

Jesus is LORD Mark 2:23-3:6

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus begins His ministry telling everyone that the Kingdom of God has finally burst forth. "Repent and believe the good news." (1:15)

So how do we know God is doing something new and good?

The good news about Jesus

- Changes ordinary people into God's rescuers
- Is for everyone...all the little towns along the way.
- Is for the demon possessed, the diseased and paralyzed
- Is for those with a bad reputation and those considered to be a lost cause.
- Won't be compromised for political or religious correctness

The reign of God with Jesus is music and joy to those in need of a Savior.

But Jesus isn't good news for everyone. There's the devil and all the people who stand to lose their worldly control - offended that Jesus is calling for change to their way. The Pharisees and others go from amazed and curious to skeptical and accusing.

- "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (2:7)

- "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (2:16)
- "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting but yours are not?" (2:18)

They have witnessed Jesus' authority but they think they're above it. We come to the last question from the Pharisees in this section of dark clouds coming.

Read 2:23-24

Their question is straight to Jesus this time. Perhaps they feel they have Him in a position to shame and discredit His good news. They've been spying on Jesus' disciples - caught them red-handed with their hands in the cookie jar...the farmer's grain, that is. No good Jew would reap in a grain field on a Sabbath! That's work! Jesus answers with a question...always a step ahead. Hoping the proud students will finally learn from the Teacher.

Read 2:25-26

As I studied, one phrase stood out: "He and his companions were hungry and in need." (2:25) It's a lens to bring clarify Jesus' message to the Pharisees. In Jesus' illustration, David ate the holy bread...bread of the Presence.

It was meant as a symbol of God's covenant with Israel. It was replaced with fresh bread on the Sabbath each week...and the old bread was only to be eaten by the true priesthood and in a holy place.

The whole story is intriguing

1 Sam 21-22

This story shows how evil Saul had become. David was fleeing Saul and deceived the head priest at Nob. David told Ahimelech that he was on a secret mission for the king and didn't have time to take supplies – that he and his men were in need (actually alone at the time). Doeg the Edomite (in Saul's service) saw the priest hand over the old sacred bread (and Goliath's old sword). When Saul found this out, he wiped out the entire innocent priest village of Nob...men women and children. Doeg did a lot of the dirty work. Only Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech, escaped and joined David's group of outcasts. When David found out, he grieved...knowing that if he had gotten rid of the witness, the priests would have been spared. He felt responsible. Abiathar served as David's priest for some time.

Jesus' point was that God did not destroy David for this. He went on to become King of Israel...the greatest. And I wonder if his critics ever caught that Jesus was born in the line of David...just like the prophecies predicted (2 Sam 7:12-13, Is 9:7).

Jesus defends that his companions were hungry and in need.

“Can't you set aside your petty law to notice people in need?”

There is another law (Deut 23:25)

that Jesus could have thrown back at them...that if you enter a neighbor's grain fields, you may pick kernels with your hands (but not sickle). But instead He wants to show them God's heart begins with the royal law... love God with everything you've got, and your neighbor as yourself. And on the Sabbath, especially.

Have you ever lost focus, perspective or just got grumpy lost because you were hungry and in need?

They call it hangry.

Some pretty poor decisions are made when our bodies cry out.

Remember Esau selling his birthright to Jacob for soup?

Darlene knows me very well. If I'm prepared, I can fast. But if its unplanned and I miss a meal or two...I get over hungry. I want food and lots of it. This is not a good time for me to be making decisions in the grocery store or the restaurant. Poor Darlene...has to talk me down from eating that grocery isle or party platter...or all-you-can eat buffet. It's just not good for me. Just need something to tide me over.

Maybe Jesus was teaching while they were walking and some missed breakfast so they grabbed a handful of grain (right on their

path) to stay alert. It wasn't like it was their regular work. They weren't harvesting and setting up a grain stand.

We need food for our bodies and food for our souls. The Pharisees were enforcing the instruction of the scribes...who had been added their own ingredients to God's soul food. If they had a commercial it would go something like;

"True Israelite Granola for the Soul. A good Jew eats the tradition of the elders. It's fortified with 613 ingredients...guaranteed to keep you from God's wrath. Ask your local Pharisee for details." Fine print reads: not guaranteed for tax collectors and sinners.

Those rules were getting in the way of a real relationship with God.

When we examined the Scriptures about the Sabbath back in September (available on request) we found the Sabbath was to be a benefit for the Israelites and those living among them...even their livestock. Rest, reflection refreshment...and community.

God created us...but do we believe He knows what's best for us?

Consider the efforts of the founding fathers of Canada. They set this country apart...built on

several principles from the Bible. Many immigrants were believers who passed on their faith from generation to generation. But today there little regard for a day set aside to rest, reflect and refresh in the Lord.

Where did believers lose traction in Canada?

Maybe it was lack of belief. I mean the kind of belief that continues to change what we do. Jesus' half brother James was sick and tired of seeing people who claimed to believe in Jesus but lived for themselves first. Look'in out for #1.

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?

Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?

So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. (Ja 2:14-17)

It is inconvenient and messy to follow through and do more than a 'wish you well'. That road is mysterious...and sacrificial. Jesus reminds us that God wants mercy

and care. God made the Sabbath to bless and help us foster our relationships with Him, our family our fellow believers...and our neighbor in need.

Who would have the authority to tell the most zealous law keepers in the world...they are mistaken about God and the 10 commandments?

Read v27

God did not make man for the purpose of keeping the Sabbath laws - especially not the expanded version AND especially not to ignore the royal law of love. By who's authority does Jesus challenge their way?

Read V 28.

The Pharisees aren't getting it but us insiders get it. It like Jesus is saying, "My way of thinking about Sabbath laws and how far to apply them is superior because the Father has given me the authority - as Lord."

Will you put your faith in your letter of the law? Or trust the One who gave the law for your good - the One who sends the Son of Man?

Religion or relationship. What do we choose?

We face a choice like that each day. To get up humble and thankful - sharing Gods grace in the

messiness of the real world. Or filled with our own agenda - with a little bit of God on the side? The good vs. evil balance sheet we keep in our head is dead.

Jesus is saying to them, "You don't control what is the Sabbath...I do."

Now it's the Lord's turn to ask the question about the Sabbath and the 10 commandments. A question so simple, a 5 yr old could answer. Yet a question that strikes at the very core of their hardened hearts.

Read 3:1-2

Can you feel the anticipation? "He's going to take the bait...doing His regular work on a Sabbath. We'll turn His bleeding heart against Him. Lawbreaker." Showdown at the OK coral. Jesus anticipates their evil intent and turns the tables on them. He makes sure everyone is aware of the serious flaw behind their Sabbath laws.

Read 3:3-4

This day or any day should be the same answer. Do good. Save a life.

But the Pharisees refuse to answer this most basic question. The 12-year-old boy wonder they were once impressed with...has grown up to challenge their way of living out God's commands.

I believe Jesus was still hoping that

his question which shake them from their stubborn roots. Still hoping for their hearts to soften to see the error of their way.

Read 3:5a

If Jesus had no hope at all of making an impact with the truth he would not have displayed such emotion. His heart was troubled and He was angered by their callousness.

A hard, proud, stubborn heart angers God. Aren't we all upset too?

These leaders of God's people pile on more burdens. They wield the law with a heart of stone. They treat the most needy as outcasts. They would turn people away from Jesus, the One more powerful: Who heals bodies and souls, casts out demons, preaches with God's authority, befriends and forgives sinners, changes people into God's rescuers. Jesus calls people to join His celebration of God's Kingdom, like a bridegroom calling His guests for the wedding feast.

Their god of the Pharisees was not one who would condescend to live in a little 'no place' town. Their god would not forgive a sick disabled person living under the curse of generational sin. Their god would not rise up from the commoners to preach to the poor, the sick and the

sinners. Their god would pat them on the back, conquer the Romans and bring glory back to Israel. The Pharisees are confused about Jesus' authority because they deny that their thinking could be flawed...from men and not God.

Jesus knows God better and the Sabbath better than all the Scribes and Pharisees combined...because He is LORD.

Read 3:5b

And so the LORD heals the man with the deformed hand - just with His words. No hint of a 'work' effort on the Sabbath. Icing on the cake of righteousness.

Read 3:6

The works based religious hate correction so much they can't see God right in front of them. Let us not fall into the same trap. So sure of our understanding of God and His will...that we ignore and even deny holding on to some worldly thinking that needs correcting.

Do we criticize and ignore those people with messy lives...lives infected by sin because they need a Doctor for their soul? Do we add rules that the Holy Spirit never authorized?

The Pharisees hate correction so much so that they want Jesus dead. Jesus' skeptics have become His

mortal enemies. They know Jesus will not hold back the truth of His authority and will continue to correct them with power. They have refused God's mercy and are leading others into the abyss too. But they don't have the official power to kill so they make a deal with their enemies, the supporters of Herod's royal family. Yes the ones corrupted by power who put John the Baptist into prison for proclaiming God's truth. They make a deal with the devil.

Considering the world events of the past 2 years, we should not be surprised that the most unlikely people will form partnerships to fight a greater enemy. Just last month Vladimir Putin, treated France as an ally over their common enemy ISIS...and many powers are realigning for fear of an enemy that would throw the world into chaos.

But we must not be driven by fear to make compromises in our trust of God. Don't become aligned with the ways of the world. We do not fight an enemy of flesh and blood. The LORD is our general.

Praise be to God we live in the age of the church. We have the writings of God's Apostles and God's Spirit within us...and the witness of the church to help us.

Concerning our connection to the world, the Apostle Paul writes: *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.* (Eph 4:22-24).

Do not get drunk on wine (strung out on drugs or controlled anything of this world), *which leads to debauchery* (just plain selfishness which is not what God made us for). *Instead, be filled with the Spirit,* (Eph 5:18)

The Spirit in control of our lives brings out the best...like the most beautiful display of lights on a dark Christmas night:

love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)

AMEN?

While Jesus' enemies make plans to kill Him, He continues His mission to bring people near God. He is not swayed by threats because He fully trusts the Father. And the Father is pleased to give His Son authority. The Good News is the one with the authority shows mercy: Jesus, our Lord.