**The Gospel of Mark Sermon #5**

**The Lord Looks at the Heart**

Theme of Mark:

Jesus: Messiah and Son of God: suffering servant and savior of mankind.

Theme verse: Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Mark 5:1-20 Parable of the demon-possessed man

Gerasenes on the East side of Sea of Galilee This man was very scary!!!

In a sense, this man is us outside of Christ. Though we may not have been possessed by demons, we were controlled by many different sins and addictions.

Interesting:

v. 6-8 Demons know who Jesus is (Son of the most high God) when people do not.

Demons prefer to be sent among the pigs. Hmmm…. (pork?)

v. 15 Imagine the scene…

v. 17 Please leave our region. They were not excited about this man. The “world” may be the same about your losing your demons. v. 16-17 They were more worried about their income than that the man had been healed.

v. 18 Man wanted to join the apostles, but Jesus says no. Because he was not a Jew?

What do I learn from this parable?

Mark 4:35-41 Jesus has power over nature

Mark 5:1-20 Jesus has power over the spiritual world/demons

Demons are real.

Demons can have power over people.

But… Jesus has power over the demon world. We do not need to fear.

With Jesus’ help we can overcome our controlling sins and addictions. We can have our “right mind” again.

Jesus has compassion on Gentiles as well as Jews

Skip Jesus heals Jarius’ son, and a bleeding woman (who, by the way, would have been like a leper—permanently unclean)

Jesus sends out the 12 (we will cover in Luke)

John the Baptist beheaded (Matthew)

Jesus feeds the 5000 and walks on water (John)

Mark 7:1-20

Pharisees come all the way from Jerusalem to check out what Jesus is doing.

Jesus is healing people, feeding people, walking on water, teaching powerfully, but what are they concerned about? Eating food with improperly washed hands.

Q: Are you a nit-picker?

Nits are the eggs of lice. There is nothing inherently wrong with picking nits.

Do you major in the minors?

Do you look at the outer things, and fail the see the matters of the heart?

Parents?

How could that happen? We take our eyes off of Jesus.

v. 6 Jesus does not tolerate fools. He gets right to the heart of the issue.

What does he call the nit-pickers, the “Pharisees? Hypocrites.

What is a “Pharisee” in this situation? A nit-picker who is more concerned about her or his man-made rule than the heart.

Enforcing “rules” about dating. “Rules” about parenting. “Rules” about what movie you can watch. “Rules” about what kind of music a Christian can listen to.

“Rules” about what kind of clothes are appropriate. “Rules” about what kind of car a Christian ought to drive, etc…

v. 8 You have let go of the commands of God.

Their answer: What commands? To love God and to love your neighbor (Mark 12:29-31)

Remember, there is nothing wrong with picking nits. You need to pick nits.

And there is nothing wrong with washing hands as a symbol/reminder of kosher purity.

But you need to love the person and you need to love God!

2 kinds of “bad” traditions

1. The kind that is taught as if it is a command of God when it is not. (v. 6-7)

At this point, it is easy to point to Roman Catholic traditions such as wearing of robes, saying Ave Marias, all that stuff… But does this help us?

Generally, it is an attempt to (legitimately?) enforce a biblical principle. As a guideline, it is not bad.

But if we ever lose the heart behind the tradition and enforce it as doctrine, we are blowing it!

Our rules need to be truly redemptive—truly helpful toward people obeying God and loving God.

2. The kind that, if we give undue attention to them, we would actually be caused to disobey God! (v. 9-14)

Corban (literally devoted to God) is a real thing (see the archaeological artifact from Jerusalem)

Tradition of praying Jesus into your heart.

Tradition of asceticism (becoming a monk or nun) (example from Philip Sheldrake this past weekend)

Clergy/laity distinction, when Bible says we are all priests and all one in Christ.

Giving undue attention to the leader, when, in James, we are told not to show favoritism.

v. 14-22 Sisters and brothers: Let us always remember to look to the heart, and not to the external matters of Christianity.

v. 20 Pharisees are looking at the effect, not the cause.

Are the external things important? Well…. Yes, but what are you going to focus in on.

Parents, take note!!!

Spouses take note!!!

(as a side note, Jesus declared all foods clean. Right, but this is truly a side note!!!!

Because his whole point is that such things are not important.

v. 20 Last point. It is what comes out of the heart that is important.

Here is the problem: We can’t see the outside!

We need to learn to discern the heart behind the action.

Not so we can judge people, but so we can help people get their hearts right.

If time: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

If not: 1 Sam 16:7 “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance (and those people are Pharisees), but the Lord looks at the heart.

Summary:

Jesus has power over nature.

Jesus has power over the spiritual world and demons.

Jesus has the power necessary to root out those inner demons—those deep-rooted sins and addictions.

Are you a nit-picker? Are you a Pharisee?

Let us be like Jesus. Do not stop picking nits, but ALWAYS remember that the Lord looks at the heart.