

1SERIES: GETTING TO KNOW JESUS

SUBJECT: The Good News Demolishes.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:13-3:16

SERMON NO. 5

Introduction

The burning of five rural churches in Bibb County a few days ago was tragic news. Some of these churches had historical settings dating back to the early 1800's. The loss was devastating to each congregation. The news median showed pictures of the rubble that was left at the sites. The member's reaction was to build new churches that would be even better and more useful. But in order to do so, all of the rubble of the old church would have to be demolished and removed.

The mission of the coming of Jesus was, and still is, to demolish man-made religions, replacing them with an intimate relationship between God and people. This new relationship would save people from their sin, something man-made religion cannot do!

We shall observe four destructive ways that Jesus used to destroy man-made religions.

I. THE SICK NEED A DOCTOR (MK. 2:13-17). He went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. 14 And as he passed by, he saw Levi (Matthew) the son of Alohaeus sitting at the receipt of customs, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. 15 And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. 16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? 17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

1. Matthew was a tax collector. A tax collector was a person who had a legal license to lie, cheat, and steal from any body who lived in his territory, with the full authority of the Roman government. On the social scale tax collectors were considered to be just above someone with leprosy. *Matthew was considered as a cheat and a thief.*

a) It was to this outcast of society that Jesus came and said, "Follow Me." And to the amazement of the crowd that was following Jesus, Matthew left his post, left his security, and followed Jesus as one of His disciples. *To celebrate this life-changing decision to follow Jesus...*

b) Matthew held a party inviting all his friends, so they could meet his new master. People like Roman politicians, more tax collectors, prostitutes, thieves and loan sharks. And it must have caused quite a stir, because the Jewish leaders went to take a look. *And while the party was in full swing, we read...*

Mark 2:16 *And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? This verse reveals..*

2. The first way Jesus intended to demolish the man-made religion of the Pharisees...

Mark 2:17 *When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

a) Jesus hears what the Pharisees are saying, and agrees with them. In effect He says, "You're right, these are sick, hurting, troubled, sinful people. Their life style has damaged them deeply. They are covering up their evils. They are thieves and scoundrels. But where else would a doctor be needed?"

3. Jesus came to rescue sinners! He stands ready to establish a relationship with you, just the way you are! This is one of the destructive forces of the Gospel. *But let me show you a second one...*

II. THERE IS JOY IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (Mark 2:18-20). *And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? 19 And Jesus saith 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. 20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.*

In the Old Testament only one day a year was required for fasting. That was the Day of Atonement. On that day, the entire nation of Israel stopped to confess their sins and receive forgiveness through sacrifices.

During the 400 years between the Old and New Testaments additional man made rules of religion were added by teachers of religion. One of those was that if you were to be considered really devout, you had to take part in a fast on Monday and Thursday of each week. These weekly fasts started after breakfast, and ended before dinner. So, in reality, only lunch was skipped on those two days.

The Jews of Jesus' day added to their fasting another practice. They would paint their faces white. They'd put on old and tattered clothes. And they'd suck their cheeks in, so their faces would look gaunt and hollow. The idea was to call attention to themselves so people would recognize how pious they were. And they did it at a time when it would get them the most attention right during business hours.

1. Jesus' disciples didn't take part in this practice. So, Jesus was asked, "Why not?" To answer these critics, Jesus used a word picture of a Jewish wedding celebration...

Illustration: After a Jewish wedding at that time in history, the couple did not go away for a honeymoon. Instead, they stayed at home. Basically, for a week, they held a continuous "Open House" for all their friends and relatives. It was a continuous week of feasting and rejoicing. For many couples of that day, this week long celebration was the most joyous week of their entire lives. In fact, there was a rabbinic teaching of that day which said that people who were in attendance at a wedding feast were exempt from all religious observances that would take away from their joy." And fasting was one of those practices.

And Jesus was saying, "My disciples are like the friends and relatives of the bridegroom at this week-long party."

2. The point Jesus is making is that the characteristic attitude of people who follow the good news will be joy. Why? Because the things that weigh a person down, rob them of joy, and cause despondency and gloom, things like sin, and sin's consequences are forgiven and removed in the kingdom that God rules.

Through a relationship with Jesus, joy will take the place of sorrow. That's quite a contrast to the Pharisees trying to impress people with their false humility and sadness. They didn't have the joy that Jesus was promising. That old way of thinking had to be destroyed, and that's just what Jesus was doing, here! *A third destructive blow that was leveled against man-made religion had to do with...*

III. NEW AUTHORITY (MARK 2:23-24). And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the Sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. 24 And the Pharisees saith unto him, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?

1. What the disciples were doing was legal under Jewish law. Jesus challenged the man made authority and rules of the Pharisees. *The Jewish law is recorded in ...*

Leviticus 19:9-10 "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God.

Since Jesus and His disciples were traveling, and obviously didn't have any provisions with them, it was permissible for them to take a few heads of grain from the field, crush the husks and eat the grain.

2. The criticism Jesus received for this was not over the picking of someone else's grain. The issue in the religious leaders minds had to do with keeping the Sabbath holy. Picking grain on the Sabbath was not allowed under Jewish Sabbath law. *But look at Jesus' answer...*

Mark 2:25-26 And he said unto them, have you never read what David did, when he had need, and was a hungred, he, and they that were with him? 26 How he went into 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 priest, and gave also to them which were with him?

Illustrate: He compares the situation of He and His disciples to a situation David faced before he officially became King of Israel. David and his men were hungry on a day when they approached the Tabernacle. In the Tabernacle was some bread, called the "shew bread". This bread was only to be eaten by the priests and their families..., and this only after it had been on display in the Tabernacle. But because of their overwhelming hunger, David broke this rule and gave the bread to his men to eat.

At the time of this shew bread incident, David had already been anointed king of Israel. The throne was rightfully his. But as long as King Saul was still alive, he was not recognized by the people as the true king. So, he lived as a warrior, traveling the land on a mission to fight the enemies of God (and avoid being killed by Saul in the process). So, being God's anointed king and doing God's mission, David had the right to do what ever was necessary to keep his mission alive, in this case he and his men broke a ceremonial law to eat bread and stay alive.

1. Jesus is putting Himself in this same position. He and His disciples are on a mission to proclaim that a personal relationship with God is possible; when you repent you can receive forgiveness for your sin; and you enter into this relationship through belief in God's Son, Jesus Christ. While He and His disciples are on this mission, the day of the week doesn't matter.

a) Time is short. Jesus only has three years to get His good news out to people. So, if the disciples are hungry and they don't have food, they must eat to keep up their strength. And so they did, on a Sabbath day.

b) Jesus saw nothing wrong with breaking accepted religious practice to accomplish his goal. And He set himself up as the final authority in what they did. *And it is this authority issue that Mark highlights in the next verses...*

Mark 2:27-28 And he saith unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath

2. From this point on, the authority of manmade religion is under demolition by Jesus. They had pushed Him and pushed Him, so finally He seized the moment and says, "Not anymore! Now, I'm the leader, I'm the Lord." The Jewish

leaders saw what Jesus was beginning to do. **He must be eliminated.** So, from this point on, the Jewish leaders began to plot to kill Him. *One last area of destruction that Jesus brought against man-made religion...*

IV. SERVICE (MARK 3:1-3). *And he entered again into the synagogues; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse him. 3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.* Jesus annihilated the ineffective and empty practices of human religion.

1. The Pharisees were now out to get Jesus. So on this Sabbath day, they used a needy human being to try and trap Jesus into breaking another religious law. Rabbinic law stated that you could do no more than what was absolutely necessary to save a life. If a person's condition wasn't life threatening, then it had to wait. Obviously, a man with a shriveled hand wasn't a life and death issue. But the religious leaders wanted to see if Jesus would heal the man anyway, and therefore violate Sabbath law. *Look what happened in the next verse...*

Mark 3:4 *And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life or to kill? But they remained silent. Look at Jesus' reaction to their silence...*

Mark 3:5 *When he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.*

2. To Jesus, performance of ritual or religious practice was not important. It was a spontaneous love to the genuine needs of human beings. We call that service. Meeting people's genuine needs by serving them is a part of following Jesus.

Conclusion

Jesus came to destroy man made religions. He expects His followers to value what He values; and live as He lived; and prioritize their lives with His priorities.

What is your future built on, the Gospel of God or some man made religion? You see, Jesus isn't tolerant of other religions. It's either His way, or Hell's way. Which have you chosen?