

## Commentary on Mark Chapter 2, by Chuck Smith 11.21.21

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**November memory verse, Romans 3:23 (NKJV)** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

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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

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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](#))

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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.

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 Alpheus 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,

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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,".

[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

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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. 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](#)),

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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

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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, during 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.