

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Message Four

The Ways of the Slave-Savior's Gospel Service

Scripture Reading: Mark 2:1—3:6

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

- A. As God with divine authority, He forgave the sins of the victim of sickness that He might release him from Satan's oppression (Acts 10:38) and restore him to God; the scribes considered this to be against the theology of their religion—Mark 2:1-12:
 - 1. The Lord Jesus was both the God-Savior and the Slave-Savior, possessing deity and humanity; He had not only the ability to save sinners but also the authority to forgive their sins—Luke 5:21, 24.
 - 2. Receiving the forgiveness of our sins causes us to fear God (Psa. 130:4) and to love God (Luke 7:36-50); in the Lord's salvation He not only forgives our sins but also causes us to rise and walk, to "go in peace" (v. 50), and to "go, and from now on sin no more" (John 8:11).
- B. As a Physician to the sick and miserable people, He feasted with the tax collectors, who were disloyal and unfaithful to their race, and with sinners, who were despised and isolated from society, that they might taste the mercy of God and be recovered to the enjoyment of God; this was condemned by the self-righteous yet merciless scribes of the Pharisees—Mark 2:13-17:
 - 1. The self-righteous Pharisees considered themselves strong; hence, blinded by their self-righteousness, they did not know that they were ill and needed Christ as a Physician—Matt. 9:12-13.
 - 2. The Lord as the Physician takes care of His "patients" by causing them to feast with Him, bringing them into the enjoyment of God; the joy of salvation, the enjoyment of God, is a feast—1 Cor. 5:7-8; Psa. 51:2, 12.
- C. As a Bridegroom with the sons of the bridechamber, He caused His followers to be merry and happy without fasting; thus, He annulled the practice of the disciples of John (the new religionists) and the Pharisees (the old religionists) so that His followers could be delivered

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from the practices of their religion into the enjoyment of God's Christ as their Bridegroom, with His righteousness as their outer clothing and His life as their inner wine in God's New Testament economy—Mark 2:18-22:

1. The real meaning of fasting is to stop eating all things other than the Lord Jesus and to not have a taste for anything other than Him—Matt. 6:16-18; Isa. 58:3; John 6:57; cf. Num. 11:4-7.
 2. Christ as the Bridegroom gains us to be His overcoming bride as His duplication by being our Physician to organically heal us in our entire tripartite being by His complete salvation—Rom. 5:10; cf. Mal. 4:2:
 - a. He is our new cloth as our new garment to clothe us and beautify us with Himself as our God-given righteousness through the shedding of His precious blood applied to us for our judicial redemption—Luke 15:22; 1 Cor. 1:30; Matt. 9:16.
 - b. He is our new wine as our new life to fill us and cheer us with Himself as our God-given portion through the dispensing of His priceless life into us for our organic salvation—Judg. 9:13; Matt. 9:17; Col. 1:12.
 3. We are not only the bride of Christ but also “the sons of the bridechamber” (Mark 2:19) to be the corporate “best man” of Christ as the Bridegroom; by enjoying Him as our new garment and new wine, we become His corporate “best man,” the Body of Christ as the new man.
- D. The Lord allowed His followers to pick the ears of grain in the grainfields on the Sabbath so that they could satisfy their hunger; thus, apparently they broke God's commandment concerning the Sabbath, but actually they pleased God because the hunger of Christ's followers was satisfied through Him, as the hunger of David and his followers had been satisfied with the bread of the Presence in the house of God; this indicates that in God's New Testament economy, it is a matter not of keeping the regulation of religion but of enjoying

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satisfaction in and through Christ as the real Sabbath rest—vv. 23-28:

1. The real meaning of keeping the Sabbath is that we cease from our doing, stop our work, and enjoy what the Lord has done for us by eating Him as the bread of the Presence for our nourishment and supply—Exo. 25:30.
 2. Man was not created for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was ordained for man so that he might enjoy it with God; God first worked and then rested; man first rests and then works—Gen. 2:2-3.
 3. Keeping the Sabbath is a sign that God's people work for God not by their own strength but by enjoying Him and being filled with Him to be one with Him; it is also an eternal covenant assuring God that we will be one with Him by first enjoying Him and then working with Him—Exo. 31:12-17.
- E. On the Sabbath the Lord healed a man who had a withered hand, caring not for the keeping of the Sabbath but for the health of His sheep; thus He indicated that in God's New Testament economy it is a matter not of keeping regulations but of imparting life—Mark 3:1-6:
1. This is the case of a person who is partially free but not wholly free; like the man with the withered hand, we need to be fully liberated.
 2. The Slave-Savior is our Emancipator, setting us free from religious ritual and from the slavery of sin; we may be liberated to a certain extent, but in certain parts of our life we still need to be freed by the Slave-Savior—John 8:32, 36; Rom. 6:12-23; 8:2.

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

- A. When we contact the Lord directly, having a direct touch with Him, He is transfused into us as the power of God

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to become our healing; the genuine way to help people is to bring them into a direct touch with the Lord.

- B. We all have to contact the Lord, to fellowship with Him, and to touch Him moment by moment in our spirit so that He can be our daily salvation and moment-by-moment supply for the building up of His Body—John 4:24.