



THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



## Sermon Series Notes

### “A Confrontation with Truth” (Mark 3:1-6)

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Jesus came to institute a new covenant, a covenant revealed in the old covenant (Rom.3:21). The new covenant grants man righteousness by faith, apart from law. *Once the new covenant is instituted, there is no longer any need for the old one.* Jewish Christians in the NT church had a very difficult time embracing this truth, and the practical implications that went along with it. Many in the church today have the same problem, and there are those who teach at best a mixture of the old covenant with the new covenant – belief in Jesus, but adherence to certain aspects of the law as well. The Hebrews Roots Movement is just one example of this kind of false teaching. Others include people in the church who simply cannot let go of certain aspects of the principles, regulations, and practices of the old covenant.

The book of Hebrews was written specifically to prove how the new covenant completely supersedes the old covenant, and how much better the new is from the old. Galatians was specifically written because some false teachers had led people their astray, taking them back to the principles & regulations of the old covenant. See Gal.1:6-9; 3:1-3; 5:1-8.

One of the points Paul stressed in understanding and living according to the new covenant is that there is no longer a need to observe the special feasts and holy days that were part of the law. This is one of the points that sincere believers in the church struggle with even today. See Gal.4:9-11; Col.2:16-17. This does not mean it is wrong to study the feasts and holy days that were observed under the law, or in the right context celebrate these feasts, etc. We should study them to learn of the shadows they represent, and the reality we now have in Christ. But some are practicing them, and encouraging others to practice them, and they are doing so in manner and with the attitude that those of us who do not are at best less spiritual. I say with all biblical authority, this is simply not true.

Some will argue that Paul continued to observe Jewish feasts, but he tells us why he did so in I Cor.9:19-23.

Another clear passage that confirms the truth that there is no need to practice customs related to the old covenant is Galatians 2:11-16, noting verse 14.

Peter was encouraged to violate the law of a kosher diet in Acts 10, immediately afterward learning the spiritual significance behind that physical lesson. And according to Gal.2:14, Peter did not continue to observe Jewish customs associated with the OT law, except when he acted in a manner that misrepresented the gospel (Galatians 2:11ff), or to, like Paul, attempt to reach his fellow unbelieving Jews (I Cor.9:19-23).

The controversy between the religious establishment of the day and Jesus continues this week in Mark chapter three. Read Mark 3:1-6.

## THE CONTEXT

The context of this healing is the previous ample, clear, verifiable testimony to the truth Jesus both represents and proclaims, yet these religious leaders have rejected. As a result, it is inevitable for there to be more controversy, unless of course Jesus acquiesces to their perspective, and backs down from His assertions about the falsehood they represent & teach, or they repent.

Jesus is not a bully looking for a brawl, he is simply the physical embodiment of all truth. And when truth and falsehood meet, if one or the other does not back down, there's going to be confrontation.

The surface issue is that of the perceived violation of the Sabbath. These Jewish leaders had a legalistic view of what it meant to violate the Sabbath. The Pharisees brand of religion was one of religious rules, regulations, traditions, etc. They had added so much religious tradition to the law that the spirit of the law was lost in their legalistic attempt to please God. Jesus repeatedly tried to straighten out their wrong thinking, but to no avail.

Once again another gospel writer adds something to this story that Mark leaves out, and is helpful in our understanding. See Matthew 12:9-12. See also Luke 14:1-6. They had nothing to say because there was nothing they could say. See John 5:1-10, 16-18.

The truth is that neither Jesus nor His disciples had violated the spirit of the Sabbath. And according to Jesus neither had David when he ate the consecrated bread which was lawful only for the priests to eat. The purpose of the Sabbath was for man to rest. It's physical, practical observance also has spiritual meaning (See Hebrews 4:1-11).

Despite the legalistic system these Pharisees and teachers of the law were enslaved to, and as a result their wrongful condemnation of Jesus and His disciples over what they deemed a violation of the Sabbath, there is a deeper issue here, and that is their underlying attitude toward Jesus, and the authority He not only professes to have but also demonstrates by the miracles He performs. They already had disdain for Jesus, but now it has grown to outright hatred. And this despite the fact that He has done nothing wrong.

Both Psalm 35:19 & 69:4 prophesy that the Messiah would be hated "without reason." See also John 15:25.

## THE COLLABERATION

One interesting definition of collaboration is "Traitorous cooperation with an enemy." The Herodians were influential political supporters of Herod (Antipas at this time). The Pharisees were anti-Herod. The point is simply that the Pharisees and Herodians had absolutely nothing in common, except their disdain & hatred of Jesus. It was the same with Caiphas and Pilate, Caiphas being the high priest over the Jewish people and Pilate a governor of Rome. It was also this way with Herod and Pilate; Luke 23:12 That day Herod and Pilate became friends – before this they had been enemies.

People of the world will come together against Christ (& Christians) when they won't come together for any other reason.

Rev.11:7-10 prophesies a day when two of God's most choice servants are killed, and the world rejoices at their deaths by sending gifts to one another. It is what I call the first anti-Christmas.

## THE CONFRONTATION

Jesus initiates the climax of the confrontation here when he heals this man with the shriveled hand. By doing so he is once again proving a point, the falsehood of what these Jewish leaders both teach and represent. Please note with me the specifics of this confrontation.

### Jesus' anger

- II Cor.11:29...Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?
- I got angry when I realized NFL Charles Lee had fallen prey to false teaching. I got angry when I found out the other Charles Lee was divorcing his wife (who is on our staff) and headed away from a commitment to Christ, and that not long after God graciously freed him from what could have been an even lengthier prison sentence.
- Eph.4:26 In your anger do not sin (Psalm 4:4)
- James 1:20...man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.
- While there is an unrighteous anger, there is also a righteous anger, and that of course is the anger we see here in Jesus.

### Jesus' deep distress

- The word could also be translated "grieved." This is the difference between man's anger and God's anger (righteous indignation).
- See II Cor.2:4

### Jesus' unwillingness to back down

- Three issues are involved here, honoring & obeying God, the proclamation of truth, and a demonstration of love.
  - a. Prov.13:12 Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.
  - b. Rev.3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.

The issue of truth here is not truth that is debatable and/or unimportant (non-essential to salvation). This is not an issue over whether Christians can dance or not, drink beer or wine, etc. It's not an issue over one's pre, mid, or post trib view of the rapture of the church. It's not even a debate over Calvinism verses Arminianism. No, this is an issue of truth that determines one's eternal destiny. Please note with me what Jesus said in Matthew 23:

Matthew 23:15 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much *a son of hell* as you are.

The Pharisees and teachers of the law were zealously committed in their beliefs, but those false beliefs reserved for them a future place in hell. Because people's souls are at stake, Jesus, the embodiment of all truth, would not back down from a dramatic and eternally vital confrontation. He is willing to die for the truth.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. (Also Prov.16:25)

Their stubborn hearts

- They had been presented undeniable truth, yet they denied it. One may be ignorant, but after being informed correctly and ignoring the information they become "willfully ignorant."
- II Peter 3:5 But they *deliberately* forget...(KJV willingly ignorant of)
  - o Resolved or determined.
- Jer.13:10 These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts...
- The condition of one's heart determines the degree to which one can be deceived.
- Jer.17:9 The heart is deceitfully wicked
- I Tim.4:1
- I Kings 22; Who will lure Ahab to his death? I will be a lying spirit in the mouths of his prophets.

PRACTICAL LESSONS

### **How do we respond when confronted with truth?**

Have you been confronted with truth? What has been your response?

Rev.3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.

### **The great need to stand for and proclaim truth, especially the truth of the gospel.**

For a Jewish person to believe that eating a kosher diet, "keeping the law" through religious observances, celebrating the feasts, etc. is doing them any good in terms of righteousness/salvation, is a deception and a lie. They are headed for hell, just as much as the person who sits in church week after week, believing that church attendance and the fact that they are a "good person" merits them favor with God.

We must proclaim the truth of the gospel, and nothing but the truth of the gospel. To be sensitive to a person's religious beliefs for the sake of an opportunity to share Christ with them is worthy, and exactly what Paul the apostle did again and again (I Cor.9:19-23), but at some point we must share truth, and people's response to that truth is not our responsibility.

One of my dreams as a young person was to be a rock and roll star. I idolized so many rock stars, and after becoming a Christian, I prayed for those same idols to become followers of Christ like I had. I still pray for people like Ringo and Paul McCartney, etc. Years ago I was elated to hear that Rick Wakeman had become a Christian. Around that same time, I was saddened to learn that Cat Stevens had become a Muslim. I realize that most of the younger people here have no idea who Rick Wakeman and Cat Stevens are, so let me pause for a brief educational moment.

Show Roundabout video; Roundabout was released in 1972 and hit # 13 on the U.S. Billboard chart. It is the most played live song that Yes performed.

Show Cat Stevens video; Morning Has Broken was actually a Christian hymn first published in 1931. Cat Stevens version of the hymn was recorded in 1971 on his album (vinyl) "Teaser and the Firecat." It hit # 6 on the Billboard chart, and in 1972 # 1 on the U.S. easy listening chart. The piano arrangement on Cat Stevens "Morning Has Broken" was arranged and composed by Rick Wakeman. The original Morning Has Broken hymn lasted only 45 seconds, and Cat Stevens producer said he could not put a 45 second song on his album, that it had to be at least three minutes long. Stevens heard Rick Wakeman playing a tune in the recording studio, and said he'd like something like what he was playing in the beginning, end, and possibly the middle of Morning Has Broken. But Wakeman said that piece was for a solo album he was planning. Nevertheless, Stevens convinced Wakeman to adapt it for his recording. The piece would later become the song "Catherine Howard" on Wakeman's solo album. She was the queen of England from 1540-41. Wakeman and Stevens are British. If you listen to the song you will immediately here the resemblance to the piano piece on Morning Has Broken.

Not too long ago I read an article about Rick Wakeman and his Christian beliefs.

"I'm a Christian in my beliefs, but I have a view that I know a lot of people disagree with. It's my own personal view that we have lots of religions and beliefs around the world, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. And in fact, there are a lot of different denominations within Christianity. I believe there is just one god – it's the same one. We all have different routes of getting to that god. At the end of the day, we all have our own beliefs in the ultimate power, but it's the same god, with different names. When Cat Stevens converted to Islam, a lot of people said to me, "You did 'Morning is Broken' with him and you're a Christian. You should tell him that Christianity is what he should be looking at, not Islam." I said, "You know what, I'm thrilled he converted to Islam, because he's found a faith. He's found something he can believe in that he's been looking for." I'd be more upset if he never found anything. I feel sorry for people who don't find anything."

And I feel sorry for Rick Wakeman, and the people he's leading astray by his erroneous perspective of truth.

### **The courage needed to stand for and proclaim truth.**

I have yet to die for stand upon and proclamation of truth, and I pray I never have to. On what I have considered important doctrinal issues, I have lost friends, been in uncomfortable conversations, and spent considerable time seeking to sway someone toward truth, or away from the false teaching they have embraced. But I have never to my knowledge had someone plot my death as a result of my stand for truth. But that day may come.

"There exists for the first time in my lifetime a very real possibility that preaching the Bible may land you in jail in the United States. Current conversations about hate speech may in fact find their way into the law books. In Europe and Canada this is already the case." (Fatal Drift, p.43).

Francis Schaeffer was a Christian theologian and philosopher (1912-84) said "As we have now come to the famed year 1984, what we need in light of the accommodation around us is a generation of radicals for truth and for Christ. We need a young generation and others who will be willing to stand for loving

confrontation, but real confrontation, with the current forms of the world spirit as they surround us today..." (The Evangelical Disaster, Schaffer).

"Old Paths, New Power," pp.24-25

Joshua confronted the people of Israel (Joshua 24)

Elijah confronted the false prophets of Baal (I Kings 18)

All the prophets had confrontational ministries

Azariah and 80 other courageous priests confronted King Uzziah by (II Chron.26:17-18).

Paul confronted Peter in Antioch (Galatians 2:11,14)

### **Expectation of hatred and persecution from the world.**

Please do not be discouraged when the people of this world unite in their opposition to Christianity. It has always been this way, and it always will be. And the opposition is not logical, it has no reason, it is because we identify ourselves with Jesus Christ. See John 15:18-20a.

The spirit at work in regard to the world's united opposition and hatred toward Christians is the spirit of antichrist. That spirit can manifest through outright rebellious acts, but it also disguises itself in religious attire. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (II Cor.11:13-15). Refer also to I Tim.1:1; John 8:42-47.

One of the best ways for Satan to deceive people is through religious deception; See John 16:1-3.

The Orlando massacre was motivated by a religion that is opposed to the beliefs of Christianity. To believe that Islam is ultimately a peaceful religion is to have your head in the sand, unwilling to admit the truth (Just like those who opposed Jesus).

While we grieve for those murdered in Orlando, it is likely that many souls are now in hell because of this devilish act. My God's instruction in the Bible is to love all men as He loves all men (not murder them in cold blood), but at the same time to be uncompromising in regard to truth. The truth is Islam is a false religion leading many to a path of destruction.

But the truth is also that homosexuality is not only a sin, but a perversion of God's original intention.

And the truth is also that both the homosexual *and* the heterosexual who lives an immoral lifestyle, unwilling to repent and receive the forgiveness Jesus offers is headed for a Christ-less eternity.

See Luke 13:1-5.

### **CONCLUSION**

Are you standing for truth, or have you compromised with the world? Are you confronting falsehood, or cowering like Peter at the enemy's fire?

The story is told that Alexander the Great was judging some in his army for offences during battle. One young soldier stood before him, and the charge was cowardice in battle, something that Alexander most

despised. When asked his name, Alexander wondered if he had heard correctly, so he asked again, “*What is your name?*” To which again the soldier replied, “Alexander, sir.” Filled with anger Alexander the Great stood to his feet, looked this man right in the eye and said, “Son, change your conduct, or change your name.”