

Mark Chapter 2

Verses 1-12: Jesus continues to astound (and offend), by extraordinary works and claims.

Mark 2:1 "And again he entered into Capernaum after [some] days; and it was noised that he was in the house."

“He was in the house”: This was likely Peter’s home, where Jesus had taken up temporary residence (Matt. 4:13).

Jesus comes back into Capernaum from His desert outposts (1:45).

As we said in the previous lesson, Peter’s home was on the outskirts of Capernaum. Jesus had fled to the wilderness to avoid the huge mobs of people. We see here, that Jesus had quietly come back into town, but someone saw Him return and now it was all over town that He was back.

Mark 2:2 "And straightway 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."

“The word”: The good news of the gospel, that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, for the forgiveness of sins.

We can see that in just a very short time this house filled with people. In fact, so many people packed in this house to hear Jesus preach that not even one more person could squeeze in the front door. We know from the previous lesson, that Jesus’ message was not what they were used to hearing. His message was of power and authority.

We know also, that Jesus’ message was not of formality, because here we saw Him preaching in the home. The scribes went strictly by the formality of worship in the synagogue. They were hungry for this type of preaching, which was for all the people.

Mark 2:3 "And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four."

“Sick of the palsy”: Since he was lying on a bed, the man’s paralysis was severe, perhaps he was a quadriplegic.

Palsy is a progressive disease. It seems this man’s palsy had gotten to an extreme case. He was unable to walk. Palsy has terrible shaking associated with it and is actually like a short circuit in the brain. Most people with palsy are able to walk, so this had to be someone who had an advanced disease, because it took four men to bring him.

Mark 2:4 "And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken [it] up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay."

“They uncovered the roof”: Most homes in Israel had flat roofs used for relaxation in the cool of the day and for sleeping on hot nights. And there was usually an external stairway that extended to the roof. Often, as here, the roof was made of slabs of burnt or dried clay that were placed on supporting beams which stretched from wall to wall.

The builder then spread a uniform coat of fresh, wet clay over those slabs of hardened clay to serve as a seal against the rain. The paralytic’s friends took him up to the top of such a house and dug out the top coat of clay, removing several of the slabs until they made enough room to lower him down into Jesus’ presence.

We see here, that the crowd was so large; there was no way to get to Jesus through the crowd. I see great faith, not only of the man with the palsy, but with his friends who would not give up on getting to Jesus.

First of all, they had great love for their friend to go to this much trouble to get him to Jesus. Most of all, they had to believe strongly that if they could get him in Jesus' presence, he would be healed. It seems they broke open the roof of the house and let him down right in front of Jesus.

Mark 2:5 "When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

“Jesus saw their faith”: The aggressive, persistent effort of the paralytic’s friends was visible evidence of their faith in Christ to heal.

“Son, thy sins be forgiven thee”: Many Jews in that day believed that all disease and affliction was a direct result of one’s sins. This paralytic may have believed that as well; thus he would have welcomed forgiveness of his sins before healing.

The Greek verb for “are forgiven” refers to sending or driving away (Psalm 103:12; Jer. 31:34; Mic. 7:19). Thus, Jesus dismissed the man’s sin and freed him from the guilt of it (see the note on Matthew 9:2).

Touched by their obvious and active trust, Jesus acts. But instead of a physical healing alone, Jesus proclaims a remission of “sins”.

Notice, Jesus recognized their faith first. Faith impresses Jesus. On many occasions, Jesus said your faith has made you whole. I do not believe that all disease is because of sin in a person's life, but I do believe some diseases are brought on ourselves because of sin in our lives.

The wrong type of sex brings all sorts of terrible diseases. I personally believe that Aids falls into that category. Not all people who acquire aids (but the majority), have committed sin causing their disease.

Some disease is associated with sin. Sin is a sickness itself. At any rate, we see here that in this particular case, this disease was because of sin in the man's life. Jesus went to the root cause of the disease and said thy sins be forgiven thee. We cannot assume from this that all palsy is brought on by sin.

Verses 6-7: “Scribes” were professional students and teachers of the Old Testament and Jewish tradition surrounding it. They also served as judges in the Jewish legal body, the Sanhedrin. They were influential men in society.

They take strong issue with Jesus’ seeming presumptuousness, for it was common knowledge to students of the Old Testament that forgiving sin is God’s prerogative alone. Jesus is implicitly making a claim to divinity, which to the Scribes ranks as blasphemy.

Mark 2:6 "But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,"

“The scribes” (see the note on Matthew 2:4; compare 1:22)

Mark 2:7 "Why doth this [man] thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?"

“This man ... blasphemies”: The scribes were correct in saying that only God can forgive sins (Isa. 43:25), but incorrect in saying Jesus blasphemed. They refused to recognize Jesus’ power as coming from God; much less that He Himself was God.

These scribes were not there to be of help in this ministry of Jesus. They were here to spy and criticize. (In verse 7 above), they showed just how little they really knew or believed about Jesus. Their first mistake was in believing that Jesus was just a man. Without realizing it, they made a true statement. God alone can forgive sins.

Jesus is God the Word caught up in the body of a man. This was the truth they failed to see. Many in our churches today cannot see Jesus as anything but man. They are like these scribes, doubting, because they put limits on Jesus.

Were Jesus just a man, the scribes would have been correct. Jesus, as we have said in all of these lessons, was God manifest in the flesh: Immanuel, God with us. God forgives sins anytime or anyplace, for anyone He wants to.

Mark 2:8 "And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?"

“In his spirit”: This can also be translated, “by His spirit.” This is not the Holy Spirit, but the omniscient mind of the Savior.

Jesus senses their indignation and addresses them directly, as in Mark He is inclined to do.

It seems that these scribes did not speak out openly against Jesus, but were just having evil thoughts. They were probably, afraid of the people too much to speak out openly. Just the fact that Jesus knew what they were thinking in their hearts should have told them that He was no mere man.

Jesus nearly always answered them with a question. He really was saying to them: if there were no good results, you would have room to complain. Judge whether it is right or wrong by the results.

Mark 2:9 "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, [Thy] sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?"

“Whether is it easier ... ? It is much easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven you”. No human can prove that such a thing occurred since it is invisible. Commanding a paralytic to walk would be more difficult to say convincingly. However, because the actions of the paralytic would immediately verify the effect of the command (see note on Matt. 9:5).

Modern English would drop the “whether”.

This man sick of the palsy had been around for the scribes to minister to, and they had not been able to help him. Jesus, to me, was saying here, why complain about the manner it is done in, if it works?

Verses 10-11: “Son of man” is one of Jesus’ favorite self-designations, used some 14 times in Mark. Scholars debate its exact meaning, some incredibly denying that Jesus applied the term to Himself. But such skepticism is surely misplaced. It seems to be a deliberately unclear title, one that could conjure up images of divine

presence and might (Dan. 7:13-14). But which could at the same time give willful skeptics enough rope, so to speak, to hang themselves in the tortuous coils of their stubborn doubt.

By healing sickness in conjunction with forgiving sin, Jesus is not equating physical infirmity with spiritual depravity. Yet there is some ultimate connection, for sickness and death apparently invaded humanity through sin (See Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12).

Someday, by God's grace in Christ, sin, death, and all sickness will be vanquished. Jesus' exercise of divine forgiveness here and its immediate consequences are perhaps advance tokens of the wondrous boon of ultimate redemption. In Jesus, the sphere of God's restorative influence, His kingdom, is indeed at hand (1:15), and that with great power.

Mark 2:10 "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)"

"But that ye may know": Jesus' power to heal the paralytic's physical infirmities proved the veracity of His claim and power to forgive sins.

"Son of man": Jesus used this term for Himself to emphasize His humiliation (see notes on 14:62; Matt. 8:20). It appears 14 times in Mark (verse 10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62).

Mark 2:11 "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house."

I believe here, that Jesus was saying to these scribes, you do not understand who I am. He called Himself, "Son of Man" because that was who they believed He was. "Son" is capitalized. Jesus' power was not diminished just because He was housed in the body of a man. His power is not just in heaven, but here on the earth as well.

Mark 2:12 "And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."

Here as previously (1:22, 28, 45; 2:7), Mark calls attention to the response Jesus provoked. The observers have never seen anything like this.

Just as the wind obeyed Jesus in Matthew, we see here, that this man obeyed the voice of Jesus and did just exactly what Jesus told him to do. He never doubted for a moment that he could do what Jesus told him to, and he did it.

You can imagine how amazed the people were. They had not seen miracles like this done by the scribes. This was something brand new. They realized that this was from God and they glorified Him.

Verses 13-22: Jesus returns to activity by the lake. Mark pictures a constant coming and going of crowds.

Mark 2:13 "And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them."

We see here, that when Jesus left the house and went back to the seaside, all these people followed Him; and He taught them. These people were anxious to hear what Jesus had to say, because He had answers to their problems. They had just witnessed a man healed of a long-time illness, and they realized Jesus had something these scribes did not have.

Mark 2:14 "And as he passed by, he saw Levi the [son] of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him."

“Levi the son of Alphaeus” (one of the 12), more commonly known as Matthew.

“Levi” is known also as Matthew, the tax collector (publican).

“Sitting at the receipt of custom”: Matthew was a publican, a tax collector, a despised profession in Palestine because such men were viewed as traitors. Tax collectors were Jews who had bought tax franchises from the Roman government.

Any amount they collected over what Rome required they were allowed to keep. Thus, many tax collectors became wealthy at the expense of their own people (see notes on Matt. 5:46; 9:9).

“He arose and followed him”: This simple action of Matthew signified his conversion. Because his response was so immediate, it is likely Matthew was already convicted of his sin and recognized his need of forgiveness.

This man would not have been someone the scribes would have chosen for Christian endeavors. As far as making money, this was a good job. Matthew gave up a lot of worldly income to follow Jesus. Matthew came without hesitation when Jesus called.

Mark 2:15 "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."

“Sat at meat”: This can also be translated, “reclining at table,” as common posture for eating when guests were present. According to (Luke 5:29), this was a feast that Matthew gave in Jesus’ honor.

“Many publicans”: There were two categories of tax collectors:

(1) gabbai collected general taxes on land and property, and on income, referred to as poll or registration taxes;

(2) mokhes collected a wide variety of use taxes, like our import duties, business license fees, and toll fees. There were two categories of mokhes: great mokhes hired others to collect taxes for them; small mokhes did their own assessing and collecting.

Matthew was a small mokhe. It is likely representatives of both classes attended Matthew’s feast. All of them were considered both religious and social outcasts.

“Sinners”: A term the Jews used to describe people who had no respect for the Mosaic Law or rabbinic traditions, and were therefore the most vile and worthless of people.

“Sat also together”: Literally “were reclining with “Jesus” willingness, to associate with tax collectors and sinners by sharing in the feast with them, deeply offended the scribes and Pharisees.

By now Jesus has attracted a number of devotees. But He has also managed to appeal to those whom most pious Jews of that time and place would have avoided.

The Hebrews were extremely careful who they associated with. They would not fellowship with people of the world and especially with tax collectors. Jesus had broken the pattern again. He was doing something in meeting with these tax collectors and sinners that the scribes would never do. Jesus held promise even for these people that the synagogue had rejected.

Verses 16-17: With some irony Jesus deflects the barb of His detractors, who first seek to stir up His own disciples against Him. For Jesus as well as for the Old Testament, no man is “righteous” in God’s sight by virtue of his own goodness. The point is that Jesus seeks out those who, being in need, sense and own up to it. “Sinners” refers to common folk who in their religious practices were less scrupulous than the Pharisees, and often more responsive to Jesus than cultivated religious people.

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?"

“Scribes and Pharisees”: This phrase indicates that not all scribes were Pharisees (regarding Scribes, see note on Matt. 2:4). Pharisees were a legalistic sect of Jews known for their strict devotion to the ceremonial law (see note on Matt. 3:7).

Even at this early stage of Jesus' ministry, these scribes and Pharisees knew that they were no match for Jesus. They came to the disciples and talked to them. In a sense, they were saying, don't you know that in our law it is forbidden to eat with people like this? They asked the disciples why He was doing this sinful thing.

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."

“I came not to call the righteous”: In the parallel passage (Luke 5:32), sinners are called “to repentance.” The repentant person, the one who recognizes he is a sinner and who turn from his sin, is the object of Jesus’ call. The person who is sinful but thinks he is righteous refuses to acknowledge his need to repent of his sin (see notes on Matt. 9:12-13; John 9:39-41).

We all know that everyone has need of Jesus as Savior. I believe that Jesus in speaking to these self-righteous people was telling them that He didn't come to help those who did not want His help. Jesus came to help whosoever will. These scribes and Pharisees would not accept His help.

He was telling them, if you are already perfect, you don't need My help. Jesus came to save the lost. A person must realize he needs help, before they will receive help.

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

You can easily see from this Scripture above in Romans, that He was speaking to them this way because of their self-righteousness.

Mark Chapter 2 Questions

1. As soon as Jesus went back to Capernaum and entered the house, what happened?
2. Why had Jesus gone to the wilderness?
3. What was said that makes us know there was no more room in the house?
4. After all these people gathered, what did Jesus do?
5. Why had so many come to hear Him preach?

6. Who brought the man sick of palsy to Jesus?
7. What did they do when they could not get him in the door?
8. What kind of disease is palsy?
9. What do we see in these four men who would not give up, until they got the man sick of palsy to Jesus?
10. "When Jesus saw their _____, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."
11. Why did this man have palsy?
12. What did these scribes say Jesus spoke?
13. What truth did they speak unknowingly?
14. Why had the scribes come to the house?
15. What did the scribes call Jesus that is the same mistake many church goers make today?
16. How did Jesus know what they thought?
17. What could Jesus have said and gotten the same results?
18. Why did Jesus forgive his sins, instead of just saying be healed?
19. Why did Jesus call Himself, Son of man?
20. What did the man sick of the palsy do?
21. How did this affect the people?
22. Who did they praise for this?
23. When Jesus left the house and went to the seaside, what did the people do?
24. What did Jesus go to the seaside to do?
25. Who did Jesus see as He passed the place of tax collecting?
26. What is this man's other name?
27. Who was this man the son of?
28. What two other books tell of Matthew's call?
29. Who were with Jesus that the scribes and Pharisees did not approve of?
30. Who did the scribes and Pharisees complain to about Jesus' behavior?

31. When Jesus heard their complaints, what did He say to them?

32. In Romans 3:23, we see what?

33. What was Jesus telling these scribes and Pharisees that they were?

Mark Chapter 2 Continued

Verses 18-22: This is evidently a further incident, not directly connected in time with (verses 13-17). Pharisees fasted twice weekly (Luke 18:12).

Mark 2:18 "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?"

“Disciples of John”: Those followers of John the Baptist who did not transfer their allegiance to Jesus (John 3:30; Acts 19:1-7). At this time John was in prison (Matt. 4:12). Their question indicates they were observing the Pharisaic traditions (Matt. 9:14).

The Pharisees” (see note on verse 16). The association of John’s disciples with the Pharisees indicates that both groups were disturbed about the problem raised by Jesus’ association with tax collectors and sinners (verse 15).

“Fast”: The twice-a-week fast was a major expression of Orthodox Judaism during Jesus’ day (Luke 18:9-14). Yet, the Old Testament prescribed only one fast, and that on the Day of Atonement (verse 16:29, 31).

(In Luke 18:12), we see a self-righteous Pharisee bragging that he fasts twice a week. Possibly, to make others look on him as more righteous than he really was.

Luke 18:12 "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

Jesus warned about this type of fasting. Jesus told us when we fast to wash our faces and not let the world know when we fast, but to fast unto God. Possibly the reason John's followers were fasting was because John was in jail. It appears to me, that these Pharisees were jealous that Jesus' disciples were not fasting.

Mark 2:19 "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."

“As they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast”: In Jesus’ illustration, the “attendants of the bridegroom”, were the friends the bridegroom selected to carry out the festivities. That certainly was not a time to fast, which was usually associated with mourning or times of great spiritual need.

Jesus’ point was that the ritual practiced by John’s disciples and the Pharisees was out of touch with reality. There was no reason for Jesus’ followers to mourn and fast while enjoying the unique reality that He was with them.

People fast when they are in desperate need of having a prayer answered. While Jesus was with them, there was no desperate need of an answer to prayer. This verse is also prophetic. Jesus is the bridegroom of the bride of Christ (which we Christians are).

I say again, there is no need to fast when everything is going good. While Jesus was with them, He took care of all their needs, and there was no need to fast.

Mark 2:20 "But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."

“Taken away from them”: This refers to a sudden removal or being snatched away violently, an obvious reference to Jesus’ capture and crucifixion.

“Then shall they fast”: An appropriate time for mourning was to be at the crucifixion of Jesus.

Jesus foresees the “days” when His disciples will “fast.” That time will be when He has returned to heaven. Fasting is practiced during a time of grief, not joy. As a bridegroom’s friends rejoice while he is with them (verse 19), and grieve when he is “taken away from them”. So Jesus’ disciples rejoice while He is among them, but will fast after His ascension into heaven (see Acts 13:2-3; 14:23).

All who study the Bible know that when Jesus was taken by the authorities, the disciples ran. They suddenly forgot all the times Jesus had told them that this very thing would happen. He told them He would be crucified and then rise from the grave on the third day. Then they would need to fast and pray, because Jesus had been taken away.

Instead of fasting and praying, they went back to their old jobs and old ways of life.

Verses 21-22: Jesus offered two parables to illustrate that His new and internal gospel of repentance from and forgiveness of sin could not be connected to or contained in the old and external traditions of self-righteousness and ritual (see note on Matt. 9:17).

Mark 2:21 "No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse."

We know that this statement is very true. If we are patching an old garment, we should cut a patch of something equally worn so that the tear and the patch wear together. It would be a waste of new material also, to put it in something worn out.

Mark 2:22 "And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles."

“Bottles” are wineskins, the “old” ones figuratively representing Judaism and the “new” ones, Christianity. Old wineskins lose their elasticity and would be “burst” open by the fermentation of “new wine” put into them. The point: the old faith of Judaism and the new faith of Christianity cannot be mixed, nor can the practices or traditions (e.g., the time of fasting), of Judaism be forced on Christianity.

The literal message here needs very little explanation. The fermenting of the new wine could cause old containers to give way. Probably, these were not glass bottles, but bottles made of skins.

I believe the real message that the Lord would have us receive here though is: The people who were caught up in the law would not accept this new message of grace. We see this even in our day. Those who have always looked at the literal message will not even try to see the spiritual message. New converts can be taught easily to see the spiritual message.

Verses 23-28: Jesus astounds by defying then-current Sabbath practice.

Mark 2:23 "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."

“Corn fields”: The roads in first-century Israel were primarily major arteries; so once travelers left those main roads they walked along wide paths that bordered and traversed pastures and grain-fields.

“On the Sabbath day”: “Sabbath” transliterates a Hebrew word that refers to a ceasing of activity or rest. In honor of the day when God rested from His creation of the world (Gen. 2:3), the Lord declared the seventh day of the week to be a special time of rest and remembrance for His people, which He incorporated into the Ten Commandments.

But hundreds of years of rabbinical teaching had added numerous unbearable and arbitrary restrictions to God’s original requirement, one of which forbade any travel beyond 3,000 feet of one’s home. (Num. 35:5; Jos. 3:4).

“Pluck the ears of corn”: Travelers who did not take enough food for their journey were permitted by Mosaic Law to pick enough grain to satisfy their hunger (Deut. 23:24-25; see note on Matt. 12:2).

We see here, that they were on the move. Perhaps, they had not been eating and they saw this fresh, ripe corn. They did not stop to cook this, so they just shucked it and cleaned the corn silks off as they walked and ate these juicy kernels. There is a little more detailed account of this same thing in Luke.

Luke 6:1, "And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands."

The spiritual message that we must get from this is: The Word (food), is not always prepared for us. We have to do a little work digging (rubbing), the Word out before we can digest it.

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

“On the Sabbath that which is not lawful”: Rabbinical tradition had interpreted the rubbing of grain in the hands (Luke 6:1), as a form of threshing and had forbidden it. Reaping for profit on the Sabbath was forbidden by Mosaic Law (Exodus 34:21).

Actually, the Pharisees’ charge was itself sinful since they were holding their tradition on a par with God’s Word (see notes on Matt. 15:2-9).

This reminds me so much of some of our churches today. Some churches have their own laws that you have to stick to, or you are just not allowed to be in that body.

Every church has its Pharisees: caught up so in the "don'ts" that it is very difficult to get anything going. These Pharisees pointed to the law and said you can't do this; you are breaking the Mosaic Law. They didn't even realize that Jesus was the law maker.

Mark 2:25 "And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him?"

“He said unto them, Have ye never read”: Jesus’ sarcasm pointed out the main fault of the Pharisees, who claimed to be experts and guardians of scripture, yet were ignorant of what it actually taught (Rom. 2:17-24).

“What David did”: David and his companions were fleeing for their lives from Saul when they arrived at Nob, where the tabernacle was located at that time. Because they were hungry, they asked for food (1 Sam. 21:1-6).

Jesus here said, don't you even know what is in your own book of law? You profess to know everything about the book of law, and yet, you do not know this simple thing. The story of David going to the temple when he was running from Saul and getting five loaves of shewbread for him and his men is found (in First Samuel chapter 21).

These Pharisees did not realize that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath.

Mark 2:26 "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 priests, and gave also to them which were with him?"

“In the days of Abiathar the high priest”: The phrase “in the days” can mean “during the lifetime.” According to (1 Sam. 21:1), Ahimelech was the priest who gave the bread to David. Abiathar was Ahimelech’s son, who later was the High-priest during David’s reign.

Since Ahimelech died shortly after this incident (1 Sam. 22:19-20), it is likely that Mark simply added this designation to identify the well-known companion of David who later became the High-Priest along with Zadok (2 Sam. 15:35).

“The shewbread”: Twelve loaves of unleavened bread (representing the twelve tribes of Israel), were placed on the table in the sanctuary and at the end of the week replaced with fresh ones. The old loaves were to be eaten only by the priests.

While it was not normally lawful for David and his companions to eat this consecrated bread, neither did God want them to starve, so nowhere does Scripture condemn them for eating (see note on Matt. 12:4).

Helping David caused problems for this priest with Saul, and he later fled and joined David in exile. This shewbread was the bread in the holy place on the table always before the Lord. This bread was sprinkled with incense when brought into the holy place and was eaten by the priests only. The new bread was brought each Sabbath to replace the old which was eaten.

This eating of the shewbread had sustained David in his time of need, and this is just what the disciples had done as well, eaten to sustain themselves.

Verses 27-28: Jesus’ reasoning is that divine institutions on earth are to have a God-honoring, noble, and liberating function. Sabbath laws had for some degenerated into a mockery of God’s intent. Jesus, “the Son of man” and “Lord ... of the Sabbath,” having power to forgive sin, can also teach rightly regarding proper observance of the Jewish Sabbath. Jesus here touches a raw nerve, as the next incident shows.

Mark 2:27 "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:"

“The Sabbath was made for man”: God instituted the Sabbath to benefit man by giving him a day to rest from his labors and to be a blessing to him. The Pharisees turned it into a burden and made man a slave to their myriad of man-made regulations.

Man must cease labor one day a week to give his body a time to restore itself. If a man fails to rest one day in seven, he soon becomes sick and not able to go. When we stay too busy, we have a tendency to forget about God. On this day of rest from daily labor, we can tend to the needs of our souls. It gives us time to think about other things, besides just making a living.

We remember that there were exceptions made for necessity in the law. God allowed a man to free his animal, if he got in trouble on the Sabbath. This just shows that God is concerned about the needs of mankind more than He is interested in us dogmatically obeying the law.

Mark 2:28 "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath."

“Lord also of the Sabbath”: Jesus claimed He was greater than the Sabbath, and thus was God. Based on that authority, Jesus could in fact reject the Pharisaic regulations concerning the Sabbath and restore God’s original intention for Sabbath observance to be a blessing not a burden.

The Son of man is Lord of everything and everyone. We have mentioned before that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.

Philippians 2:10-11 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;" "And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

No further explanation is necessary. He is Lord of everything.

Mark Chapter 2 Continued Questions

1. Whose disciples who fasted came and asked why Jesus' disciples didn't fast?
2. What describes the attitude of the Pharisees?
3. When we fast, who are we to tell?
4. What did Jesus call Himself in verse 19?
5. When do people fast?
6. When will Jesus' disciples fast?
7. What did Jesus' disciples do when the authorities took Jesus?
8. What had they forgotten?
9. Why would a man not put a new piece of cloth in an old garment?
10. Why would you not put new wine in old bottles?
11. What is the spiritual message in the statement above?
12. Those who have always looked at the literal message in the Word will seldom see the _____.
13. Who is easy to teach the spiritual message?
14. What did the disciples do, as they walked through the cornfield?
15. What day was it?

16. What does Luke 6:1 tell us about this story that was not in Mark?
17. What is the spiritual meaning of this?
18. Who complained about the disciples doing this on the Sabbath?
19. What are the Pharisees in the church doing today?
20. What Old Testament personality did Jesus remind them of?
21. What had he done that could have been judged a sin?
22. What happened to the priest that helped David?
23. What was the shewbread sprinkled with?
24. Who was the Sabbath made for?
25. Who is the Lord of Sabbath?