

“Who do you say that I am?” Mark - Part 4

The One who Redefines Religion

Mark 2:13-3:6

January 15th, 2017

I. Redefining WHO is WELCOME. (2:13-17)

A. Those who WILL COME. (v.14)

B. Those WILLING to admit NEED. (v.16-17)

Last week we saw how Mark is communicating that Jesus is the one who has authority, and that we are called to surrender to Him. This week Mark moves on to attack an area very close to home...the way we practice our Christianity. Jesus redefines religion for those that he comes in contact with, and Mark uses 4 back to back stories to drive home the point.

1. Who is the most “welcoming” person that you know? What do they do that makes you say that?
2. Would the people around you who aren’t connected to a church say that Christianity is welcoming? Why or why not?
3. Does making space for someone in our lives or in our church mean that we agree with everything that they think or do? When does this welcoming get challenging?

II. Redefining the USE of RITUALS. (2:18-22)

A. Connecting ACTION to MEANING. (2:18-20)

B. RELATIONSHIPS grow and CHANGE. (2:20-22)

As if inviting a tax collector to follow Him wasn’t revolutionary enough, Jesus begins undermining two of the key Jewish religious practices: Fasting and the Sabbath. People notice right away that He not only not playing by the rules, but He is changing them. The problem is He is so challenging when they seek to bring Him back into line.

4. What religious practices are most meaningful to you? Has that changed over the span of your life? If so, why?
5. What has been your experience with fasting and keeping the sabbath?
6. What do you think Jesus is saying in Mark 2:21-22? How would we apply that to our lives today?

III. Redefining the UNDERLYING PURPOSE. (2:23-3:6)

A. God is FOR us not AGAINST us. (2:23-28; Rom 8:31-32)

B. To do GOOD and to SAVE life. (3:1-6; I Jn. 3:8)

The Jewish religion, by the time of Jesus, had become just that...a religion. It was for many a set of rules and practices that you needed to follow to keep God happy. When it gets to this point there are always a few who are good at the game that begin to use it to elevate themselves over others, and the Pharisees were experts at making sure everyone was toeing the line. But a relationship with God is less about lines and more about following, surrendering, and trusting. You can toe the line in regards to the rules and totally ignore what Jesus is calling us to.

7. Do most people that you know perceive God as being for them or against them? How can you tell? Why do you think they feel the way that they do.
8. Read I Jn 3:8. What types of things do you see around you that are "the devil's work"? How might God be calling you to destroy that?

IV. Jesus is our INTERPRETIVE KEY. (2:28; John 5:39-40)

- A. He "FLESHES out" the TRUTH. (Col. 2:9)**
- B. He shapes our PRACTICES and PRIORITIES. (Mt. 5:17-48)**
- C. WHAT are you LOOKING for? (3:2; Rom. 2:7-8)**

So Mark is saying that when we look for the truth, we have to look through Jesus. He is the way we understand God. He is the model for how we are called to live. And He is the one who "moves in" and empowers us to actually live differently. The question is are we willing to let that happen. Sometimes we prefer a religion we can manipulate to a relationship with Jesus that changes us.

9. How might Jesus challenge some of the ways you interpret scripture? Some of the ways you "practice" your Christianity?
10. Read John 4:39-40 and if necessary the surrounding context. What might God be saying to you through that passage?