**The Gospel of Mark: A Disciple’s Mirror**

***Reflections on Following Jesus*** -- From A Handbook on Cross-Bearing

**Mark 2:1–3:6**

***Messiah’s Mission --*** Or, Jesus Sets the Record Straight on Why He Came

**What’s (happening in) the story?** Jesus confronts the clerics.

Why would anyone want to kill Jesus? Mark wants us to ask this question, and so he raises and answers it early in the book. If he were just out to tell a good story, he would not be giving away the plot in chapter two! But remember, his readers are believers, as the book is written thirty years after Jesus’ death. So Mark is giving readers the full picture of why their own faith in Jesus is opposed and persecuted.

The conflict boils down to Law vs. Grace. The Pharisees and Scribes had turned the Law of Moses into just another religion, meaning that it was all about doing things to merit God’s favor, working one’s way to Heaven. The outrage that Jesus brings is GRACE! And instead of being grateful, religious people hate Him, for grace exposes their pride.

**What’s the challenge in the story?** Do I know why Jesus came?

If Jesus is merely another religious leader who came to teach us to be kind, no one objects, for He fits the mold. But Jesus says that to follow Him, we must confess we are sinners. Will we humble ourselves to do that? Will we admit we are lost and without hope apart from Him?

**What are the key elements in the story?**

Last (Mark 1:21-45) we saw Jesus escaping the crowds flocking to Him desiring miracles, but not deliverance from sin. In this passage He says what His presence implies. ***Jesus has come to. . .***

1. Give sinners assurance of God’s love and saving grace. 2:1-12

“Son, your sins are forgiven.”

2. Heal self destructive, sin-poisoned lives. 2:13-17

“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

3. Lift the burden of the Law and the abuses of legalism. 2:18-22

“New wine is for fresh wineskins.”

4. Bring freedom and rest to His people. 2:23-28

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

5. Reverse the devastating effects of sin. 3:1-6

“Is it good on the Sabbath to save life or to kill?”

**What’s the big idea (main point) of the story?**

***In a life and death struggle with the religious self-righteous, Jesus comes to make disciples of repentant sinners,***

***forgiving their sins and freeing them from***

***the Law’s condemnation and sin’s devastation.***

***So let’s take a look at ourselves in Mark’s mirror. . .***

* Do I embrace the uniqueness of Jesus in His message of grace, in contrast to the “world religions” of works? Acts 4:8-12
* Have I abandoned any and all self-righteousness? Titus 3:3-8
	+ Have I been freed from sin’s guilt? Romans 8:1-4
* Do I receive all my fellow sinners as equals, or look down upon some for their past?

 -1 Corinthians 6:9-11