



The Book of Mark - The Gospel in Motion

The Gospel of Mark presents the life of Jesus with urgency and action. In this fast-moving account, we see Christ calling disciples, confronting darkness, healing the broken, and revealing the power of the Kingdom of God. Each week we will follow the movement of His ministry as the story builds toward the most important moment in history. On Easter Sunday, we will arrive at Mark 15–16, where the cross and the empty tomb reveal the ultimate purpose of Jesus' mission—salvation, victory over sin and death, and the hope of new life for all who believe.

The Gospel in Motion

Week 2 — When Religion Misses Mercy

Mark 2:1–3:6

Introduction

Throughout the ministry of Jesus, He often **clashed with religious leaders**.

These confrontations were not because Jesus rejected God's Law, but because the leaders had **distorted its purpose**.

They had replaced the **heart of God** with a system of **religious performance**.

God had already spoken through the prophet:

Hosea 6:6

"I desire mercy and not sacrifice."

God values **compassion and faithfulness** more than ritual.

In **Mark 2–3**, we see several moments where Jesus restores the **true heart of God**.

1. Jesus' Authority to Forgive

Mark 2:1–12

Four men bring a **paralyzed man** to Jesus.

When the crowd blocks the way, they **lower him through the roof**.

Instead of immediately healing him, Jesus says:

“Son, your sins are forgiven.”

The scribes are shocked:

“Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Their theology was correct—but they **failed to recognize God standing before them**.

Jesus then heals the man to prove His authority.

Key Truths:

- **Sin is humanity's greatest problem**
- Jesus has **authority to forgive sin**
- **Spiritual healing is greater than physical healing**

Isaiah 53:5

“He was pierced for our transgressions... and by His wounds we are healed.”

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us...”

The greatest miracle in that house was not a man walking.

It was a **sinner walking out forgiven**.

2. Jesus and the Sinner

Mark 2:13–17

Jesus calls **Levi (Matthew)**, a tax collector.

Tax collectors were considered **traitors and sinners**.

Then Jesus **eats with sinners**.

The Pharisees were offended.

They believed holiness meant **separation from sinners**.

Jesus saw sinners as people who needed **rescue**.

Jesus responds:

“Those who are well have no need of a physician...
I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Luke 19:10

“The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Romans 5:8

“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Religion produced **pride**.

Jesus' mission produced **mercy**.

The gospel is not only for the **polished**.

The gospel is for the **broken**.

3. Jesus and Fasting

Mark 2:18–22

People ask:

“Why do John's disciples and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not?”

They were measuring spirituality by **religious practices**.

Jesus responds with an image:

“You do not fast when the **bridegroom** is present.”

Jesus identifies Himself as the **Bridegroom**.

Something **new** had arrived.

Isaiah 62:5

“As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”

Jesus was not adding another rule.

He was bringing the **New Covenant**.

Jeremiah 31:31–33

“I will make a new covenant... I will write My law on their hearts.”

Religion focused on **external rule-keeping**.

Jesus came for **internal transformation**.

2 Corinthians 5:17

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”

Jesus did not come to **patch up religion**.

He came to **make people new**.

4. Jesus and the Sabbath

Mark 2:23–28

The Pharisees accuse the disciples of breaking the Sabbath.

They had picked grain while walking through the fields.

Jesus reminds them that **David once ate consecrated bread when he was hungry**.

Then Jesus declares:

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

God originally gave the Sabbath as a **gift of rest**.

Exodus 20:8

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

But religious leaders turned the gift into **burdensome rules**.

Religion often replaces **relationship with regulations**.

Jesus reveals the deeper truth:

Matthew 11:28

“Come to Me... and I will give you rest.”

True rest is found **in Christ**, not in rules.

5. The Mercy of God

Mark 3:1–6

Jesus enters a synagogue where a man has a **withered hand**.

The Pharisees watch closely, hoping to **accuse Him**.

Jesus asks them:

“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil?”

They remain silent.

Jesus heals the man.

Mark tells us Jesus looked at them with **anger and grief** because of their **hard hearts**.

Isaiah 29:13

“These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me.”

Instead of celebrating the miracle, the Pharisees **plot to kill Jesus**.

This confrontation begins the path that will eventually lead to **the cross**.

Even there we see God’s mercy.

Luke 23:34

“Father, forgive them...”

The Danger of Religion

Religion without the heart of God produces:

- **Pride**
- **Judgment toward others**
- **Distance from God**

But the gospel produces **grace**.

Ephesians 2:8–9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith... not of works.”

Grace reminds us that salvation is **received, not earned**.

The Heart of Jesus

Throughout these passages we see the mission of Christ:

- He **forgives sinners**
- He **restores the broken**
- He **removes religious burdens**
- He **invites people into relationship with God**

Psalms 103:8

“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.”

Conclusion

In **Mark 2–3** we see two paths:

The path of **religion without mercy**

or

The path of **Jesus full of grace and truth**

The religious leaders protected **rules**.

Jesus restored **people**.

Closing Challenge

The religious leaders **saw Jesus but missed Him**.

They knew the Scriptures but **missed the Savior**.

But the broken people experienced **His grace**.

The difference was not knowledge.

The difference was **humility**.

The question for us today is simple:

Will we cling to **religion**...

or will we embrace **Jesus**?

Because wherever Jesus goes:

- **Sinners are forgiven**
- **The broken are restored**
- **The mercy of God is revealed**