

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God

Part II: The Perfect Service Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 1:1-10:52

I. Christ's Work To Minister In The Intent Of Rather Than The Letter Of Scripture (Mark 2:23-28)

I. Introduction

- A. We learned in our first lesson in this series that Mark's Gospel presents the perfect service of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, with Mark's focus of having rebounded unto upright Christian service from personal failure.
- B. At times, such failure rises from getting entangled in the letter of Scripture versus heeding its intent, but Mark 2:23-28 reports on Jesus' work to minister in the intent of rather than in the letter of Scripture when they differ:

II. Christ's Work To Minister In The Intent Of Rather Than The Letter Of Scripture, Mark 2:23-28.

- A. As Jesus and His disciples walked on a "footpath" through a grain field one Sabbath Day, His disciples began to pluck heads of grain to thresh them by hand for eating, Mark 2:23 NIV; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 114.
- B. The Pharisees objected to this activity, and asked Jesus why His disciples were doing what was not lawful to do on the Sabbath Day, suggesting they were guilty of a capital offense, Mark 2:24 ESV with Exodus 31:15.
- C. In reality, the Mosaic Law allowed the disciples to pick grain by hand and to eat it as they went through the field providing they did not harvest enough to collect in a container to take with them, cf. Deuteronomy 23:25. However, the Pharisees "viewed" the disciples' activity as servile work, a violation of the Sabbath Day restriction (cf. Exodus 34:21), what the disciples arguably would have violated only if they were going to sell the harvested grain for material gain, something they were simply not doing! (Ibid.)
- D. Nevertheless, Jesus addressed the Pharisees' **motive behind** their restriction, that of heeding the **technical directives** of the Law **above God's intent** in having given it (as follows), Mark 2:25-27:
 - 1. Christ referred to king David's effort in 1 Samuel 21:1-6 when he was in need and hungry, both he and the soldiers under his oversight, Mark 2:25.
 - 2. In that event, David violated two regulations of the Law that technically were capital offenses:
 - a. First, he entered the tabernacle courtyard to make contact with the high priest when only the Levites, not Hebrews of other tribes like the tribe of Judah from which David hailed, could do lest they be executed for violating God's holiness, Mark 2:26a with Numbers 1:51.
 - b. Second, David asked for and ate the shewbread of the Holy Place that was lawful only for the priests, not for him and his men with him, lest they be executed for violating God's holiness, Mark 2:26b with Leviticus 24:5-9 and Numbers 1:51. [The high priest, Abiathar "recognized that his moral obligation to preserve David's life by providing bread superseded the ceremonial regulation concerning who could eat the showbread (Lev. 24:5-9)," so he gave the bread for David and his men providing they were ceremonially clean in exhibiting a personal respect for God, 1 Samuel 21:4; Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 Sam. 21:5. David and his men ate the bread and were not punished of God in doing so, 1 Sam. 21:6.]
 - 3. Jesus then explained that God had instituted the Sabbath rule to serve the needs of man who needed to rest from his labors, not to make man enslaved to burdensome regulations as the Pharisees had transformed it, Mark 2:27. The Pharisees had done what ancient pagan man did: ancient pagans viewed the seventh day as "a day of bad luck" when one should "'afflict himself'" and avoid "'pleasures'" and not work lest it "'not prosper'" (B. K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 1974, p. 65, citing U. Cassuto, A Com. on the Book of Gen., trans. By Israel Abrahams, 1961, p. 23), a burdensome view the Pharisees of Jesus' day were promoting opposite God's will that the Sabbath Day be a day of rest and refreshment for man's benefit! God wanted the Sabbath to reflect His grace to the world, but the Pharisees had turned it into a burdensome legalism.
- E. Thus, if the Sabbath was made for man's beneficial refreshment and not to enslave him to burdensome regulations as in the Pharisees' teaching, Jesus as the Son of Man was also the Lord even of the Sabbath, meaning "He has sovereign authority over its use," Mark 2:28; Ibid., p. 115.

Lesson: As David had done before Him, Jesus practiced and taught that God's moral obligations, the **INTENT** of His Word, takes precedence **OVER** Scripture's **TECHNICAL DIRECTIVE** whenever these entities **DIFFER**.

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ as God's Perfect Servant, Mark 1:1, 15. (2) May we like Christ also believe and practice the **INTENT** of God's Word **ABOVE** its **TECHNICAL DIRECTIVES** whenever a situation arises that produces a difference between the **INTENT** and the **TECHNICAL DIRECTIVES** of the Word of God.