

Intro.

- A. Jesus is the most popular figure in ALL history! (c. **Mk. 1:45**)
1. While miracles were wonderful, their purpose was to furnish credibility so that people would realize the offer of a grander prize – *SALVATION & admission into the kingdom of God!*
 2. **Mk. 2** tells of paralytic's healing, call of Levi, ?'s re: fasting, & criticisms re: Sabbath violations.
- B. These 4 events need to be understood as **challenges to Christ's authority**.
1. As we study these events, I want you to look beyond these **challenges**.
 2. Look & see 3 precious gifts that Jesus provided(s) to those who will *Trust & Obey* Him.

Discuss.**I. 1st Gift is FORGIVENESS (i.e., SALVATION), Mk. 2:1-1**

- [Imagine what Jesus saw as He stood in that living room in Capernaum.] qualities for fishers of men.)
- A. He *looked up* & saw 4 men & their bed-ridden friend, & observed several admirable characteristics. **I.D.**
1. deep concern about a friend in dyer need
 2. strong belief that Jesus = the best answer to meet all of our needs,---& our only hope
 3. men who put feet to their prayers (i.e., didn't loose hope in face of obstacles)
 4. men who could work together to help another obtain what they needed
- B. He *looked down* saw the paralyzed man, & all those things the man lacked
1. Christ certainly recognized this man's inability to walk
 2. He was more focused on the spiritual needs, & gave those primary attention
- C. Jesus also *looked around* & saw the critics to scrutinized everything He said & did.
1. It was the obligation of the religious leaders to investigate & evaluate "new teachers" (**Deut. 13**)
 2. As it had happened in Judea (**Jn. 4:1-4**), Galilean Jews were showing same closed mindedness that would lead to heresy & eventually the crucifixion of our Lord.
 3. For the time being Jewish leaders would stay somewhat subdued in criticizing due to Jesus popularity
- D. Christ also *looked within* the hearts of His critics (**vs. 8**).
1. The scribes accused Him of blasphemy, knowing that only God could forgive sins.
 2. While they were correct re: the Power & Authority necessary to forgive sin, they failed to really see who Jesus is!!!
 3. Jesus challenged His accusers: *Which is easier...?* (c. **Psa. 103:3**)
 4. Christ affirmed His deity & demonstrated His power as "*the Son of man*" (phrase used 14 X's in Mark)
- E. What *IF the religious leaders had opened their minds to the truth Christ taught?*
1. Could have learned that sin is like sickness & forgiveness is like having health restored
 2. Could have learned that Christ is the Savior w/ the authority to forgive sins, even theirs (& ours).

II. FULFILLMENT, Mk. 2:13-22

- Jesus deliberately associated w/ outcast of society (e.g. Levi the tax collector= Matt., *the gift of God*), & His critics were there with questions poised to bring about His demise.
- Christ responded to Jews' questions making 3 interesting comparisons that would teach others who He was & about the work He came to do.
- A. 1st ? = why does He eat w/ sinners? Response: *Well people do not need a doctor, but the sick do.*
1. Already shown that sin \approx to sickness; natural to say Savior \approx physican, only better – cure, & bill pd.
 2. Extending the comparison, consider **3 kinds of patients whom the Gt. Physician cannot heal**:
 - a. those who do not know the physician
 - b. those who know something Him, but do not trust Him.
 - c. those who will not admit they need the Gt. Physician
 3. Jer. (**6:14 & 8:11**) rebuked priests & false prophets of his day => *worthless physicians*
 - a. gave false hope & healed the people's hurt only slightly.
 - b. Offered weak medicines & treated surface symptoms;
 - c. Never touched root of problem, which was their sinful heart (**Jer. 17:9**)

- B. 2nd ? = why don't Your disciples fast? Response: *While bridegroom is present, friends feast > < fast.*
1. John was somewhat a recluse, & his disciples fasted. (c. **Neh. 1:4** – Neh. Fasted & prayed in prep.)
 - a. Jesus accepted invit. to social gatherings, esp. where sinners gathered (interested in oppor. to teach)
 - b. He came to convert sinners, not compliment self-righteous; to bring gladness, not sadness.
 2. Using imagery familiare to Jews, reminded them that Israel's relationship to God ≈ to marriage, **Isa.54:5**
 - a. Jews had turned to other gods, committing sp. adultery
 - b. John ref: to Christ = *Bridegroom* **Jn. 3:29**; He now invited people to the wedding (c. **Rom. 7:4**)
 - c. Marriage > than just knowing person, but involves commitment, & giving self completely to them.
 - d. *It's like becoming a Christian*, much more that a *feeling*, or a mere *acquaintance*.
 - e. Only after a bridegroom has left is their any sadness (i.e., fasting) **Mk. 2:20**
- C. 3rd illustration (w/o a ?) = new wine in old wineskins & new cloth sown onto old garment, **vs. 21-22**
- a. Remember, Christ came to save sinners, not just to straighten out the Jews.
 - b. Came to intro. the New, not patch up the Old. (cross ref. = **Lk. 5:36-39**)
 - c. New law written on hearts, not stones (**2 Cor. 3:1-3**); Salva. is not a *blended relig. of all beliefs*, \ \ Ac.4
 - d. Being a Christian >> patching up your life, but becoming a new creature; putting away the old as put on Christ, becoming new man, **Col. 3:10**
 - e. **Heb 8 – 10** = record of benefits of better High Priest, who gave a better covenant & = a perf. offering

III. FREEDOM, **Mk. 2:23-13:12**

- A. The Sabbath = cherished by Jews = sacred institution, gift f/ God after the Exodus (**Ex. 20:8ff; Neh. 9:14**)
1. When Jews became convinced that Christ violated Sab., they felt as though war had been declared!!!
 2. There were 39 acts forbidden according to Jewish tradition.
 - a. Moses prohibited work (**Ex. 20:10**).
 - b. Wrong to kindle a fire for cooking (**Ex. 35:3**), or gather fuel (**Num. 15:32ff**).
 - c. Jews were not to carry burdens (**Jer. 17:21ff**), nor transact business (**Num. 10:31; 13:15, 19**).
 - *d. Tradition went farther, limiting travel to 200 cubits, **Josh. 3:4**. (c. **Ac. 1:12** = 7/8 of a mile.).
- B. After healing the man at Pool of Bethesda **Jn.5**, Lord again “violated Sab.” walking thru field & eating.
1. => **Deut. 23:24f** – o.k. for hungry to eat, as long as didn't work (harvest w/ sickle, & fill container).
 - a. In **Mt. 12:3f** Jesus' defense included *Priest's actions & Hosea*, but Mark's Roman readers didn't care so much re: Jewish prophets & priest, so he focused on David f/ **1 Sam. 21:1-6**.
 - b. Jesus showed how God's gtest concern >> relig. tradi., but man's needs, & *Pharisees = confused!!!*
 2. “?” Was Abiathar (**vs. 26**) = High Priest??? (c. **1 Sam. 22:20**)
 - a. **1 Sam. 21** names Abimelech, Abiathar's father, as H.P.
 - b. Is it possible for father & son to both have exactly same name? (c. **1 Chron. 18:16; 24:6; 2 Sam.8:17**)
 - c. Often teachers in 1st Cent. identified passages according to name of leading character in text and an event to help in order to help students I.D. reference since their manuscripts had no chpts. & vs. (see **Mk. 12:26**)
 3. That same Sabbath, Jesus healed man with withered hand (**Mk. 3:1-5**)
 - a. The Pharisees were anticipating a flagrant violation & were watching, **Lk. 6:7**.
 - b. The Lord's “?’s” went unanswered by his accusers, **Mk. 3:4**.
 - c. Lord was angry at the attitude of the Pharisees, & they plotted to destroy him.

Concl.

- A. Jesus went away to the sea, & a crowd followed Him.
1. Jesus continued healing & teaching.
 2. He was very deliberate, but realistically cautious about healing & dealing with the crowds.
 - a. again, warned not to *make him known*
 - b. a night would be spent in prayer, **Lk. 6:12** after which he would call the 12.
 - c. Then would follow a powerful sermon on the side of Mt. Olivett when He would explain the nature of His kingdom.
- B. Jesus was offering 3 precious gifts: *forgiveness, fulfillment & freedom*.
1. Most refused his offer then, (**Mt. 7:13f**)
 2. His offer is still open to those who would follow Him & obey His teachings.
 3. Will you refuse His offer tonight, or will you accept His invitation for salvation by obeying His word?