

Mark

THEME: "Jesus As a Servant"

INTRODUCTION: The book of Mark is the oldest of the four Gospels. It is used as a source book for the rest of the New Testament more than any of the other Gospels. You will remember that there are four Gospels because each one represents Jesus from a different standpoint. Just as the same lady can be a mother to one person, a wife to another, a daughter to another, and a friend to another, each Gospel shines its light upon Jesus from another angle. Matthew shows Him as the King. Mark shows Him as a servant. Luke shows Him as the Son of Man. John shows Him as the Son of God. He is the same Person, yet He is shown in four different lights by four different writers. Let us notice some interesting things about the Gospel of Mark.

1. THE GOSPEL OF MARK WAS WRITTEN BY JOHN MARK.

He was the son of one of the New Testament Mary's. He was a nephew of Barnabas. (Read Acts 12:25; 15:37-39; Colossians 4:10; II Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 24.) When Mark was a young man, he accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. At that time he became afraid, or for some other reason turned back, leaving Paul and Barnabas and going home. Maybe he was afraid; maybe he was homesick, but at least we know he did turn back. (Teacher, stress here the importance of not turning back. When a job is begun, finish it. Keep going forward! Never turn back!)

2. THE GOSPEL OF MARK WAS WRITTEN TO SHOW JESUS AS A HUMBLE SERVANT.

The key verse is Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Yes, Jesus was the King, as Matthew shows Him. He was the Son of God, as John shows Him, but He also was a servant. Did He not say that the servant was the greatest of all? Mark show us things Jesus did, Jesus at work.

1. Man thinks of greatness as being obeyed." God thinks of greatness as "obeying." When we think of someone being great, we think of someone who has people under him, who obey him and do exactly what he says. When God thinks of greatness, He thinks of someone who obeys, who is obedient and disciplined.

2. When man thinks of greatness he thinks of "being served." When God thinks of greatness, He thinks of "serving." We think of a great man as one who has many servants. When God thinks of a great man, He thinks of one who is a servant, one who serves.

3. When man thinks of greatness he thinks of one who "receives much." When God thinks of greatness, He thinks of one who "gives much."

3. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

- A. Sanctification (Introduction) Chapter 1:1-13
- B. Service - Chapter 1:14-8:30
- C. Sacrifice - Chapter 8:31-15
- D. Resurrection and Ascension - Chapter 16

4. THE WORD USED FOR "SERVANT" IS THE WORD "BOND-SERVANT."

There was a difference between "servant" and "bond-servant." A "servant" was a slave. He had to be

a slave; he was purchased for that cause. When this servant's time of service was over and he was released, he could volunteer to continue as a servant. In other words, many times a slave became so close to his master that he would rather continue the rest of his life as a slave. He in turn volunteered to be a slave. He entered into a bond agreement with his master. He became a "bondservant" voluntarily. This is what God wants us to be. He wants us to serve Him, but He wants us to serve willingly. He frees us that we might serve Him.

5. MARK IS A GOSPEL OF DOING GOOD DEEDS RATHER THAN A GOSPEL OF DOCTRINE, PHILOSOPHY, ETC.

Over and over again he mentions what we ought to do for God in order to serve Him and serve Him better. WORKS OF JESUS. One of the Key words in this book is the word "STRAIGHTWAY." This was a servant's word. In other words, when the command comes from the master, "straightway" the servant obeys. He doesn't wait, linger around, or take time to decide; he obeys him immediately.

Luke gives a genealogy tracing Jesus back to prove that He is a man. Matthew gives a kingly genealogy to show Jesus as King. Mark gives no genealogy at all, for who gives the genealogy of a servant? To prove that someone is a servant needs no genealogy. Anybody can be a servant, and everybody should be one.

6. MARK WAS GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE.

(Notice Colossians 4:10; II Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 24.) Yes, Mark failed the first time he went with Barnabas and Saul, and he turned back, but he was not cast aside. Paul gave Mark another chance, and he became a great comfort and help to the Apostle Paul. Thank God that He is the God of a second chance. He gave Peter a second chance. He gave Samson a second chance. He gave Jonah a second chance. If we have failed once, God will still use us.

7. THE KEY TO SERVICE IS SACRIFICE.

Repeatedly our Lord speaks about the cross. Mark 9:12-13, Mark 10:32-34, Mark 10:45 (key verse for the book of Mark). Mark 14:8, Mark 14:24-25. Instead of lifting up a throne Jesus lifts up his cross. The key to life is to serve lifting up your cross. People often don't understand that Jesus teaches us that true joy and happiness comes from serving others sacrificially, not having everything for our self.

Teacher, lead the class in discussing what deeds of service they can do and how they can be servants. Explain to them how many people in the Bible and in history were servants first and then became leaders. Billy Sunday was an assistant, a helper and a sort of jack-of-all-trades man for J. Wilbur Chapman until God opened the door for Billy Sunday to become an evangelist. Joshua was a servant to Moses until he became a great leader. Elisha was a servant to Elijah until he became a great leader. Paul was a servant to Barnabas until he became a great leader. There is nothing that prepares one for success in life as does a willingness to serve.