

08. Mark 2:1 – 3:6



Liberating from paralysis of sin : Mark 2:1-5

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was **speaking the word** (the 'good news of God', 1:14) to them.

Then some people came, bringing to him a **paralysed** man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralysed man lay.



When Jesus saw their **faith**, he said to the paralysed man, “Son (τέκνον), **your sins are forgiven.**”

Liberating from paralysis of sin : Mark 2:6-7

Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, “Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

‘You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin’ (Psalm 85:2).

‘Do not turn to mediums or wizards; do not seek them out, to be defiled by them: I am YHWH your God ... A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be stoned to death, their blood is upon them’ (Leviticus 20:27).

‘Every man who preaches apostasy under the dominion of the spirits of Belial shall be judged according to the law relating to those possessed by a ghost or familiar spirit’ [Leviticus 20, 27]

Liberating from paralysis of sin : Mark 2:8-12

At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk’? But so that you may know that the **Son of Man** (Daniel 7:13) has **power** on earth to forgive sins” – he said to the paralytic – “I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.”

And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Eating with sinners. Solidarity Vs Separation : Mark 2:13-17

Jesus went out again beside the sea; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them.

As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he says to him, "Follow me."

And he got up and followed him.



Eating with sinners. Solidarity Vs Separation : Mark 2:13-17

And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many **tax collectors and sinners** were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples (first mention) – for there were many who followed him.

When the scribes of the Pharisees ('separated ones') saw that he was eating with **sinners and tax collectors**, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with **tax collectors and sinners?**"

When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

Liberating from slavish conformity to ritual : Mark 2:18-22

Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were **fasting**; Isaiah 58 follows
and people come and say to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"
Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the **bridegroom** is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.

Isaiah 58:1-3

Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet day after day they seek me

and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;

they ask of me righteous judgments,

they delight to draw near to God.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Isaiah 58:3-5

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to YHWH?

Isaiah 58:6-8

Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of YHWH shall be your rear guard.

Isaiah 58:9-11

Then you shall call, and YHWH will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.
If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
If you offer your food to the hungry,
and satisfy their needs
then your light shall rise in the darkness,
and your gloom be like the noonday.
YHWH will guide you continually
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.

No one sews a piece of **unshrunk cloth** on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made.

No one puts **new wine** into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins.
new wine – fresh wineskins.

Liberating from narrow conformity to the Law : Mark 2:23-28

One **sabbath** (first use) Jesus was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The **Pharisees** (see 2:16) said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the **sabbath**?”

And he says to them, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar (Ab-Abiathar, Ahimelech) was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, 1Samuel 21:6 which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.

Then he said to them, “The **sabbath** was made for humankind, and not humankind for the **sabbath**; so the **Son of Man** (see 2:10) is lord even of the **sabbath**.”

The Sabbath

The Sabbath became more and more important for Jewish self-identity. Special Sabbath temple sacrifices were instituted, and, more importantly, this was the day when the people assembled for prayer in the synagogues. The Sabbath was a day consecrated to God, and its observance was symbolic of the commitment of the people to keep their part of the covenant.

The Sabbath

‘You shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, given in order that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. ... Whoever does any work on it shall be cut off from among the people. ... Therefore the Israelites shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant’ (Exodus 31:13,16).

‘If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honourable; if you honour it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord’ (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Sunday

‘Former adherents of the ancient customs have since obtained a new hope. So they have given up keeping the Sabbath, and now order their lives by the Lord’s Day instead, the day when life first dawned for us, thanks to Jesus and his death. That death is the mystery that has moved us to become believers and endure tribulation to show that we are disciples of Jesus Christ our teacher’(Ignatius to the community at Magnesia n. 9).

‘Do not neglect to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encourage one another’(Hebrews 10:25).

‘Let no one be under any illusion; a person who excludes himself from the sanctuary is depriving himself of the Bread of God, for, if the prayer of one or two individuals has such efficacy, how much more powerful is that of the bishop together with the whole church.’

(Ignatius to the community at Ephesus n. 5.2)

The Liberator ('Redeemer') is rejected : Mark 3:1-6

Again he entered the **synagogue**, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the **sabbath**, so that they might accuse him.

'You shall keep the sabbath, because it is holy for you; everyone who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it shall be cut off from among the people' (Exodus 31:14).

The Liberator ('Redeemer') is rejected : Mark 3:1-6

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And he says to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." Then he says to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness (**πωρώσις**) of heart and says to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Christology in Mark 1:1 - 3:6

Interpretative
commentary

The Liberator

The Messiah 1:1

The Son of God 1:1

The Holy One of God 1:25

The Son of Man 2:10 and 2:28

The Physician 2:17

The Bridegroom 2:19

Transcending the Torah 2:28

Part One of Mark's Gospel (1:21 - 3:6) focuses on liberation

1. Mentally disturbed man in synagogue
2. Simon's mother-in-law (for ministry)
3. Instrument of God's liberating power
4. A leper is embraced
5. Liberation of a man paralysed by sin
6. Eating with 'sinners and tax collectors'
7. Liberation from slavish conformity to ritual (fasting)
8. Liberation from narrow interpretation of the Law
 - 'Sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath'
 - Man with withered hand in the synagogue

The Pharisees went out and at once began to plot with the Herodians against Jesus, discussing how to destroy him' (Mark 3:6).