mark was the son of a woman named Mary, whose home in Jerusalem was a meeting place for the disciples of Jesus (Acts 12:12). Since he was a cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10), he may have been a Levite (Acts 4:36). It has been thought that he was the young man who fled naked on the night of Jesus' arrest (Mark 14:51–52). Mark's mother must have been quite an influential leader in the Jerusalem church. It was to her home that Peter went after the angel released him from prison (Acts 12:12).

Around a.d. 44, Mark went with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 12:25) and started with them on their first missionary journey, but he soon left them and went back (Acts 13:13).

Later, around a.d. 50, Mark wanted to go with Paul on his second missionary journey, but Paul refused to take him. This caused the separation of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36–39). Mark then went with Barnabas to Cyprus.

Some 12 years later, about a.d. 62, Mark appears in Rome with Paul (Colossians 4:10 ; Philemon 24), and four or five years after that, Paul is asking for Mark to come to him (2 Timothy 4:11). Thus it seems that Mark in his later years became one of Paul's close co-workers

Mark and Peter

Mark may have been a convert of Peter (1 Peter 5:13), and early Christian tradition states that Mark was for most of his "career" a companion of Peter. He was with Peter in Babylon (Rome? See "From Where?" in 1 Peter) when Peter wrote his first epistle (1 Peter 5:13). Mark's Gospel is believed to contain essentially the story of Jesus as told by Peter. It is thought to have been written in Rome between a.d. 60 and 70 and before the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70. Papias (a.d. 70–155) was a student of the apostle John and wrote in his Explanation of the Lord's Discourses that he had established the following after careful inquiry: Mark became the interpreter of Peter and wrote down accurately all that he remembered of the words and deeds of Christ. Peter would adapt his instruction to the need of the occasion, but he did not present a connected, chronological account of the Lord's acts and sayings. Thus Mark made no mistake when he wrote down some things as he remembered them. For he had one goal: to omit nothing that he had heard and to make no false statements.

Mark 1–1:13; Mark 1:1–8. Preaching of John the Baptist

This is told in all four Gospels (see note under Luke 3:1–20). Mark starts his book with a quotation from the Old Testament. He skips the story of Jesus' birth and launches at once into the crowded memoirs of Jesus' public life.

Mark 1:9–11. Jesus Is Baptized (See on Matthew 3:13–17 .)

Mark 1:12–13. Jesus' Temptation (See on Matthew 4:1–10 .)

The Galilean Ministry, Mark 1:14 to 10:1 Galilean ministry occupies about one-half of Mark.

Mark 1:14–15. Jesus Begins Galilean Ministry

Mark skips about a year between vv. 13 and 14 , that is, between Jesus' temptation and the beginning of His Galilean ministry. Some of the events of that year are described in John 1:19–4:54 :

- The first disciples, after Jesus' baptism by John
- Water turned to wine at Cana
- Cleansing of the temple
- Conversation with Nicodemus
- Preaching in the lower Jordan region for about eight months
- Conversation with the Samaritan woman
- Healing of the son of the royal official from Cana
- Rejection at Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30)

Jesus had been preaching in the lower Jordan region (John 3:22–24 ; 4:1–3). But growing hostility of Pharisees (John 4:1–3) and Herod's imprisonment of John (Matthew 4:12) made it look dangerous. Having work to do before His death, He thought best to get farther away from Jerusalem. Mark 1:16–20. The Call of Simon, Andrew, James, John. (Told also in Matthew 4:18–22 ; Luke 5:1–11 .) Two of these men had been disciples of John the Baptist and had come to faith in Jesus a year before, after John baptized Jesus (John 1:35–42). They are now called to become Jesus' disciples and travel companions. (See further under Matthew 10 and Mark 3:13–19 .)

Mark 1:21–28. The Healing of a Demon-Possessed Man

(Told also in Luke 4:31–37 .) This is Jesus' first recorded miracle in Capernaum after making the town His headquarters. Shortly before, He had healed, while in Cana, the son of a royal official in Capernaum, 15 miles distant (John 4:46–54). (For note on demons, see under Mark 5:1–20 .)

In this account we see that the evil spirit had the ability to possess the body of a man with the intent of tormenting and destroying him. The demon spoke through the man, recognizing Jesus' divinity and calling Him "Holy One." Jesus commanded the demon to be quiet and to come out of the man. The evil spirit, knowing Jesus' authority over Satan and all demonic spirits, immediately obeyed Jesus' commandment and left the man's body. Jesus would not let the demons speak of His deity. He wanted to demonstrate to the people through His teaching and actions that He was the long-awaited Messiah before declaring Himself the Son of God.

Capernaum: Synagogue and House of Peter

The site of Capernaum, the "home base" of Jesus during His earthly ministry (Matthew 4: 13; Mark 2: 1), is located on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. He performed many miracles there (Matthew 8: 5–13; Mark 2: 1–13; John 4: 46–54). Three of the disciples were from Capernaum, and Peter and Andrew had evidently moved there from Bethsaida (Mark 1: 29). Fishing was probably the major trade, although it is possible that basalt implements (such as olive presses and grain grinders) were produced there as well. The village sat astride the international trade route that ran from the Mediterranean Sea to Transjordan and Damascus, and it seems that a customs station was located there because of its proximity to the Jordan River and Philip the Tetrarch's territory (Matthew 9: 9; Mark 2: 14).

In spite of Jesus' remarkable works and teachings, the people did not repent, and He predicted that Capernaum would "go down to the depths" in judgment (Matthew 11: 23–24; Luke 10: 15).

Synagogue: The large, beautiful white limestone synagogue has been known for years and probably dates to the 4th century a. d. In recent years the Franciscan fathers who have excavated below this synagogue have found the black basalt, three-foot-high foundation walls of an even earlier synagogue—probably dating back to the 1st century a. d. This indeed may have been the very synagogue built by the centurion (Luke 7) and the one in which Jesus preached.

House of Peter: In their excavations of a residential area in the village of Capernaum, the Franciscan fathers have found a very special 1st-century building, in which there was a room that was venerated. On the plastered walls of this room were graffiti mentioning the "Lord Jesus Christ," "Christ," and crosses. Evidently Judeo-Christians of the 1st century a. d. venerated this room as the home of Peter, the disciple of Jesus, the place where Jesus must have stayed on many occasions. In the 4th century a church was built over the house, and in the 5th century an octagonal church was built in such a way that the "room" was at the center of the church.

Mark 1:29–31. Peter's Mother-in-Law Healed

(Told also in Matthew 8:14–15 ; Luke 4:38–39 .) This means that Peter was married. Jesus' first miracle was indirectly a blessing on marriage: He healed the mother-in-law of His leading apostle.

Mark 1:32–34. Jesus Heals Many

(Told also in Matthew 8:16–17 ; Luke 4:40–41 .) This was after sunset, because sunset marked the end of the Sabbath. The news about the demon-possessed man and Peter's mother-in-law had spread all over the city, and great crowds, with their sick, gathered around the house. And Jesus healed them. It was His miracles that attracted the crowds. The light of divine compassion for suffering humanity had begun to shine. It was a great day in Capernaum.

Mark 1:35–37. Praying in Solitude

(Told also in Luke 4:42–43 .) It had been a busy day. Jesus had healed many people, perhaps several hundred. He was now in the full swing of His public work. He often slipped away from the crowds, seeking solitude to keep in touch with God. If the Son of God needed solitude and time alone with God, away from the demands of daily life, how much more do we need to break away from the incessant noise and demands of our society to talk with and listen to God! (See note on Jesus' prayer life under Luke 11:1–13 .)

Mark 1:38–39. Travel Throughout Galilee

Jesus made many trips, always returning to Capernaum (Matthew 4:23–25 ; 9:35–38 ; Luke 4:44). Galilee was crossed by famous international highways on which merchants traveled between Egypt and the Euphrates. One of these highways passed through Capernaum. Later the Romans would pave some of the most important international highways that ran through Palestine, but in Jesus' day all roads were still unpaved and dusty in the summer and in places muddy in the rainy season.

Mark 1:40–45. A Leper Cleansed

(Told also in Matthew 8:2–4 ; Luke 5:12–16 .) The Greek word translated "leprosy" can refer to a number of diseases that affect the skin, including leprosy. Jesus told the leper to show himself to the priest to be officially declared healed, because that was a

to draft Jesus to make Him king get out of control. The point of the miracles was to show God's compassion, not to gain political power. Jesus looked for faith, not fame.

Mark 2:1–12. A Paralytic Healed

(Told also in Matthew 9:2–8 and Luke

Mark 2:1–12. A Paralytic Healed

(Told also in Matthew 9:2–8 and Luke 5:18–26 .) The paralyzed man was lying on a bed carried by four friends. Their faith in Jesus' power to heal and their determination to get to Him pleased Jesus. Notice that Jesus first met the paralyzed man's spiritual needs, "Son, your sins are forgiven," and then his physical needs by healing him with the words, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

Jesus' fame had spread so widely that Pharisees and teachers of the Law from Jerusalem and from all over the land (Luke 5:17) had come to investigate. Before their critical, hostile eyes, Jesus boldly asserted His deity by offering to forgive the man's sins—and He worked the miracle, as Jesus Himself said, to prove His deity. It had an amazing effect on the people, but it only further irritated the Pharisees and teachers of the Law, the religious custodians of the nation.

Mark 2:13–17. The Call of Levi (Matthew)

Jesus had recently chosen four fishermen to be His associates in the establishment of His kingdom. Now He adds a tax collector. (For a note on Matthew, see introduction Matthew .)

Mark 2:18–22. A Question About Fasting

(Told also in Matthew 9:14–17 ; Luke 5:33–38 .) The question probably came up because of Jesus' participation in Matthew's feast, which greatly surprised John's disciples, the Pharisees, and probably even some of Jesus' own disciples. Feasting was so different from

the way John the Baptist had lived. There may be times of crisis when fasting is a proper expression of humility and penitence and religious devotion. Also, there was special significance in it in the case of John the Baptist (see under Luke 3:1–20). But the religionists of Jesus' day greatly overdid it. Jesus did not attach a great deal of importance to fasting as generally practiced (Matthew 6:16–18), although Moses, Elijah, and Jesus Himself each fasted for 40 days (Exodus 34:28 ; 1 Kings 19:8 ; Matthew 4:1–2).

But this was in a period of great strain. The three metaphors—the bridegroom, the torn garment, the old wineskins (wine containers made from goat skins)—seem to mean that there are occasions, usually involving sorrow, when fasting is proper, but that it is out of place in most aspects of ordinary life.

In the metaphor of the bridegroom surrounded by guests, Jesus clearly identifies Himself as the bridegroom and His disciples as wedding guests. This analogy refers to Jewish wedding customs, which are always joyous celebrations. The guests at a wedding would never consider fasting during the wedding celebration. This account is one of many in which Jesus foretells to His disciples that there will be a future time when He will be taken away from them, and on that occasion they will be fasting in sorrow.

The second metaphor refers to a new, unshrunk patch being sewn onto an old garment. The likely result will be that the new patch will tear away from the old garment, making the original tear more significant after the garment is washed and the new patch shrinks. Jesus may be suggesting the need for the apostles, representing the new patch, to break away from the old Jewish religious practices, which had become religious traditions and more of an advertisement of one's holiness than true worship of God (Matthew 6:16–18).

The final metaphor, of the new wine poured into new wineskins, refers to the Word of God being taught to new believers. The new believer must become a new creation in Christ and leave the beliefs of the world behind in order to allow for spiritual growth (see note on Matthew 9:17). If new wine is poured into old wineskins, the skins will crack and break as the wine matures and expands.

Mark 2:23–27. Eating Grain

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Mark 2:23–27. Eating Grain on the Sabbath; (Told also in Matthew 12:1–8 ; Luke 6:1–5 .) The Old Testament had strict laws about Sabbath observance, but Jewish tradition had added so many restrictions to avoid breaking the Law that the Sabbath almost became a burden rather than a day of spiritual, mental,

and physical rest—the people had to work at avoiding work on the Sabbath. Jesus' assertion that He was Lord of the Sabbath was equivalent to a claim of deity.

Mark 3:1–6. A Healing on the Sabbath

(Told also in Matthew 12:9–14 ; Luke 6:6–11 .) The healing on the Sabbath of the man who had a shriveled hand so irritated the Pharisees and the Herodians (influential Jewish members of the political party that supported King Herod, with whom the Pharisees would normally have nothing to do) that they laid plans to kill Jesus. To these professional religionists, a common deed of kindness on the Sabbath was a terrible crime, let alone this very uncommon deed. There are seven recorded healings by Jesus on the Sabbath (see under John 5).

Mark 3:7–12. Multitudes and Miracles

The crowds that came to Jesus were motivated by two things: to have their sick healed and freed from demons, and the popular expectation that He was the Messiah.

Mark 3:13–19. The Twelve Chosen

(See The 12 Disciples .)

Mark 3:20–30. The Unpardonable Sin

(See on Matthew 12:24–37 .)

Mark 3:31–35. Jesus' Mother and Brothers

(See on Matthew 12:46–50 .)

Mark 4:1–20. The Parable of the Sower

(See on Matthew 13:1–23 .)

Mark 4:21–25. A Lamp on a Stand

(See Matthew 5:14–16 .)

Mark 4:26–29. The Parable of the Growing Seed

It was generally expected that the messianic kingdom would be inaugurated in a display of glory and power that would shake the world. This parable means that it would, instead, be unspectacular: a very small beginning, and slow, long growth, moving quietly, imperceptibly, but irresistibly on to the day of harvest. (See Joel 3:13 ; Revelation 14:14–20 .) It also signifies that the Gospel has a power of its own. Only Mark records this parable.

Mark 4:30–34. The Mustard Seed (See on Matthew 13:31–32 .)

Mark 4:35–41. The Storm Stilled

(Told also in Matthew 8:23–27 ; Luke 8:22–25 .) In this account, Jesus clearly establishes His authority over all creation. The disciples were frightened in the tossing boat, but Jesus was calmly sleeping. How we would love to know the inner processes and powers by which His word stilled the raging waters! What a rebuke to the disciples: Why are you afraid? Where is your faith?)

Mark 5:1–20. The Demon-Possessed Man in the Region of the Gerasenes

(Told also in Matthew 8:28–34 ; Luke 8:26–37 .) The Decapolis was not an area frequently visited by Jesus, for He had said that His mission was primarily to the "lost sheep of Israel" (Matthew 15:24), but on one occasion He healed a demon-possessed man, who, after having been healed, went into the Decapolis to tell of all that Jesus had done for him (Mark 5:20). This event is recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, but Mark and Luke seem to mention only the most prominent of the two men who were healed (Mark 5:2 ; Luke 8:27 ; cf. Matthew 8:28).

How Many Were Healed and Where?

Aside from the problem of the number of men healed, the various Greek manuscripts offer different readings as to the place where the healing (s) occurred: "the region of the Gerasenes or Gadarenes or Gergesenes]" (Matthew 8: 28; cf. Mark 5: 1; Luke 8: 26). The identification of the site of the healing with the Decapolis city Gerasa (modern Jerash) is problematic, for Jerash is situated 35 miles (56 km.) south of the Sea of Galilee. Unless that city owned some territory on the southeastern shore of the sea—a supposition that has not been proved—then the city is too far south for it to be the correct site. The placement of the event near the Decapolis city of Gadara (modern Umm Qeis) is more plausible, since it is only six miles (10 km.) southeast of the sea and would be more likely to have owned lakeshore territory than Gerasa; however, this is not certain either.

Since the 5th century, Christian tradition has placed the event at Gergesa (modern Kursi), which is on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee directly opposite Taricheae and Tiberias. There a monastery was founded to commemorate the healing, and it is easy to imagine a herd of swine (an indication that this was gentile territory) hurtling down the nearby hills into the sea. (See map on p. 536.)

The demon called himself "Legion"

The demon called himself "Legion" (a legion was a Roman army unit of 6000 men). There were thus many demons in the two men, probably most of them in the more violent one. There were 2000 swine, and probably at least that many demons. They recognized the authority of Jesus immediately.

Notice that the demons would rather live in swine than be sent into eternal punishment, "into the Abyss" (Luke 8:31). But they soon went there anyway; they could control the men, but not the swine. They did not drive the swine into the sea. Neither the swine nor the demons wanted to go into the sea. The swine got panic-stricken with the demons inside and lost control of themselves on the precipitous hillside. Once on the move, they could not stop.

Notice, too, that the local population wanted Jesus to get out of their country. He had healed their insane neighbors but had, in the process, destroyed their swine. They thought more of their property than they did of their people. Their tribe is still around today!

Jesus had commanded the leper to say nothing about his cure (Matthew 8:4), but He told this man to go out and tell people about his (5:19). The reason for the difference was that in the region east of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was not as yet widely known, whereas in Galilee His publicity was already out of hand with a grassroots movement under way to proclaim Him a political king.

Mark 5:21–43. Jairus' Daughter Raised (See on Luke 8:40–56 .)

Mark 6:1–6. A Visit to Nazareth

(Told also in Matthew 13:54–58 .) This seems to have been Jesus' second visit to Nazareth after He began His public ministry, about a year after the visit recorded in Luke 4:16–30 . Note that Jesus had four brothers as well as sisters (more than one). They did not at that time believe in Him (John 7:5). They did afterward, and according to common opinion, two of them, James and Jude, were authors of the two New Testament letters that bear their names. The other two brothers were Joseph and Simon.

Mark 6:7–13. The Twelve Sent Out (See on Matthew 10 .)

Mark 6:14–29. John Beheaded (See on Luke 3:1–20 .)

Mark 6:30–44. The 5000 Fed (See on John 6:1–14 .)

Mark 6:45–52. Jesus Walks on the Water

(See on John 6:15–21 .) From the Feeding of the 5000 to the Transfiguration, Mark 6:53 to 8:26

(See also Matthew 14:34–16:12 .) This was a period in Jesus' life of probably about eight months, from April to November, of which we have only slight knowledge. It is told only by Matthew and Mark. Luke goes directly from the feeding of the 5000 to the Transfiguration (Luke 9:17–18). John goes immediately from the feeding of the 5000 to Jesus' visit to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, six months later (John 6:71 ; 7:1). Part of these eight months was spent in the region of Tyre and Sidon (west and northwest of Galilee), Caesarea-Philippi (north of Galilee), and the Decapolis (lit., "Ten Cities," southeast of Galilee), areas with largely gentile populations. Herod was ruler over Galilee. He had recently murdered John the Baptist and was beginning to eye Jesus with suspicion, especially since some of the people had turned against Jesus after the feeding of the 5000, when Jesus in Capernaum had explained His mission in terms that many were not able to understand: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35).

Mark 6:53–56. Crowds in Gennesaret

(Told also in Matthew 14:34–36 .) Gennesaret was the plain

Mark 6:53–56. Crowds in Gennesaret; (Told also in Matthew 14:34–36 .) Gennesaret was the plain along the shore southwest of Capernaum. It appears that the day after Jesus fed the 5000, He explained to the crowd in Capernaum the nature of His mission. Many of His followers did not like what He said and left Him (John 6:66). Then He went southward to Gennesaret, where great crowds gathered, and He healed many.

Mark 7:1–23. Clean and Unclean ; (Told also in Matthew 15:1–20 .) The rulers in Jerusalem had already determined to kill Jesus (John 5:18). No doubt they had heard of His waning popularity in Galilee (John 6:66). They now sent this delegation of Pharisees to push their propaganda campaign, hoping to make Him more unpopular with His own disciples, for it is likely that many of them held to the same traditions as the Pharisees.

The washing of hands that is referred to here was not for sanitary purposes, but purely a religious ritual. It was not prescribed in the Law, but was an invention of the teachers of the Law. Jesus told them that such rituals were of no value, that real "uncleanness" is of the heart, and then He roundly denounced them for making the Word of God null and void by some of their traditions that were of strictly human origin.

His words apply directly to many of the practices that through the centuries have crept into the Christian church. It is amazing with what ingenuity many church leaders strive to find a basis in God's Word for practices that are known to be of purely human origin. We can use the Word of God to rationalize that which is in some cases in direct opposition to the Word of God.

Mark 7:24–30. The Syrophenician Woman

(Told also in Matthew 15:21–28 .) In Matthew she is called a Canaanite woman. This was about 50 miles north of Capernaum, outside of Jewish territory in a gentile region—the same area where Elijah had been sent to the woman of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:9). Also in Matthew, we see that “children” represent the Jews. Jesus was making the point that the Gospel was to be first given to the Jews: “First let the children eat all they want.” The gentile woman understood Jesus' comment but persisted in faith with the reply, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.”

Jesus was moved by her persistence, humility, and faith and granted her request. When she returned home, she found that Jesus had freed her daughter from the demon that had possessed her.

Mark 7:31–37. Healing of a Deaf and Mute Man

Jesus returned from the region of Tyre and Sidon, where He had gone to get out of the public eye for a while, eastward and southward to the east side of the Sea of Galilee. He was now back in the region where a few weeks before they had tried to make Him king. So He cautioned the man He healed to keep quiet, to avoid publicity.

Mark 8:1–9. Feeding of the 4000

(Told also in Matthew 15:29–39 .) This probably was near where Jesus had fed the 5000 a few weeks before. Matthew adds that it was at a time when He was healing many. The people in Galilee must have heard that Jesus had returned to their borders.

Mark 8:10–21. Leaven of the Pharisees

(Told also in Matthew 16:1–12 .) This incident took place in Dalmanutha (Mark 8:10). Matthew 15:39 says it was Magadan (or Magdala, kjv), the home of Mary Magdalene, which was a city in a region called Dalmanutha, on the northern portion of the western shore of the Sea of Galilee

No sooner had Jesus arrived back in Galilee than His enemies were on hand, resorting to every conceivable scheme to discredit Him in the eyes of the people. They wanted a sign. For two years He had been healing, almost without interruption, large numbers of people suffering from every kind of disease. And He had fed the 5000 and the 4000. Still they wanted a sign. Jesus was also troubled by the slowness of the disciples to understand the significance of His miracles, so He reprimanded them for worrying about food while they were with Him (Mark 8:7–12).

Mark 8:22–26. A Blind Man Healed

This was at Bethsaida, on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus had done many miracles (Matthew 11:21) and near which He had fed the 5000. Hence His caution to the man to avoid any unnecessary publicity.

Mark 8:27–30. Peter's Confession (See on Matthew 16:13–20 .) Mark 8:31–33. The Passion (Jesus' Death) Foretold (See on Mark 9:30–32 .) Mark 8:34–9:1. The Cost of Discipleship (See on Luke 14:25–35 .)

Mark 9:2–13. Jesus Is Transfigured

(Told also in Matthew 17:1–13 ; Luke 9:28–36 .) This is thought to have taken place at Mount Hermon, shortly before Jesus' final departure from Galilee, about four months before His death. One of the purposes of the Transfiguration was to strengthen the faith of the disciples in the divine nature of Christ before they experienced the shock of the difficult days ahead. Peter never forgot it. It gave him a sense of certainty as he was facing his own martyrdom (2 Peter 1:14–18). Also, it was a sort of grand, climactic testimony direct from heaven that Jesus was the One in whom all Old Testament prophecies converged and found their fulfillment.

Mark 16:1–8. The Women Visit the Tomb

(Told also in Matthew 28:1–8 .) Peter, after his denial of the Lord, no doubt felt that he had been disowned and needed this special message (Mark 16:7). How gracious of Jesus to send it to him! Later in the day Jesus Himself appeared to Peter (Luke 24:34). What took place at that meeting we can only imagine: hot tears, burning shame, loving forgiveness. It sealed a devotion that never again was broken, even in Peter's martyrdom. (See further on John 21:15–19 .)

The women ran to tell the disciples. Peter and John ran to the tomb (John 20:3–10 .)

(For a summary of the events on the resurrection morning, see Jesus' Resurrection .)

The Last 12 Verses of Mark (16: 9–20) The last 12 verses of Mark (often called “the long ending”) are not in the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts (see p. 1078), but were accepted early in the history of the church as a genuine part of Mark's Gospel. It is thought likely that the last page of the original copy was lost and added later. It does not seem that verse 8 could have been a proper ending for the book.

Mark 16:9–11. Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

(Recorded also in John 20:11–18.) He also appeared to the other women (Matthew 28:9–10) and to the two disciples from Emmaus (Mark 16:12–13; see on Luke 24:13–32).

Mark 16:14–18. Jesus Appears to the Eleven

(Told also in Luke 24:33–43 ; John 20:19–25 ; see notes on these passages, Luke 24:33–43 ; John 20:19–25 .) The final commission to go into all the world (Mark 16:15–16) seems to have been given at this appearance. It may, however, have been a summary of final instructions that Jesus repeated over and over during His 40 days of ministry after the resurrection.

The power to work miracles (vv. 17–18) was a divine attestation of the apostles' mission in founding the church. (See on Acts 3 .)

Forty days elapsed between Mark 16:18 and 16:19 , during which Jesus appeared to His disciples and others (see Jesus' Resurrection for a summary of Jesus' appearances after His resurrection).

Mark 16:19–20. Jesus' Ascension (See on Luke 24:44–53 .)

(Told also in Matthew 17:14–19 ; Luke 9:37–42 .) It was a bad case of demon possession that baffled the disciples. (See on Mark 5:1–20 .)

Mark 9:30–32. The Passion Again Foretold

Up to this time Jesus had not talked much about His coming crucifixion. But from here on He wanted them to understand plainly what was going to happen to Him. Between Peter's confession and their arrival in Jerusalem, He told them at least five (recorded) times that He would be killed and would rise from the dead:

1. After Peter's confession (Matthew 16:21 ; Mark 8:31 ; Luke 9:22)
2. After the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:9 , 12 ; Mark 9:9 , 12)
3. After the healing of the epileptic (Luke 9:44)
4. While passing through Galilee (Matthew 17:22–23 ; Mark 9:31)
5. Near Jerusalem (Matthew 20:17–19 ; Mark 10:32–34 ; Luke 18:31–34)

Mark 9:33–37. Who Is the Greatest? (See on Luke 9:46–48 .)

Mark 9:38–40. The Unknown Miracle Worker. (See on Luke 9:49–50 .)

Mark 9:41–50. Causing to Sin

A supreme Christian motive is that we conduct ourselves in such a way that no one else may be lost on account of our example. Jesus said this a number of times, in different connections (Matthew 18:7–14 ; Luke 17:1–10).

The Perean Ministry, Mark 10:1–52 Mark 10:1. The Departure from Galilee (See on Luke 9:51 .)

Mark 10:2–12. A Question About Divorce (See on Matthew 19:3–12 .); Mark 10:13–16. Little Children (See on Luke 18:15–17 .)

Mark 10:17–31. The Rich Young Ruler (See on Luke 18:18–30 .) ; Mark 10:32–34. The Passion Again Foretold (See on Mark 9:30–32 .) Mark 10:35–45. The Request of James and John (See on Matthew 20:20–28 .) Mark 10:46–52. Blind Bartimaeus (See on Luke 18:35–43 .) Jesus' Last Week, Mark 11 to 16 Mark 11:1–11. The Triumphal Entry (See on Matthew 21:1–11 .) Mark 11:15–18. The Clearing of the Temple Area (See on Matthew 21:12–17 .) Mark 11:12–14; 19–25. The Fig Tree (See on Matthew 21:18–22 .) Mark 11:27–33. By What Authority? (See on Matthew 21:23–27 .) Mark 12:1–12. The Parable of the Vineyard (See on Matthew 21:33–46 .) Mark 12:13–17. Paying Taxes to Caesar (Recorded also in Matthew 22:15–22 ; Luke 20:20–26 .) This was an effort to trap Jesus into making a statement of some kind that could be used as evidence of disloyalty to the Roman government and thus give His opponents an excuse to hand Jesus over to Pilate. Jesus, with a master stroke, proclaimed the separation of church and state. Christians must be obedient to their government; but the government has no right to dictate the religion of its subjects. Mark 12:18–27. Question About the Resurrection (Recorded also in Matthew 22:23–33 ; Luke 20:27–40 .) The Sadducees were the materialists of that day. They were not numerous, but were educated, wealthy, and influential. They did not believe in the resurrection. The question with which they tried to baffle Jesus involved a case that would require polygamy in heaven. Jesus settled the matter instantly and simply: there will be no marrying in heaven. Mark 12:28–34. The Great Commandment (Recorded also in Matthew 22:34–40 .) What Jesus gave as the first great commandment is found in Deuteronomy 6:4–5 ; the second, in Leviticus 19:18 . Note that Jesus put God first, our neighbor second. The one most important thing in life is our attitude toward God. Everything depends on that. Jesus is God incarnate, and the one thing He wants is that we love Him more than we love even our own life. Later, after the resurrection, the one last thing that Jesus wanted to know of Peter—He asked Him three times over—was, "o you love me?" (John 21:15–17). Mark 12:35–37.

The Son of David (Recorded also in Matthew 22:41–46 ; Luke 20:41–44 .) The point of the question is, How could a man call his own son "Lord"? Simple as the answer seems to us, it silenced Jesus' opponents (Matthew 22:46).

Mark 12:38–40. Teachers of the Law Denounced (See on Matthew 23 .)

Mark 12:41–44. The Widow's Gift (Told also in Luke 21:1–4 .) This was just after Jesus' denunciation of the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees. It was His last act in the temple after a day of controversy. He took time to pay this glowing tribute to the widow who gave little (two mites, small copper coins that were worth almost nothing)—but it was the gift of all she had, which made it a gift of incomparable value to God. Then Jesus left the temple, never again to enter.

Mark 13. Discourse on the Second Coming (See on Matthew 24 .)

Mark 14:1–2. The Plot to Kill Jesus (Told also in Matthew 26:1–5 ; Luke 22:1–2 .) This was on Tuesday evening. About a month before this, after Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, the Sanhedrin had definitely decided that Jesus must be put to death (John 11:53). But Jesus' popularity made it difficult (Luke 22:2). Even in Jerusalem the crowds surrounded Him (Mark 12:37 ; Luke 19:48). Their opportunity came two nights after this, through the treachery of Judas, who delivered Jesus to them in the night, while the city was asleep. They hurried to get Him condemned before daybreak, and before nine o'clock that morning (the "third hour"), they had Him on the cross.

Mark 14:3–9. The Anointing at Bethany

(Told also in Matthew 26:6–13 ; John 12:1–8 .) This seems to have occurred on the Saturday evening before the Triumphal Entry (John 12:2 , 12). But Matthew and Mark tell it in connection with the plot of the priests, as providing a motivation for Judas's betrayal. (See further under John 12:1–8 .)

Mark 14:10–11. The Bargain of Judas

(Told also in Matthew 26:14–16 ; Luke 22:3–6 .) Judas's part was to deliver Jesus to the leaders when there were no crowds around. They did not dare arrest Him openly, lest they be stoned by the people. Judas led them to Jesus after the city had gone to sleep.

Jesus knew from the beginning that Judas would betray Him. Why Judas was chosen is one of the mysteries of God's ways. Judas may have thought that Jesus would use His miraculous power to deliver Himself. Yet in God's eyes, His deed was evil, for Jesus said it would have been better for him if he had never been born (Matthew 26:24). The whole performance was amazingly prophesied (Zechariah 11:12–13 ; "Jeremiah" in Matthew 27:9–10 is either a copyist's error or may have been used because the whole group of prophetic books was sometimes called by Jeremiah's name.) (Told also in Matthew 17:14–19 ; Luke 9:37–42 .) It was a bad case of demon possession that baffled the disciples. (See on Mark 5:1–20 .) **Mark 9:30–32. The Passion Again Foretold**

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The Site of the Crucifixion

According to the Gospel accounts, Jesus was led outside the city and crucified at a place called “the Skull” (Matthew 27: 33; Mark 15: 22; Luke 23: 33; John 19: 17; “Calvary” is derived from the Latin, “Golgotha” from the Hebrew word for skull). He was buried in a nearby tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea.

In Jerusalem today there are two localities that lay claim to being the place of these events. The first of these is Gordon's Calvary, to the north of the present-day Damascus Gate, with the nearby Garden Tomb. Although this site lies outside the ancient as well as the present-day city walls and is quite amenable to certain types of piety, there is no compelling reason to think that this is either Calvary or the tomb. In fact, the Garden Tomb may date back to the Iron Age (1000–586 b.c.) and thus could not have been a tomb “in which no one had yet been laid” (Luke 23: 53).

More compelling, although not certain, is the suggestion that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre marks the spot of these dramatic events. It is probable that this site was outside the walled city of Jesus'day and was in fact a burial ground. Very ancient Christian traditions, dating back to at least the days of Eusebius (4th century a.d), suggest that the church marks the more probable of the two sites. (Halley's Bible Handbook; Henry Halley; 2000; Zonderson, Bible History and commentaries; pages 621-643)

Let's turn to Mark's gospel.

Mark was a young man when Jesus was crucified, perhaps about twelve years old. So, the gospel that he writes is considered to be the understanding that he received from listening to Peter relate the stories of Jesus Christ. Peter does call Mark his son; that would be son in the faith. And Mark was a companion of Peter through much of Peter's ministry, and thus, heard Peter relate these stories of Jesus Christ. And so in his gospel, you have pretty much Peter's account as written by Mark of Jesus.

There is only one part of Mark's gospel that he probably wrote from personal experience. It's a little insertion in the gospel of Mark that you do not find in the other gospels, and it is concerning the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. And Mark's gospel tells us that there was a young boy there about twelve years old. And one of the soldiers grabbed him, but he wriggled out of his coat and left his coat in the soldier's hand and ran home. And that is believed to be Mark's personal account of his own experience as a little twelve-year-old boy. He happened to be there in the garden with Jesus and his disciples that night that Jesus was betrayed.

Mark's mother's name was Mary. She was a wealthy woman. She lived in Jerusalem and her home was a gathering place for the church. When Peter was imprisoned by Herod, the church had met in her home for that prayer meeting. And so when Peter was released by the action of the angel and came to the house and knocked on the door, and the young maiden came and saw it was Peter, and was so excited she didn't even open the door, but ran back in and told the people, "Peter's here." And they said, "Ah, you've seen a ghost." That was the home of Mark. His mother's name was Mary, a wealthy woman who lived in Jerusalem. Her home was the gathering place for the early church.

Her brother's name was Barnabas, and he was the companion of Paul on the first missionary journey. Mark also went with them on that first missionary journey, but Mark left them. And we don't know why he left. There is speculation that Mark was afraid to go on into the more hostile areas of Asia, but that is only speculation. We do not know why Mark left Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. But Paul evidently was offended by his leaving, so that when Barnabas and Paul were getting ready to leave on their second missionary journey and Barnabas wanted to take his nephew Mark along, Paul objected strenuously because of the fact that he had left the first time. And from this, the contention between Paul and Barnabas became so great that Barnabas took Mark and went off himself to the island of Cypress. And Paul took Silas and headed on out to Asia. However, this breach between Paul and Mark did not last long, for Paul makes mention of Mark being in Rome with him and ministering to his needs.

It was probably while Mark was in Rome with Paul that he wrote this gospel. It is one of the earliest gospels written, and thought to be written some time before the year sixty-three. It is thought to be written by Mark for the Romans, as he was there with Paul in Rome. Inasmuch as whenever he deals with any of the Jewish customs, he takes the time to explain it, which would not be necessary if he were writing to the Jews. But it is thought that he wrote this gospel for the Romans. Mark is brief in his style. He doesn't go into a lot of details, but he just briefly relates the stories and he covers, therefore, a lot of territory.

Later, as Paul was writing, he asked them to send Mark to him with some of his things, because he said Mark had been such a comfort and a help to him. So, here we have the gospel according to Mark.

So, he briefly tells us of the ministry of John the Baptist, and he quotes the prophecies from the Old Testament that relate to the ministry of John the Baptist.

And then he tells us,

And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in Jordan. And straightway [immediately] coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him. And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Mar 1:9-11).

Here again we see the three persons of the godhead as Jesus is coming up out of the water, the Spirit of God is descending upon Him and the voice of the Father declaring, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

And now, he takes us from the baptism.

And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him (Mar 1:12-13).

Now, Mark does not give us any of the details of the temptation of Jesus. He leaves that for the other gospel writers, Matthew and Luke.

Now after that John (Mar 1:14)

Do you see the brevity? He doesn't go into details, where the other gospels give us a little bit more detail about that temptation of Jesus in the wilderness.

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God [notice the gospel of the kingdom, the good news of God's kingdom], and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel (Mar 1:14-15).

Believe the good news.

Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway [immediately] they forsook their nets, and followed him. And when he had gone a little further thence [from there], he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway [immediately] he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him (Mar 1:16-20).

Now as we read Mark's gospel, because he doesn't give us any background, it would appear that Jesus just walking along the shore of Galilee suddenly saw Peter and his brother Simon and said, "Come and follow me. I'll make you fishers of men," and they just left their nets and followed Him. Well, that is what happened, but this isn't the first time that they had met Jesus. This is when Jesus called them to discipleship, but they had met Jesus earlier. In fact, in the gospel of John, he tells us of their earlier meeting of Jesus. Andrew had met Jesus. And he came to Peter his brother and told him, "Hey, we have found the Messiah." And he brought his brother Peter to Jesus. And they knew Jesus; they had met Jesus. They had observed the miracles that He had done. But now, Jesus is calling them to a full commitment of discipleship. Knowing Jesus, immediately upon His call to them, they left their fishing, their nets to follow Jesus.

Notice James and John with their father Zebedee. Jesus later sort of nicknamed them the "sons of thunder." But they had hired servants. They left their father with the hired servants. So they evidently came from a well-to-do background. And so,

And they came into Capernaum [which, of course, is where Peter was living there in Capernaum]; and straightway [immediately] on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes (Mar 1:21-22).

Now, when the scribes would teach the people, express an opinion as their own, they would say, "Now, Rabbi Hallel says of this that it means this or that or the other." And they were always quoting other rabbis. They would never just say flat out, "Now this is what the Lord is saying to us." They never would speak with authority. They would always in their teaching just quote the other ideas, the other thoughts, the other rabbis and what they thought this might have meant. Thus, when Jesus came, He spoke with authority. We remember in the Sermon on the Mount He said, "You've heard that it hath been said by those of old time, 'Thou shalt not kill,' but I say unto you," and He spoke with authority. And they marveled at this kind of teaching. They weren't use to this kind of teaching. They weren't used to someone speaking with authority concerning the word of God. And so, they were astonished at his teaching because it wasn't as they were used to hearing, but He spoke to them and He taught them with real authority. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God (Mar 1:23-24). James in his epistle said, "You say you believe in God, so what? That doesn't make you a Christian. That doesn't make you saved. For the devils believe and they fear and tremble before Him." So, just believing in God really doesn't bring you salvation, which many people are mistaken in that. They say, "Well, I'm not an atheist; I believe in God." But that isn't salvation. That's just proving you're not a fool. For it is the fool that has said in his heart, "There is no God." So you say you believe in God, then I believe you're not a fool. But it doesn't mean you're saved. Salvation comes by believing into a vital relationship with Jesus Christ, a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. "But whosoever believeth into Him," into this vital life-changing relationship with Him, "shall not perish but have everlasting life."

Now, this demon crying out said, "I know Thee, whom Thou art. You're the Holy One of God. What are you doing? You're coming to destroy us?" He recognized the power of Jesus. He acclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God, but he wasn't saved. It is possible for you to recognize the power of Jesus and acclaim that Jesus was the Son of God, and still not be saved. Salvation is a life-changing experience as you believe into this relationship with Jesus Christ.

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him (Mar 1:25).

In the Bible, we have three beginnings. John's gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God." Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." But Mark's gospel is:

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mar 1:1);

So, Mark does not tell us about the birth of Jesus. He leaves that for Matthew and for Luke. But Mark begins his story at the baptism of John. But this is the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and so he is not going to tell us anything about the early years of Jesus, about his birth. But he starts right in with the ministry of Jesus Christ. So, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ." And, being with Paul in Rome, probably he was thinking of Paul's declaration to the Romans in his epistle to them prior to his going there, where Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation." We'll find John referring much to the gospel. He is quoting Jesus as making reference to the gospel in many places. Mark sets out--it's John Mark actually, Mark was his surname--he sets out Jesus as the servant. Matthew sets out Jesus as the King, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Mark emphasizes the servanthood of Jesus Christ. And so in Matthew, Jesus is the Lion; Mark, He is the servant; Luke, He is the Son of Man; and in John, He is the Son of God. These are the various aspects and the phases of Jesus' life that we see in the gospels.

As it is written in the prophets (Mar 1:2),

And he begins, first of all, with a quotation from Malachi, and then he jumps to Isaiah and quotes from Isaiah. As it is written in the prophets:

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee (Mar 1:2).

That's a quotation from Malachi. It is a quotation concerning John, the forerunner of Jesus Christ. Now, quoting from Isaiah,

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all of the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with Holy Ghost (Mar 1:3-8).

Speaking with authority to the demon.

And when the unclean spirit [demon] had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him (Mar 1:26). Mark makes mention of many cases of exorcism by Jesus, demonstrating the power that Jesus had over these unclean spirits or demons. We'll talk about that further when we get to the fifth chapter, in the man of Gadara.

And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee (Mar 1:27-28). So suddenly around the area of Galilee there's a buzz about Jesus of Nazareth, the things that He is doing, the things that He is saying. And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John (Mar 1:29). So, Simon and Andrew had a home there in Capernaum.

But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her. And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. [That is, she fixed them dinner.] And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils [demons] (Mar 1:30-32).

Not devils, plural, because there's only one devil. And the word translated in Greek is demons.

And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers [different types of] diseases, and cast out many devils [demons]; and suffered not the devils to speak [he did not allow the demons to speak], because they knew Him (Mar 1:33-34). A busy day. The beginning of the ministry of Jesus. He started out in the morning with this man with an unclean spirit as Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, and this man with an unclean spirit crying out and being cured. All day long they began to bring people to Him to be healed, on into the evening hours. How late we don't know. "All the city was gathered together there at the door of Simon's house." You'd say, "Ah, what a tough day. We better sleep in tomorrow." You'd been spiritually expended. And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed (Mar 1:35). It's interesting that Jesus' concept of being renewed in strength and refreshed was not sleeping in, but getting out early before anyone else was up and communing with the Father. And He drew His strength from prayer. I do not know of any greater evidence of the necessity of our praying than the fact that Jesus prayed. Being the Son of God He resorted to prayer for strength, for guidance, for life itself. And if He, being the Son of God, saw the necessity of prayer, how much more do we need prayer? If He saw the need of getting up early to pray, how much more should we realize our need of prayer? How important prayer is to the spiritual life of the believer.

And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for Thee (Mar 1:36-37). So later on when they got up, Jesus was gone. But already there was a crowd of people around the door waiting. And when Simon and the others found Him, they said, "Hey, everybody is looking for You." And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth [this is why I came]. And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils [or demons] (Mar 1:38-39). And again, Mark makes note of the fact that He was casting out demons. Notice this is the fourth time that Mark makes a special emphasis upon this fact. And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and said unto him, I will [or, I am willing]; be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And he straitly [sternly] charged him, and forthwith sent him away; And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without [had to stay out] in desert places: and they came to Him from every quarter (Mar 1:40-45).

Now, Jesus was trying to have, perhaps, a little more freedom of movement. But when the news was going out the leper was cleansed and all of the healings that were being done, it got so bad that He could not come into the cities any more because of the throngs. In fact, we find Him spending a lot of His time in a little boat off shore so that they couldn't press around Him so much. The crowds so often get unruly, pushing, shoving. And so, He would push out a little ways from shore in the boat, and there He would speak to them from the boat as they would stand on the shore. And His purpose in telling this man not to tell anybody is to give Him a little more freedom of movement, but the fellow didn't obey and went everywhere telling everybody what had happened to him. It's hard to keep a secret when God has worked in your life.

Now, it's interesting, Jesus didn't say, "Now look, I want to teach you how to witness, friend. Take this little booklet, the Four Spiritual Laws, and you go out and you take this religious survey and you ask all these questions, which opens the door. And then you say, 'Well, do you know the four spiritual laws?'" You see, when God has done a marvelous work in your life, witnessing is the most natural thing in the world. How can you help but just share what God has done in your life? It's just something that becomes so much a part of your life. That witnessing is a very natural thing, not a programmed thing, but a very natural thing. You couldn't shut these people up. He didn't have to have a Tuesday night witnessing night where we go out and canvas the neighborhood. God was working in the lives of the people. They were being affected and touched by that work of God and they naturally sought to share what God had done for them. The interesting thing about this leper is, number one; his statement to Jesus, "If you are willing." Is the Lord willing to heal us? Jesus looked upon him with compassion and said, "I'm willing." The second thing is that Jesus touched him. Now, it was unlawful to touch a leper. If you touched a leper, you yourself were considered unclean for a period of time. However, Jesus touched him. But that really wasn't unlawful, because the moment He touched him, he was cleansed.

So he was no longer a leper. Immediately, he was cleansed. Jesus said, "Now go and show yourself to the priest, and offer those things which the law prescribed...go through the little ritual." So, it is interesting to me that God, in the law, made provisions for a man who had an incurable disease, which ostracized him from society. God made provisions for that man with an incurable disease to be returned to society when he was healed of an incurable disease. But how can you be healed of an incurable disease? God made provision for Himself to work as He so desired. So this is the law for the leper in the day of his cleansing. And God, under the law, gave that law for the leper in the day of his cleansing. He come and showed himself unto the priest; he examines him and then he puts him in a house apart. And after seven days, he examines him again to see if there be any new blotches of spots for whatever.

And if he is clean after the seven days, then he is to bring in this dove and they are to kill it...two doves, actually. They are to kill the one, put the blood in the basin and all, and they're to take the live dove and dip it in this bloody water and then turn it free. And it flies away with the wings flapping of the blood and all of the dove that was killed as a sacrifice for his cleansing. And he was then cleansed and could return to society. Interesting though, to me, that God would make provision for Him to work. Oh, let's always give allowance for God to work. Let's not try to put God in a box. So, leprosy is incurable. Well, give God the opportunity to work if He so desires. God left Himself room to work. And if God leaves Himself room to work, surely we ought to leave room for God to work. This is the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. That, to me, is just absolutely remarkable. I love that particular portion of the Levitical law where God made provision for Him to do a miracle. "If I want to work and heal a leper, all right, this is the law for the leper in the day of his cleansing." It is interesting in that leprosy is always used in the scripture as a type of sin, because it was such a horrible, loathsome disease that slowly ate away. First of all, it actually doesn't eat away, except that it destroys the nerve endings. And so, people became deformed as the result of the leprosy because they lost feeling. First it began in the extremities of their bodies, usually in their fingers or on their feet. And the first thing that leprosy does is numb your senses. It kills the nerves so you don't feel anything. And because they can't feel anything, pain or whatever, destroyed. It's incurable, except by a divine work of God. And so Jesus said, "I'm willing; be thou clean, go. Show yourself to the priest." they've lost their sense of feeling. The lepers quite often have their feet gnawed away by rats, and they don't feel it. While they are sleeping at night, the rats will just eat their feet and they don't feel it because of the leprosy having destroyed the nerves. Or they will put their hand down on a hot plate or so, and they will burn their hands and get the gangrene and all as a result of the burns. They can't feel it.

And so the damage is done actually because they don't have feeling. They say, "Oh, his finger dropped off." No, a leper's finger doesn't drop off, but because they have lost the feeling in their hands, in their fingers, many times they are burned or destroyed in other ways because of this loss of feeling. Sin has a way of just anesthetizing a person. A loss of feeling, and slowly you're destroyed. It's incurable, except by a divine work of God. And so Jesus said, "I'm willing; be thou clean, go. Show yourself to the priest."

Mark 2:1-28 (AMP)

1 AND JESUS having returned to Capernaum, after some days it was rumored about that He was in the house [probably Peter's]. 2 And so many people gathered together there that there was no longer room [for them], not even around the door; and He was discussing the Word. 3 Then they came, bringing a paralytic to Him, who had been picked up and was being carried by four men. 4 And when they could not get him to a place in front of Jesus because of the throng, they dug through the roof above Him; and when they had scooped out an opening, they let down the [thickly padded] quilt or mat upon which the paralyzed man lay. 5 And when Jesus saw their faith [their confidence in God through Him], He said to the paralyzed man, Son, your sins are forgiven [you] and put away [that is, the penalty is remitted, the sense of guilt removed, and you are made upright and in right standing with God]. 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, holding a dialogue with themselves as they questioned in their hearts, 7 Why does this Man talk like this? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins [remove guilt, remit the penalty, and bestow righteousness instead] except God alone? 8 And at once Jesus, becoming fully aware in His spirit that they thus debated within themselves, said to them, Why do you argue (debate, reason) about all this in your hearts? 9 Which is easier: to say to the paralyzed man, Your sins are forgiven and put away, or to say, Rise, take up your sleeping pad or mat, and start walking about [and keep on walking]? 10 But that you may know positively and beyond a doubt that the Son of Man has right and authority and power on earth to forgive sins—He said to the paralyzed man, 11 I say to you, arise, pick up and carry your sleeping pad or mat, and be going on home. 12 And he arose at once and picked up the sleeping pad or mat and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and recognized and praised and thanked God, saying, We have never seen anything like this before! 13 [Jesus] went out again along the seashore; and all the multitude kept gathering about Him, and He kept teaching them. 14 And as He was passing by, He saw Levi (Matthew) son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and He said to him, Follow Me! [Be joined to Me as a disciple, side with My party!] And he arose and joined Him as His disciple and sided with His party and accompanied Him. 15 And as Jesus, together with His disciples, sat at table in his [Levi's] house, many tax collectors and persons [definitely stained] with sin were dining with Him, for there were many who walked the same road (followed) with Him. 16 And the scribes [belonging to the party] of the Pharisees, when they saw that He was eating with [those definitely known to be especially wicked] sinners and tax collectors, said to His disciples, Why does He eat and drink with tax collectors and [notorious] sinners? 17 And when Jesus heard it, He said to them, Those who are strong and well have no need of a physician, but those who are weak and sick; I came not to call the righteous ones to repentance, but sinners (the erring ones and all those not free from sin). 18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were observing a fast; and [some people] came and asked Jesus, Why are John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fasting, but Your disciples are not doing so? 19 Jesus answered them, Can the wedding guests fast (abstain from food and drink) while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and they will fast in that day. 21 No one sews a patch of unshrunk (new) goods on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and the rent (tear) becomes bigger and worse [than it was before]. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the bottles destroyed; but new wine is to be put in new (fresh) wineskins. 23 One Sabbath He was going along beside the fields of standing grain, and as they made their way, His disciples began to pick off the grains. 24 And the Pharisees said to Him, Look! Why are they doing what is not permitted or lawful on the Sabbath? 25 And He said to them, Have you never [even] read what David did when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were accompanying him?— 26 How he went into the house of God when Abiathar was the high priest, and ate the sacred loaves set forth [before God], which it is not permitted or lawful for any but the priests to eat, and [how he] also gave [them] to those who were with him? 27 And Jesus said to them, The Sabbath was made on account and for the sake of man, not man for the Sabbath; 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Now,

And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house (Mar 2:1).

So, word went around Jesus is in the house over there.

And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them (Mar 2:2).

I like that. "He preached the word unto them." What else is there to preach? Well, all you have to do is listen to television and the radio, and you'll find there's a lot of things being preached. Experience often preached, wild experiences. But, oh, how important that we just preach the word.

And they come unto him, bringing one [who was] sick of the palsy, which was borne of four [he was being carried by four men]. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press [because of the crowd of people], they [climbed up on the roof and] uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay (Mar 2:3-4).

So, Jesus was sitting there in the house. The place was packed outside. You couldn't even get near the door because of the multitude of people. And here came four fellows carrying a friend who was sick with the palsy. And they were desperate to see Jesus. Not being able to get near the house, they probably went around back, climbed up on the roof, hoisted the guy up and began to tear off the tiles, or whatever it was. And as Jesus is sitting there talking, suddenly here comes this guy on a pallet down in front of Him.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee (Mar 2:5).

Now, I imagine at this point these four friends were very disappointed. "Lord, we didn't bring him to get saved. We brought him to get healed." But Jesus is taking care of the most important thing first. What is really the most important thing? A person's salvation, or a person's healing? And in reality, we realize that the most important thing for any man is his salvation. Better to go into heaven maimed than whole into hell. Salvation is by far the greatest need that any of us have. The greatest miracle that God can work in any of our lives is that miracle of freeing us from the power of sin and transforming us into the kingdom of light. God's great miracle. And so Jesus was doing first things first. But also, I'm certain that He was seeking to make a statement to the people, which the Pharisees immediately caught. For when Jesus said to this man, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee,"

But there were certain of the scribes [that were] sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts (Mar 2:6),

Immediately it flashed on them. This man is speaking blasphemously, for no one can forgive sins but God

Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? (Mar 2:7).

They are absolutely correct in the second statement, wrong in the first. Jesus wasn't speaking blasphemy, because Jesus was God. They were correct in the second statement; no one can forgive sins but God.

You remember David in the fifty-first Psalm, as he had been faced by the prophet Nathan with his sin against Bathsheba, cried out, "Have mercy upon me, oh God. According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. For against Thee and Thee only have I sinned and done this great wickedness." Only God can forgive a man's sins. And so, they were correct in that assessment; only God can forgive sins. But they were incorrect in the first assessment that He's speaking blasphemously. But in reality, He was just showing that He was God.

Just as we dealt the other morning with the rich young ruler who came to Jesus and said, "Good Master, what must I do to have age-abiding life?" And Jesus said, "Why do you call Me good? There's only one good and that is God." Jesus wasn't saying, "I'm not good." He was saying, "You've recognized a truth. You've recognized a truth about Me. You've recognized that I am God. Why did you call Me good? Because you recognized that I am God." He's trying to help the young fellow to really realize what he had subconsciously come to realize, bring it out into the conscious. "Why did you call me good? There's only one good; that is God. You called Me good because I am God." Now, here again is an assertion. He knew, Jesus knew, that only God could forgive sins. And He was acting in His divine nature as He said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." And Jesus knew that this would rise up in the minds of the Pharisees. And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned [these things] within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick [man] of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say to him, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? (Mar 2:8-9) Now, what's easier to say? Well, they're probably both easier, as far as just to say, you know, you can say whatever you want. But to prove that what you said was true, it would be difficult to prove that when you say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," that they are really forgiven. There is no visible, outward sign that we can discern that a fellow's sins have been forgiven him. To say, "Take up thy bed and walk," that's putting it on the line. That is difficult to say, because you can prove pretty quick whether or not there's any power in the words that you spoke. If you say, "Take up your bed and walk," and the guy still lies there, then you're exposed in a hurry as a fraud. But if you say, "Take up your bed and walk," and the guy takes up his bed and begins to walk, then it's quite obvious that he has great power. So, Jesus said,

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, [again, showing who He is] (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house [go home]. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion [anything like this before] (Mar 2:10-12). It's glorious. Now, "they were all amazed and they glorified God." Jesus had said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Let your light so shine before men, that when they see your good works, they glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). There are two ways to let your light shine. There are two ways by which you can do your works. You can let your light shine in such a way that when men see your good works, they say, "Oh, what a glorious person he is. Isn't he marvelous? My, he is so great." Drawing attention and praise to yourself. Or you can let your light so shine that when men see the good works, they say, "Oh, isn't God great? Isn't God good?" And so,

Jesus was doing the work in such a way that people were glorifying God. That's the way we should do our works; in such a way that we don't draw attention to ourselves.

Somehow, within this perverse nature of mine, I desire to draw attention to me. When I was a little tiny kid, I used to get out on the school ground all by myself with a football under my arm and I'd run through all of the team. And everybody was cheering and the announcer was saying, "And Chuck Smith has the ball and he's running. He's down to the five, crossing the goal. Oh, touchdown! Hooray! Hooray!" And everybody was cheering and yelling. And I was walking around, you know. And I was four and five years old doing this kind of stuff. Declaring the greatness of this tremendous athlete, wanting the attention, wanting the praise, wanting the cheers of the crowd. And so, it was only natural as I grew older, I continued playing football and all, and living for that cheering of the crowd, living off the cheers of the crowd, fulfilling my early fantasies. Something within man's nature, something within man's old nature.

But when we come to Jesus Christ, we must reckon that old man to be dead with Christ, in order that we might be alive unto God and live now not for our glory, not for our recognition, not to receive praise for ourselves, but do our works in such a way that when men see the good work, they glorify our Father which is in heaven. Jesus set the classic example for us, "for they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We've never seen anything like this.'"

And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi [or Matthew] the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom (Mar 2:13-14),

So there in Capernaum, Matthew was a tax collector. It is interesting that so many of the disciples were drawn right from that area of Capernaum. And as they were passing by, there was Matthew sitting at his little tax house, toll booth,

and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed him. And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house (Mar 2:14-15),

So Matthew prepared a great meal for Jesus, but he invited a lot of his sinner friends because he wanted to expose them to Jesus. It is interesting that the gospels tell us that Matthew was the one who fixed this dinner for Jesus, where Matthew just tells us about the dinner, but he didn't tell us that he was the host. But the other gospel writers point out that Matthew was the host of this meal. "It came to pass as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners," not Republicans, but there's not much difference. Someone said, "Never vote for a Democrat, because they're all crooks." But then, the Republicans are crooks too, but they do it with more finesse. Never discuss politics with your friends. I'm looking for a new kingdom, wherein dwelleth righteousness. I tell ya, that's the kingdom.

[And they] sat also together with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and the Pharisees saw him eat with the publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? (Mar 2:15-16)

Now, you have to understand Jewish culture to understand their chagrin and their shock at this. According to their whole cultural concept, if you would sit down and eat with someone, you were becoming one with that person. Because you see, you had a common sort of a soup and a loaf of bread on the table, and they didn't have knives and forks and that kind of stuff. You just picked up the bread and you pulled off a hunk, and then you dip it in this common bowl of soup out there and you eat it. So, you'd hold out the bread to me and I'd take and pull off a chunk, and you'd pull off a chunk, and we'd both dip together in the soup out there. And then we would eat the bread. But we are both eating from the same loaf of bread; we are both dipping in the same soup. And we know that as we eat that bread, our body is assimilating it, and it's becoming a part of my body; it's becoming a part of me. But that same loaf of bread is becoming a part of your body and becoming a part of you. So, mystically, we are becoming a part of each other. We're becoming one with each other when we eat with each other. I'm becoming one with you as I eat together with you.

Now, that is why the Jew would never eat with a Gentile. They didn't want to become one with a Gentile. And so, when Jesus was eating with these publicans and sinners, in their cultural mind He was becoming one with the sinners; identifying and becoming one with the sinners. "But God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). He identified with us in order that He might redeem us. And so they were amazed, they said, "Hey, how is it He's eating with publicans and sinners?"

When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and said unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days (Mar 2:17-20).

Now, fasting is a spiritual rite in which there is that denial of the flesh. It is a self-abnegation type of a thing, or a self-mortification. It's a part of denying self. And while Jesus was with His disciples, He did not command them to fast as a spiritual rite. He said, "The days will come. As long as the bridegroom is here, we're going to rejoice; we're going to party. But then I'll be going, and in those days they'll fast."

In the Old Testament we read of Daniel fasting, afflicting himself as he was waiting upon God and praying. Daniel's fast comprised of not drinking wine, not eating meat or pastries. So, there are many things that you can deny yourself--Swenson's for a while. There are different types of fasts that you can engage in: total abstinence, drinking just water, keeping the liquid level of your body up, or just

denying certain things for a period of time as you denied the flesh to spend time in prayer and to wait upon God. Prayer and the word feed the spirit, just as food feeds the body. We are extremely faithful in feeding the body. We see that it has meals three times a day. But so often, we're careless about feeding the spirit.

Now, the flesh is warring against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. And so often the flesh is overcoming the spirit. Well, that's quite obvious. Why? Because I am so faithful in feeding the flesh, and so negligent in feeding the spirit. So, fasting and prayer are a reversal of the normal. I begin to neglect the feeding the flesh, and take the time to feed the spirit. And as the result, as my spirit is warring against my flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, my spirit begins to become strong and overcome, and I become victorious. And so that's really where fasting comes in and the purpose of fasting.

Now they're talking about the disciples of the Pharisees and so forth. The old religious system with its fast days and all of the rights and so forth, and Jesus said,

No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment; else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent [tear] is made worse (Mar 2:21). Now, Jesus was talking in the days before they had Sanforized clothes. So, you have a robe that you've been wearing for a long time; it's been through many washings. All of the shrinking is out of it because it's been through so many washings. And you rip that old robe. Now, if you would take a new piece of cloth to sew up the hole that you have in your robe,

the first time you washed it, that new cloth that you put in would shrink. And, of course, pull out the old, because the old robe already had the shrinkage out of it, the new cloth shrinking would just rip the thing all the more. So, you don't use new cloth to patch an old garment. You just make the tear worse.

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles [skins]: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled (Mar 2:22),

What is Jesus saying? He's saying that the religious systems get so set that to revive or to restore them is next to impossible. That when God desires to do a new work, He usually moves outside of the boundaries of the established religious systems because they can't handle the new wine. They can't handle that new work of God. And how true this is. And how we have seen the truth of this in personal observation. How God, when He desires to move with a new work of His Spirit in the hearts of people, unfortunately, has to move out beyond the boundaries of the organized religious systems and has to start up something new to contain that new work of His Spirit, that fresh work of God that He is seeking to do in the world.

So God wanted to save a bunch of old hippies. And the old systems couldn't handle those longhaired barefooted kids, so God raises up a new work, in order that He might reach those that He's desiring to reach.

Now, this is where my prayer is that, "God, keep us flexible." I don't want to get in a rut, a pattern, a routine that we would say, "Well, this is the way we've done it. This is the way Chuck did it," and this kind of stuff. I really don't want that. I want to ever stay flexible and free to move as God's Spirit moves. Blessed are the flexible; they shall not be broken. I mean, you get rigid. If God wants to move, "No, that's not the way we do it." Well, God is going to move, and you'll get snapped. But if you just learn to be flexible. If God wants to move, all right. Move with it; be flexible. The interesting thing about God is His refusal to be patterned. "Well, God did it this way." Well, maybe He did the last time, but He wants to do it a different way this time. God does not confine Himself to patterns, and man always makes the mistake when he tries to pattern God, tries to make the groove for God to flow in. And God is always overflowing our banks, and always coming up with some new way of working in the lives of people. And so, God keep us open and flexible and ready to move as the Spirit of God moves in different ways.

And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields (Mar 2:23)

And that would be wheat fields; they called the little kernel the corn of the wheat.

on the Sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went [through], to pluck the ears of corn (Mar 2:23).

Now, during the months of May, early June and all, as the wheat is getting ripe, you take and pick off that little top part, the corn of the wheat. And you take and rub it in your hands, and you knock the chaff off of it, the little bran off of it, and then you blow it. And you rub it and blow it, and you get just a handful of wheat. And then you eat it; the kernel is soft enough that you can chew it with your teeth. And as you chew it for a while, it makes sort of a gum, actually. And you can chew it all day if you want. When we were kids, we used to pick the wheat out of the chicken feed. We didn't have enough money for gum, so we'd go out and get the chicken feed and pick out all the wheat, and we'd chew it until we got our gum. And we'd go chewing the wheat gum all day long. But, of course, it's extremely helpful. And it was something that the disciples did, going through the wheat field. And they'd just grab some of these little corn of the wheat and begin to rub it in their hands and eat it.

And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was ahungered, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the showbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath (Mar 2:24-28).

Human need takes precedence over the law. They're hungry; there's a human need. Now, according to the law, when you went through a man's cornfield, you could pick the corn and eat it. But you couldn't carry any out; you weren't to take a sickle and cut it

down and carry out the sheaves of corn. If you were going through an orchard, you could pick the fruit and eat it, but you couldn't carry any fruit out. Human need, hunger, God made provisions for. "If you're hungry, go and pick an orange." You can't do that here now. I'm not telling you to do that here, because Sunkist Growers will slap you with a \$500 fine. But God had made provision for hungry people to go in and to take what they needed to satisfy their hunger. You couldn't take any out, set up a little stand and sell the produce at the edge of the field, but you could eat to your own need and satisfaction. And so, the disciples were doing that. They were walking through someone's wheat field, and they just began to pluck the little kernels and eat them. And it was the Sabbath day.

Now, to the Pharisees and the scribes, that constituted a violation of the Sabbath day law; you're not to do any work. But Jesus said, "They're hungry. They're only taking care of their needs; their hungers. David, whom you admire, don't you remember how he, turning the time when Abiathar was the high priest, went in and he and his men were hungry? They were fleeing from Saul and they went in and David said, 'Do you have anything?' He said, 'No, I don't have anything, but the showbread here.' David said, 'I'll take that.' And he took the showbread and he fed his men and all. And that was against the law; only the priests, according to the law, were to eat that showbread." But again, human need, hunger is a higher law.

And then He announced Himself as the Lord of the Sabbath. Making that statement that we need to remember, "Sabbath was made for man." It's for man's benefit. Really, we would all be wise to observe the Sabbath, to give our bodies a chance to recuperate. If you spent every Saturday in bed, you'd be a healthier person. Just kick back. Spend the day in bed; do nothing. But we are so geared up, that we press and push all the time. But God made it for you, take advantage of it. Kick back.

(Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries,1979-1986)

The Lord bless you and watch, guard, and keep you;

The Lord make His face to shine upon and enlighten you and be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up His {approving} countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

Numbers 6:24-26

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 1399-1402)

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