**The Gospel of Mark Sermon #4**

**For I Desire Mercy, Not Sacrifice**

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.

Last week:

The Miracles of Jesus.

1. Mark 4:35-41 Jesus calms the storm. Jesus has power over the physical realm.

2. Mark 5:1-20 Jesus heals the demon-possessed man Legion. Jesus has power and authority over the spiritual realms.

One more set of miracles before we go to Mark 7:1-20.

Mark 5:21-43. Jesus helps an important person and, like a sandwich, Jesus helps an outcast woman.

Why the sandwich?

-to make a point

-because that is how it happened

Mark 5:21-24 As usual in Mark, We have a large crowd.

v. 22 A synagogue leader, Jairus, comes up.

Imagine the crowd separating to let the important man up to see Jesus.

Please, come! My little daughter. Everything we know about Jesus tells us he will obey this request.

Mark 5:25-34 but… along the way. A woman subject to bleeding 12 years. Anemic, tired, discouraged, can’t be married, can’t have children. But the Jewish context is especially tragic:

In Leviticus 15:25-33 A woman with a discharge of blood, even if not her period, is unclean as long as the discharge continues. And anyone she touches will also be unclean.

There were health benefits to this law of uncleanness for the woman, but for this woman…

She is like a leper. A permanent outcast.

v. 29 The only case of Jesus doing a miracle unknowingly. (This is not like the blank blank church practice of touching relics)

Why? Because if there is any miracle that Jesus would want to do, it is to heal this unfortunate woman. Unclean, poor, outcast, female, lonely…

v. 30 Jesus felt power going out. Interesting. Who touched me?

Disciples: Are you crazy? Like 500 people! Note: Jesus did not know that it was a woman who had been bleeding. His deity is suppressed in his humanity.

Jesus stops what he is doing (going to Jairus’ the big-wig, wealthy, important person’s house) to find the woman.

Why? Because I desire mercy, not sacrifice.

I will be talking about this in Mark 7:1-20 Remember this: Hosea 6:6, Matthew 9:9-13 (v. 13), Matthew 12:1-8 (v. 7) For I desire mercy, not sacrifice. Jesus is the personification of this principle.

v. 34 Look at Jesus’ compassion. Remember this: For I desire mercy, not sacrifice.

The scripture does not say so, but given what Jesus did with lepers, I assume he touched her. Skin to skin.

Mark 5:35-43 OK, now that the important person is taken care of (the one that the society would totally ignore and cast out), now to the secondary business at hand: The influential and respected citizen.

Jarius’ daughter has died.

Jesus’ answer to you: Don’t be afraid: just believe.

Sick: Don’t be afraid, just believe.

Made a big mistake, even a big sin: Don’t be afraid, just believe.

Don’t have a job right now: Don’t be afraid, just believe.

Found out you have cancer: Don’t be afraid, just believe.

Your spouse has been unfaithful to you: Don’t be afraid, just believe.

v. 39 Jesus treats things which are dead as if they were alive.

He treats you that way as well!!!!

v. 40 How does the world response to Jesus’ faith? We laugh!

There is NO WAY he/she is coming back from this one!

v. 41 One of only about 5 or 6 times the Aramaic is included in the Greek New Testament.

I see his compassion in these words. Jesus looks at the little girl, and all he can think about his the grief of the family, especially the parents.

v. 43 For about the zillionth time in Mark, the people were astonished.

Q: Are you astonished at what Jesus can do in your or other people’s lives?

Skipping:

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 7:1-22

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.

BTW, this was a tradition of the Pharisees, but not a commandment in the Law of Moses.

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?

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 was 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 popes and cardinals, wearing of robes, saying Ave Marias, all that stuff… But does this help us?

Generally, these rules were initially 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!

Ex: Matthew 9:9-13(v. 13) Matthew 12:1-8 (v. 8) Jesus: I desire mercy, not sacrifice.

In both cases (Matthew a tax collector and picking grain on a Sabbath) Jesus is choosing mercy over a rule.

Also Hosea 6:6 For I desire mercy/loyalty (hesed) not sacrifice and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings.

Do not ever let your religiousness stand in place of loving God and loving people and having what is best for them in mind.

Our rules-of-thumb (and all Christian groups have them) 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, being a monk or a nun.

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:

Let us be like Jesus—loving the weak, the vulnerable and those who are hurting.

Are you a nit-picker? Are you a Pharisee? Are you more into rules or into showing mercy and bring about reconciliation and redemption.

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