

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 3 “Controversies”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 2:1–3:6; Micah 6:6–8; 1 Samuel 21:1–6; Mark 3:20–35; Luke 12:53; Luke 14:26.

Memory Text

“And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath’ ” (Mark 2:27, 28, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Healing a Paralytic
- III. Calling Levi and the Question of Fasting
- IV. The Lord of the Sabbath
- V. Sandwich Story: Part 1
- VI. Sandwich Story: Part 2
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. A unique feature of the Gospel of Mark is how Jesus’ conflict with the religious leaders reached all the way back to the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. The way that Mark structured the story of Jesus, the cross is not just a future event, but casts its shadow over Jesus from the second chapter of Mark all the way to the end. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Mark 2:1 – 3:6 contains a series of five short stories that contrasts Jesus’ teachings with those of the religious leaders of His time. The lesson will explore each of these stories briefly. The lesson also addresses Mark 3:20-35, which the lesson author calls a “Sandwich Story”, where a story about Jesus is interrupted, and then is resumed again. This is a literary feature that occurs six times in the Gospel of Mark. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
3. Read Mark 2:1-12. What was the paralytic looking for when he was brought to Jesus, and what did he receive? What do you make of Jesus acting to heal someone on the

basis of other people's faith? How did Jesus go about demonstrating His divinity?
(Sunday's Lesson)

4. Read Mark 2:13-17. Who was Levi, the son of Alphaeus, and why would there be an objection to him becoming a disciple of Jesus? In this story the Pharisees try to bring disrepute on Jesus with "guilt by association". Why is the guilt by association charge to appealing to people? (Monday's Lesson)
5. Read Mark 2:18-22. What is the key question here and how does Jesus answer it? What are the implications for us today in the statements of Jesus in verses 21 and 22? (Monday's Lesson)
6. Read Mark 2:23-28. What does Jesus see in the David story that is pertinent to the charge being brought against Him? What are the implications? How does the David story relate to the statement of Jesus in verses 27 and 28? In His Sabbath statement does Jesus here undermine the importance of Sabbath rules or even rules in general? (Tuesday's Lesson)
7. Read Mark 3:1-6. How does this story illustrate the point that the Sabbath was made for the benefit of humanity, rather than the other way around? What is the point of Jesus' comparison in verse 4? (Tuesday's Lesson)
8. Read Mark 3:20-35. What connection do you see between the two stories intertwined in this passage? What charges do the scribes and Jesus' family, respectively, bring against Jesus? How does Jesus ultimately defeat Satan? (Wednesday's Lesson)
9. Read Mark 3:28-30. What is the unpardonable sin, and what does that have to do with the previous context (Mark 3:22-27)? (Wednesday's Lesson)
10. Read Mark 3:20-21. What was it that caused His family to consider Jesus out of His mind? Read Mark 3:31-35. What does Jesus' family want, and how does He respond? (Thursday's Lesson)
11. How can a local church become family for those who have been rejected by their genetic family? (Friday's Lesson)
12. Who are the "tax collectors" of today? How can we adjust our thinking about them? (Monday's Lesson)
13. What principles of Sabbath keeping can you take away from these accounts and the challenges we face in keeping the Sabbath in the modern world? (Tuesday's Lesson)
14. What would you say to someone who thinks they've committed the unpardonable sin? (Wednesday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Isn't it significant that after all the answers during creation week, the next day was a rest day, for reflection and celebration? And after all the answers given during crucifixion week, the next day was a rest day, a day for reflection, for remembering, for celebration. To me, that's the whole purpose of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is designed to remind us of the truth about God that is the basis of our trust. It's not a test of obedience. It's not a burden; it's been made one. It was given to man. Remember Mark 2:27? "And he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath.'" The Sabbath was made for us, to help us, because more than at any other time we need to be reminded of the truth that was not claimed, but revealed and demonstrated during creation week, and during crucifixion week.

Incidentally, was that first Sabbath our seventh day? It was our second day. Sometimes we say we should worship every seventh day because it's built into our system that we need to rest every seventh day. If that's a good argument, then on which day should we rest? Which is our seventh day? Thursday! I don't know anybody who chooses Thursday. Friday yes, Saturday yes, Sunday yes. But this would start a whole new movement. If we're supposed to rest on the seventh day, our seventh day is Thursday. God's seventh day, with the universe watching, their seventh day, earth time, is the one that follows all those revealing events of creation week. That's when God and the universe celebrated. And then God says, "I want you to do the same from here on, not to be a burden and a test of obedience; you need this. The controversy is on; you need to be reminded once a week of the evidence I have presented, and there will be much more coming." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Genesis*, recorded October 1983, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/1MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Is there some condition concerning which God would say, "Do not intercede with me for that." How could that possibly be? Have any of us committed that sin? Is this the unpardonable sin, as it were? And that doesn't suggest that God is unwilling to pardon. He's forgiveness personified. But is there a condition that it would make no sense to forgive; because there is no hope, there is no remedy, there's nothing more he can do? It would be like praying that God would heal someone who absolutely will not listen. There's no point to it.

Is it that Israel had reached this point? Remember 2 Chronicles, at the end, when he let them go into captivity, “There was no remedy.” Did Jesus pray any longer over Lucifer when finally he had reached the place where the truth, spoken in love, would not touch him at all? There does come a time when nothing more can be done. Now, I think we need to be very careful in deciding that about each other. I don’t think we’re able to know this. I think we go on anyway. But I think that John and Jeremiah are simply warning us in very serious terms: There is a condition even God cannot remedy. If we finally in our stubborn rebelliousness, reach the place where we have lost both the desire and the capacity to respond to truth, since the truth spoken in love is God’s only means of persuasion, then that’s the end. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Jeremiah & Lamentations, recorded February 1982, Riverside, California}

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/35MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/36MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The plan of redemption is not merely a way of escape from the penalty of transgression, but through it the sinner is forgiven his sins, and will be finally received into heaven—not as a forgiven culprit pardoned and released from captivity, yet looked upon with suspicion and not admitted to friendship and trust; but welcomed as a child, and taken back into fullest confidence. {7BC 950.6}

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. {DA 568.3}

The Lord will not compel men to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; He sets before the human agent good and evil, and makes plain what will be the sure result of following one course or the other. Christ invites us, saying, “Follow Me.” But we are never forced to walk in His footsteps. If we do walk in His footsteps, it is the result of deliberate choice. As we see the life and character of Christ, strong desire is awakened to be like Him in character; and we follow on to know the Lord, and to know His goings forth are prepared as the morning. We then begin to realize that “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”—R. & H., March 31, 1896. {CS 138.1}

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness. {COL 386.1}

Jesus never refused an invitation to such a feast. The object ever before Him was to sow in the hearts of His hearers the seeds of truth, through His winning conversation to draw hearts to Himself. {5BC 1120.3}

Jesus sat as an honored guest at the table of the publicans, by His sympathy and social kindness showing that He recognized the dignity of humanity; and men longed to become worthy of His confidence. Upon their thirsty souls His words fell with blessed, life-giving power. New impulses were awakened, and the possibility of a new life opened to these outcasts of society. {3SM 238.3}

For our sake Jesus emptied Himself of His glory; He clothed His divinity with humanity that He might touch humanity, that His personal presence might be among us, that we might know that He was acquainted with all our trials, and sympathized with our grief, that every son and daughter of Adam might understand that Jesus is the friend of sinners (ST April 18, 1892). {7BC 927.1}

Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of all the gifts of heaven and to exclude the rest of God's family in the world. But Christ came to break down every wall of partition. He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth. {9T 190.4}

He passed no human being by as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself, He presented a lesson appropriate to the time and the circumstances. Every neglect or insult shown by men to their fellow men only made Him more conscious of their need of His divine-human sympathy. He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them the children of God. {9T 191.2}

The Saviour had not come to set aside what patriarchs and prophets had spoken; for He Himself had spoken through these representative men. All the truths of God's word came from Him. But these priceless gems had been placed in false settings. Their precious light had been made to minister to error. God desired them to be removed from their settings of error and replaced in the framework of truth. This work only a divine hand could accomplish. By its connection with error, the truth had been serving the cause of the enemy of God and man. Christ had come to place it where it would glorify God, and work the salvation of humanity. {DA 287.4}

To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature

repeats His invitation, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28. {DA 289.1}

Jesus began His work by breaking Satan’s power over the suffering. He restored the sick to health, gave sight to the blind, and healed the lame, causing them to leap for joy and to glorify God. He restored to health those who had been infirm and bound by Satan’s cruel power many years. With gracious words He comforted the weak, the trembling, and the desponding. The feeble, suffering ones whom Satan held in triumph, Jesus wrenched from his grasp, bringing to them soundness of body and great joy and happiness. He raised the dead to life, and they glorified God for the mighty display of His power. He wrought mightily for all who believed on Him. {EW 159.3}

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man’s necessity. He “took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,” that He might minister to every need of humanity. Matthew 8:17. The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character. {MH 17.1}

Varied were the circumstances and needs of those who besought His aid, and none who came to Him went away unhelped. From Him flowed a stream of healing power, and in body and mind and soul men were made whole. {MH 17.2}

In every human being, however fallen, He beheld a son of God, one who might be restored to the privilege of His divine relationship.—*Education*, p. 79. (1903) {Ev 55.3}

The Saviour made each work of healing an occasion for implanting divine principles in the mind and soul. This was the purpose of His work. He imparted earthly blessings, that He might incline the hearts of men to receive the gospel of His grace. {MH 20.1}

The life of Christ was filled with words and acts of benevolence, sympathy, and love. He was ever attentive to listen to and relieve the woes of those who came to Him. {EW 160.1}

Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer. {MH 113.1}

God is just as willing to restore the sick to health now as when the Holy Spirit spoke these words through the psalmist [Psalm 107:19, 20]. And Christ is the same compassionate physician now that He was during His earthly ministry. In Him there is healing balm for every disease, restoring power for every infirmity. {MH 226.1}

It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare It to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. {DA 321.3}

No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. "Man turns from God, not God from him." Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests with the sinner. By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power. Thus he passes on from one stage of resistance to another, until at last the light will fail to impress, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. Then even "the light that is in thee" has become darkness. The very truth we do know has become so perverted as to increase the blindness of the soul. {MB 93.1}

It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul. Thus it had been with these Jewish leaders. They were convinced that a divine power attended Christ, but in order to resist the truth, they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. In doing this they deliberately chose deception; they yielded themselves to Satan, and henceforth they were controlled by his power. {DA 322.2}