



Mark 2

Mark 2
Tape #8030
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In the second chapter, in the beginning of the third chapter, Mark gives us little episodes from the life of Christ and in these, he is in each case showing us the animosity that is beginning to develop between Jesus and the religious leaders of that day. And we find how they are beginning to find fault with Him, how they're beginning to watch Him carefully, criticizing Him, how that they are beginning to look for reasons and ways by which they might accuse Him. It culminates in chapter three, verse six, where we read, "And the Pharisees went forth, and immediately took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him." And so we see now this building of the criticism and animosity against Jesus.

It is bad to develop a critical spirit. Once you develop a critical spirit, then you find that you are able to find fault with anything and everything. It's sad when a person puts himself on the place of judgment where he feels that he has the right to judge the actions, the activities, the thoughts, the intents, the motives of other people. I have found that this can happen individually and it can happen actually to a church, that you can develop this critical spirit, begin to find fault with the pastor and once a church has found fault with the pastor and gets rid of him, they find fault with every other pastor that comes. I would never go to a church to pastor that have found fault with the previous pastor and wanted to get rid of him because I knew it would only be a matter of time until they found fault with me and want to get rid of me. If that's the mold you're in, it's tragic because it colors the way you look at things, because you're always looking with an analytical, critical mind. Looking to what is wrong, finding fault.

And so this is the mindset now of the religious leaders. They are going to be finding fault with everything that Jesus does. They're going to be challenging and questioning everything, and thus, in chapter two, he shows us in each one of the little vignettes that we have in chapter two. We see the fault finding, the criticism of the religious leaders.

So it begins when Jesus returns again to Capernaum. In the last part of chapter one, Jesus healed the man with leprosy who went around telling everybody what Jesus did and the fame of Jesus grew so great that Jesus could not anymore go openly into a city, but had to stay in the outskirts, in the deserted areas, and the people came out to Him.

But He had slipped back into the city of Capernaum; and it was noised that he was in the house (2:1).

He couldn't come in unnoticed. Someone saw Him and soon the whole city knew that Jesus was in the house there in Capernaum, probably the house of Peter.

And immediately many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them (2:2).

So as soon as the word got around, Jesus was there, the people began to crowd into the house. In those days, life was pretty much public. If a person's door was open, that was an invitation for anyone to come in. But people always left the door open. There was a tremendous value placed upon hospitality. And we find that in the scriptures, this value of hospitality, and it still exists among the Bedouin tribesmen today. It goes way back, this real value of being hospitable, entertaining strangers. And we find the scripture even encouraging us toward this kind of hospitality. "Be careful to entertain strangers: you might be entertaining angels unaware" (Hebrews 13:2). And like Abraham who showed hospitality to the angels and that was the idea, you never know, it might be some servant of God. And so they had the door open and soon the house was filled with people, insomuch they that were crowding around the door trying to get in. And Jesus was in there preaching the Word unto them.

There came into Jesus four men who were carrying a friend in a stretcher who was paralyzed. And when they could not come into the house because of the crowd around the door, these fellows being very resourceful climbed up on the roof and they removed a part of the roofing. And they let their friend down

into the room in front of Jesus (2:3,4).

I can imagine the reaction of the crowd to hear the racket and the noise up on the roof as these guys were tearing the roof apart. And then to see this fellow as he is being gradually descended in front of Jesus on the stretcher, as they are letting him down. I really believe that Jesus probably chuckled. I do, I just see Him sort of chuckling at this guy coming down in front of Him.

And Jesus, when He saw their faith, he said to the one who was paralyzed, Son, thy sins are forgiven thee (2:5).

It is suggested by some commentators that his paralysis could be related to syphilis because in those days, they did not have the penicillin drugs and there was no cure for syphilis and of course, it is a progressive disease attacking the brain and ultimately causing paralysis and blindness. And thus, an association between the man's paralysis and his condition.

Quite often, there is a connection between sin and a person's physical condition. If you drink excessively, you will ultimately get sclerosis of the liver as the liver is no longer able to filter out and to purify and it sort of breaks down and you get the sclerosis of the liver. And in many cases, there is a direct relationship between a person's sin and their physical condition. Jesus seemed to make that kind of a relationship with this man. But when He said to him, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," I believe that the four fellows who brought him still standing up on the roof and peering down through the hole that they had made in the roof, I'm certain that they wanted to say, No, no, no, Lord, that's not why we brought him here.

Many times people do come to the Lord for wrong reasons. Many times people come to the Lord just for the perks, the benefits. They're interested in the healing of the body, they're not necessarily interested in the forgiveness of sins, and I think that many times when we pray for people we don't really pray for the basic problem of sin in the life. We're so prone to just pray that God will work with the symptoms. As we mention, we maybe have a friend who is becoming an alcoholic and we pray, God, help him to stop drinking, just make him sick every time he drinks, help him to stop drinking, Lord. And it could be that he stops drinking and he dies sober, a sober sinner. So what have you really helped him? The real problem is sin. And Jesus was dealing with the first issue first. The greatest need in a person's life is sins forgiven. More important that your sins be forgiven than you be healed of your paralysis. And Jesus was dealing with the basic issues first. "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." But though this may have upset his friends, we know that it upset the Pharisees even more because,

They, the scribes that were sitting there, were reasoning in their hearts, and they said, Why does this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sin but God only (2:6,7)?

Accusing Jesus now of blasphemy. This is the beginning now. As Jesus declares, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," their response is that's blasphemy, only God can forgive sins. Now, they're half correct. They were wrong when they thought it was blasphemy, they were correct in their assumption that only God can forgive sins. You see, sin is the violation of God's law. And thus, sin is against God. And only God can forgive sin.

When David was praying, after he was faced by his friend, Nathan the prophet, with his guilt, and as he prayed, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions," He said, "Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned and done this great evil in Thy sight" (Psalms 51:1-4). He sinned against God when he committed adultery with Bathsheba because God said, Thou shalt not take thy neighbor's wife. He sinned against God when he had Uriah killed, for God said, Thou shalt not murder. And so David acknowledged, My sin is against God, against Thee, and if the sin is against God, then only God can forgive sin.

Now you may sin against me in the sense that you might go out and tell lies, oh you wouldn't, but others to go out and tell lies about me. And there have been a few. And your lies may affect my reputation. There was a guy by the name of John Todd several years ago. He's been lost in the woodwork long since but he was going around the country, oh man, this guy was making up real whoppers. And he sort of went by the philosophy, tell it big enough and everybody will believe it. He really was telling some wild stories about how he was the head of the Witches of the World or whatever and he came to Calvary Chapel here and gave me \$7 million to start Maranatha Music to corrupt the Christian young people and so forth with rock-type of music and a lot of people around the country were listening to him. He was going to predominantly Baptist

churches and giving his spiel. And actually what happened is that we started getting a lot of cancellations of people who were getting my tapes because they listened to the tapes of John Todd and, My, the man's a real sneaky guy, teaches the Bible but yet he's being used by, been bought off by the Witches Society of the World and all. Now, he never did but had he come and said, Chuck, I've told all these lies, I'm so sorry, would you forgive me? I would be bound by scripture to say, Yes, I forgive you. But you see, though the sin may have affected my reputation in the minds of some people, his real sin is against God. And because I say I forgive you, that doesn't bring him forgiveness from God. He has to ask God for forgiveness because against God he sinned because it was God who said, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy brother. So his sin was basically against God, that's all sin is, thus only God can really forgive. I say I forgive you but that doesn't do you much good. You've got to go to God and deal with God with the issue.

So here their assumption, only God can forgive sin, is correct. But their assumption that He is blaspheming was not correct. I think that as far as the fellow who was lying there paralyzed on this cot, when Jesus said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," I think there was a great sigh of relief. I think there was a heavy burden that was lifted. I think there was a burst of joy in his heart. Because David, when the prophet said to him, Your sin is forgiven, he wrote, "O how happy is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1).

Oh, the joy, the relief to realize that my sin is forgiven, that horrible thing that has been plaguing my conscience, and think of this now. If indeed the paralysis was related to an affair in which he got syphilis, as he was watching this disease progress, and as he finally was paralyzed as a result, lying there day after day, haunted by this experience that has brought such disaster to his life. Don't you know that over and over in his mind he was saying, Why did I ever do that? How could I ever be so stupid? And was just killing himself with the sense of guilt as he saw the consequences of his folly.

This past week as we were talking to the Junior High School children up at the camp, we were warning and seeking to warn them of the folly even of one venture into sin. And how that just one foolish moment can bring lifelong consequences. Just one moment, one foolish decision, made in a split second, can affect you the rest of your life. When we used to live up on North Broadway in Santa Ana, when I was in high school, young fellow lived next door to us and he had just gotten his driver's license. He was out driving here in Orange County and there was a car going slowly in front of him, he decided to pass it on the curve, just that, you pull out and you think, should I, should I not, and that moment of decision, I'll try it and he gunned and started to go around and a car came around the corner, head on and this fellow injured his spine, is paralyzed from the neck down the rest of his life. Affected because of one foolish moment. And when that happens to you, you relive the experience over and over again and you beat yourself to death mentally saying, Why did I ever do it? The lifetime of grief over one foolish moment.

Here is this man, beaten down emotionally, spiritually, because of his guilt and Jesus looks with eyes of compassion and tenderness and says, Son, your sin is forgiven you. What a relief. It's gone, the guilt. But the scribes, thinking, That's blasphemy, who can forgive sins but God? And Jesus now addressed their thoughts.

He said, Why do you reason these things in your hearts (2:8)?

He knew what was going on in their hearts. John said, "He didn't need that anybody should testify to Him of men: He knew men" (John 2:24,25). He knew what was in them, He knew what they were thinking. He said,

What is easier to say to this man, Thy sins are forgiven you; or to say, Arise, take up your bed, and walk (2:9)?

Obviously to say "Your sins be forgiven you" because there is no way to prove or to disprove that you have spoken with authority. When sins are forgiven, there is nothing that we can see visibly immediately that demonstrates that the words were spoken with power and authority. Now in Sunday school we used to see the little black hearts turn white. And so we say, it turns red, the blood of Jesus, and then it comes white and it's glorious, we can see it. But you really can't see it. You can't see the change in a person's heart when the sins are forgiven. Thus, a quack can go around just saying, Your sins are forgiven, your sins are forgiven, your sins are forgiven. And how could you prove that the guy was a quack? You can't see it.

But if you say to a man who is paralyzed, Rise, take up your bed and walk, immediately it will be

obvious whether or not there is authority and power in your words. If the fellow still lies there, though he might struggle a bit but just can't make it, then you say, there's no power or authority in this man's words. But if, on the other hand, the man rises, takes his cot or stretcher, and walks out the door, then there is visible proof before you that this man speaks with authority and power. And so Jesus said, What is easier to say, Your sins are forgiven, or to rise, take up your bed and walk?

But that you might know [and here's the whole key] that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins (2:10)

He's proving now there is authority and there's power in His words. I'm going to do the more difficult.

(He turned to the man and He said), Rise, take up your bed, and walk. And immediately the man rose, took his bed, and walked; and the people were all amazed, they said, Boy, never seen anything like this before. This is something new (2:10,11).

This is the first time in the gospel of Mark that Jesus takes this Messianic title of Son of man. He will use it again several times, He makes reference to himself as the Son of man.

Going back to the book of Daniel chapter seven, verse thirteen, as Daniel speaks about the night visions, he said, "I behold, one like the Son of man, He came with the clouds of heaven, He came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13,14). So this title Son of man in Daniel is a reference to the Messiah and His receiving of the kingdom and thus, it became a term or one of the titles of the Messiah was that of Son of man. And so Jesus is using this title when He proves that He has power to forgive sins. That man walking out the door with his bed is proof that Jesus has power, that you might know that I have power on earth to forgive sins. He is claiming divine prerogatives. He is claiming to be God. Only God can forgive sins. That you might know that I, the Son of man, has power on earth to forgive sins. He then commanded the man to take his bed and to walk. And He proved His power to forgive sins.

Son of man will be used again in the second chapter, verse twenty-eight, "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." Chapter eight, thirty-one, "He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and the scribes, He'd be killed, and after three days He would rise again." Mark 8:38, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes into the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Mark 9:9, "And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what they had seen, till the Son of man was risen from the dead."

9:12, "And he answered and told them, Elijah verily comes first, and restores all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought." 9:31, "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, they will kill him; and after that he is killed, he will rise the third day." Mark 10:33, "Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and they'll deliver him to the Gentiles:" 10:45, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life as a ransom for many." 13:26, "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 13:32, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." "For the Son of man," verse thirty-four, "is as a man taking a far journey, left his house, gave the authority to his servants, and every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 14:21, "The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good for that man if he had never been born." 14:41, "For he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." And finally, in verse sixty-two, "And Jesus said, I am: and you will see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

So this Messianic title is something that Jesus took for Himself and used it over and over again. "That you might know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins." Isn't that glorious? He has power

on earth to forgive your sins, my sins. And thank God we have been forgiven by Jesus Christ.

Now he went forth again by the sea side (2:13);

The house was packed, He couldn't minister to all the people so He had to get out into the open spaces, and as He was going by the sea side,

and all the multitude were following him, and he was teaching them. As he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of customs, and He said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed Jesus (2:13,14).

The village of Capernaum or the city of Capernaum was on the main route from Europe to Africa. The land of Israel is the land bridge between Europe and Africa and all of the goods that pass from Europe to Africa had to pass through the land of Israel, and one of the first places that they came on this route from Damascus, the large place, was Capernaum. And thus, that is where they had the custom agents who would collect the import and export taxes for the goods that were passing through.

Matthew or Levi, the son of Alphaeus, was one of the tax collectors collecting the custom taxes on the goods that came through. Most of the tax collectors were noted crooks and hated. They would extort money from the people. As a general rule, they were given a certain quota that they were to turn over to the Roman government. Everything that they could get over the quota they could keep, and thus, there was a tremendous incentive to really gouge the people but they had the power of the Roman government behind them. And thus, they were extremely hated. We pick up the word "publican," that actually is the word that means "tax collector." And so He saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, he was sitting there at his seat of customs. And Jesus said, Follow me, and he arose and followed Jesus. His commitment was probably even greater than that of Peter and Andrew, James and John, because they left their ships and followed Jesus, but they could always go back fishing again. James and John, their father Zebedee, owned the fishing vessels, perhaps even a fleet, had servants and so forth, and so they could always go back to the old life if following Jesus didn't work out. But with Matthew, he could never go back and get his job again. Once he left his job, that was complete, a complete shutting the door on the past and I've decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back. There could be no turning back for Matthew.

It came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house (2:15),

First thing he did in following Jesus is, going to bid farewell to the old buddies, the tax collectors, they had to sort of run around with each other because no one else wanted to associate with them. And so, he threw a big party at his house, a big feast where Jesus might be able to speak to his friends and they be captured by this man. So "it came to pass as Jesus sat at meat in his house,"

many publicans and sinners (2:15)

classified together because you were a tax collector, you were a sinner. You remember when Zacchaeus climbed the tree to see Jesus, he also was a tax collector. Couldn't mix with the crowd, had to get up high away from the crowd in order to see Jesus. And Jesus came to the tree, told him to come down, he was going to come to his house and eat and they found fault again with Jesus for going to the house of the tax collector, publican. And Jesus said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost" (Luke 19:10), using the title again, Son of man. And Zacchaeus said, "Lord, if I had defrauded from any man, I'm going to return to him double in all." And Jesus said, "Today, salvation is come to this house" (Luke 19:8,9). It was very common for the tax collectors to defraud. But the sign that there was true conversion was the repentance, the change, the restoration. And so there were publicans and sinners

sitting together with Jesus and his disciples: there were many, and they followed him (2:15).

And here again, now we have then these scribes and Pharisees, these religious leaders critical.

When they saw him eating with the publicans and sinners, [they didn't say it to Jesus but] they said to his disciples, How is it that he eats and drinks with publicans and sinners (2:15,16)?

Critical, finding fault. In each one of these little stories that we read of Jesus here, how that they are looking for things to accuse Him of. You see, to them, if you would even touch a sinner, his sin could be transferred on to you. And so when they would walk down the street, they would hold their robes tightly about them so that their robes could not swing and maybe touch a person who was sinful. They wanted no association, not even touching. But here is Jesus eating, which is even in that culture, more than just

touching, it's becoming one with the person. And so their challenge of the disciples. Why is Jesus eating with the publicans and sinners?

And when Jesus heard it (2:17)

Evidently, they said it loud enough that He could hear them,

he said unto them, They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick (2:17):

Recognizing and admitting that He was in sick company. But He came to heal. In the previous chapter, we find Jesus touching the leprous man, something that no one would do. But He touched only to heal. He kept company only to save. They that are whole don't need the physician, those that are sick.

And I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (2:17).

I think that we would be shocked today if Jesus were here today at some of the places He would go, and some of the people He will minister to. I wonder if maybe we wouldn't be like the scribes and Pharisees, a little shocked and say, Wait a minute, why is He going there? Only going to minister. "To seek and to save those that are lost." He's always interested in the person with the greatest need. Didn't come to call the righteous to change, I've called the sinners to change.

And the disciples of John [we are told] and the Pharisees used to fast (2:18):

Evidently, this was one of those days in the year in which there was a general fast among the people and they did have days in which they observe fasting. And probably on one of these religious fast days, the disciples of Jesus weren't fasting, they were eating.

And so the Pharisees said to Jesus, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples don't fast (2:18)?

They addressed the disciples concerning Jesus, now they're addressing Jesus concerning the disciples.

And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days (2:19,20).

So while I'm here, Jesus said, I'm the bridegroom, it's rejoicing time, it's the feasting time. Days will come, I'll be taken away, those days they will fast. Fasting has been a part of religious experiences, not exclusively in the Judeo Christian but in many different religious settings and backgrounds. Fasting is a part of religious observances. I feel that there is a value in fasting, a spiritual value that can be gained by fasting, but not just in a mechanical kind of a, Well, I'm going to fast so I can be blessed. I'm going to fast until God works. That puts fasting in a works kind of a thing, seeking to obligate God to do a work for you because you've been fasting. Whatever God does for you, He does purely through grace. You do not and can not deserve the work of God in your life. And if a person is fasting in order to receive some special blessing from God, he's got the wrong concept of fasting.

I can remember reading of a minister who was going to fast until he heard from God. And he fasted for forty-three days and he heard from God. He died. But to me, the whole concept of fasting and the value that I see is that there is and we're aware of this conflict, this inner conflict between the flesh and the spirit. The Bible speaks about this warfare that is going on within us, the flesh lusting against the spirit and the spirit lusting against the flesh, the two being contrary. And how that we often find ourselves doing things that we really don't want to do or didn't intend to do. Now recognizing the two natures, the fleshly and the spiritual, we are very careful to see that the fleshly nature or the fleshly man is fed three times a day on a regular basis. We don't want to miss a meal. We're very careful to see that we have our regular meals. But the spiritual man is often fasting because we are not feeding the spiritual man, we're not into the Word on a regular basis, it's sort of hit and miss. If you would feed your spiritual man like you feed your physical man, or you'd probably extremely strong spiritually. But if you would feed the physical man like you feed the spiritual man, you'd probably be dead. Such irregular eating habits. So in that that is the general characteristic of making certain that we are fed physically but so often neglecting the spiritual feeding, it is no wonder that in this battle, the spirit against the flesh, that we often find the flesh overcoming the spirit. So fasting is sort of a reversal of the normal process in that I am feeding the spiritual man, getting into the Word of God and feeding my spirit while I am letting the fleshly man go without food for a while, let him get weak and weakened as a result of not eating. And thus, as I am feeding on the things of the spirit, I am

built up spiritually, I become strong spiritually. And that to me is the real value of fasting. Not fasting for things, not fasting to obligate God to answer a certain request or whatever, but just desiring to build up the spiritual man and to become strong in the things of the spirit by heavy feeding on the Word of God. And waiting upon God, fellowshiping, praying, fast and prayer is usually associated and must be associated with real effective fasting, it's got to be fasting and prayer.

So Jesus said, the time will come when they will, while I'm here, they don't need to. The bridegroom is with them, we're going to celebrate. But the time will come when they will fast. And then Jesus speaks out against these who are criticizing Him, and He said,

No man also sews a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that is filled in will take it away from the old, and the tear will be made worse (2:21).

In those days, they didn't have sanforized shrunk. And the first washing, there was always a great shrinking of the clothes. And thus, if you would take an old garment that have been washed over and over again, the shrinkage is all out of it. And you take, if you have a tear, you sew a new patch of new cloth in that old garment. The first time you wash it, the patch shrinks and as it shrinks, it will reap out the old garment. So you just don't sew new patches on old garment.

Nor do you put new wine in the old leather wineskins (2:22):

You put them in fresh wineskins that are soft leather, soft and supple, but the leather when it gets hard, if you put the new wine in, it will crack, it will split the hardened leather. So you put it into the soft, supple leather skins. What Jesus is saying is that this old religious system of which the scribes and the Pharisees were a part were not able to handle the new work that God was doing and wanting to do. And so God is going outside of the established religious system in order to do His new work because it would only, it would just break up, it would tear apart the old systems. And I have found that this is a general case through history. It's so easy for the wineskins to get old and hard and stiff and no longer pliable. And so when God is desiring to do a new work, He usually goes outside of the organized religious systems and begins a whole new work in that which is supple and soft and pliable. That's where basically I got my parable, Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be broken. And how important it is for us to remain flexible so that God can move as He desires to move, we not try to confine Him to a particular pattern, to a particular way, as we so often do when we get to be old skins, when we get all organized and the skins get tighter and stiffer and more rigid all the time. And so the religious systems of man, God so often wants to work but He goes outside of the established denominations and systems to begin a new work and a fresh work in the hearts and the lives.

And I really do believe that Calvary Chapel is a fresh work, that God created a new skin and that He wanted to do a new work and thus, He created this new skin to pour His spirit upon, to touch lives. And God help us not to get rigid, God help us in the days to come if the Lord should tarry, and if He tarries very long, we will pass from the scene, but in years to come, I'll tell you if they say, Well now when Chuck was here, this is the way Chuck did it, I'll come back and haunt them. We have to stay flexible, we have to stay open to be used by the Spirit of God. It's so important that we not get rigidly set, that is why we have fought against establishing a denominational relationship with the other Calvary Chapels. That's why none of them send us any reports, none of them send us any finances, they only borrow from us, all of the boys come home to Daddy, you know, but I don't want to see that kind of rigid controls established and set. I want to stay flexible, I want to stay open. And it's so important if we're going to see a continued move of God's Spirit. And that's what I desire, the continued move of God's Spirit. That we remain supple, pliable. So Jesus is saying, You guys, you old wineskins. God's going outside of the religious system, He's not going to come through the priesthood and so forth. He's going outside because He has a new work of His Spirit to do.

Then it came to pass (2:23),

And here's the last little story of chapter two, in which they're going to again find fault with Jesus, came to pass

that he went through the wheat fields or the grain fields (2:23)

They really didn't have corn like our corn here. Corn is an American thing with the American Indians. But the corn is barley corn, you've heard of barley corn, or wheat, it's corn of wheat or corn of barley.

And they were going through the fields and the disciples were picking on the sabbath day, these little ends of the barley or the wheat (2:23).

In late May, early June, the spring wheat begins to turn brown and you can actually pick the ear of it or the top of it and you rub it in your hands and as you rub it in your hands, you rub the husk off the chaff. And you can just get a good handful of wheat and wheat is very edible, it's a softer grain and when it's fresh like that, it's quite edible and of course, extremely nourishing and it has a great flavor, I've often taken the wheat and rubbed it and eat in that it actually turns into sort of a gum. We used to, when we were kids, with the chicken food, pick out all the wheat and then we would chew it until it turned to a gum and we would chew this wheat gum all day long. But it was healthy for us. Mom always let us do it because she knew wheat was healthy for us. But the disciples were on the sabbath day, picking this wheat, rubbing it in their hands, and eating the wheat,

And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful (2:24)?

You're not to do any work on the sabbath day. And according to their interpretation of the law, that constitutes work to pick that grain and rub it in your hands, real work, and eat it.

And he said unto them, Have you never read what David did, when he had a need, and was hungry, he, and those that were with him? How that he went to the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and he gave it also to those that were with him (2:25,26)?

Have you never read that? In other words, Jesus is saying that human need, human hunger, and to take care of human need is even greater than the observance of the sabbath day. And that David, because of the hunger and the need, did that which was of course not really lawful, only the priests were to eat the shewbread that was set out before the Lord, but because of the need, he did it because the actual human need justifies the action.

So he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath (2:27):

It was God's gift to man. It is important for the body to have a day in which there is the recuperation, the change of pace, the rest. And God made it for man's benefit. He didn't make man for the sabbath but He made sabbath for man's benefit. And then Jesus said that which no doubt upset them greatly.

Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath (2:28).

The issue that seems to create the greatest antagonism against Jesus is His failure to observe the sabbath day according to their traditions. Here we have now the sabbath day, the challenging of Jesus because He allows the disciples to take and eat the grain as they were going through the field, to pick it and to eat it as they're going through the field because they're hungry. And Jesus is facing this issue, He said, Look, I'm the Lord of the sabbath. It was made for man's benefit, and not to be a heavy yoke upon man as it had become under their traditional interpretations of the law. So the Lord of the sabbath.

As we move into chapter three, the next issue also took place on the sabbath day and it was the one that gelled their animosity against Jesus and brought the determination that He is a menace and He has to be put to death. It's over the sabbath day issue. So we'll get into that next week as we study the third chapter of Mark.

Father, we thank You that our Lord Jesus Christ is Lord over all and Lord of the sabbath. And Lord, we thank You that You are our rest, and we have entered into that glorious sabbath in Jesus where we have ceased from our own labors and Lord, we trust in Your righteousness imputed to us through faith. That which we could not do or attain or achieve for ourselves and of ourselves, You have done for us. And Lord, we're so grateful that You were made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God through You. We thank You Lord that You are our great high priest touched by the feelings of our infirmities because You were in all points tempted like we are. And You know what it is, Lord, to go through temptation and thus, we thank You for Your understanding and Your help as we, Lord, face temptations. Lord, what a joy it is to learn more and more about You, about Your nature, Your character, Your actions. Help us, Lord, that we might emulate You, be like You Lord in word, in deed. In Jesus' name, Amen.