

The Gospel of Mark

by A.W. Pink

Mark's Gospel presents Christ as the Servant of Jehovah, emphasizing His service, ministry, and miracles, and highlighting the importance of promptitude, urgency, and continuity in our service to God.

Scripture: Matthew 11:28, Mark 1:1-6, Luke 22:27, John 13:14, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Timothy 2:24

Topics: "Servanthood", "Compassion in Ministry"

Description

A.W. Pink explores the distinct characteristics of Mark's Gospel, emphasizing its focus on Jesus as the humble Servant of Jehovah, contrasting it with Matthew's portrayal of Christ as the King. He highlights the omissions in Mark, such as the genealogy and the Sermon on the Mount, which reflect the Gospel's purpose of showcasing Christ's servanthood rather than His royal lineage. Pink notes the frequent use of the term 'immediately' in Mark, illustrating the urgency and promptness of Jesus' ministry. He encourages believers to emulate Christ's example of selfless service, compassion, and dedication to God's work, reminding them that true service is often unrecognized and requires sacrifice.

Transcript

Why Four Gospels?

2. THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Mark's Gospel differs widely from Matthew's, both in character and scope. The contrasts between them are marked and many. Matthew has twenty-eight chapters, Mark but sixteen. Matthew abounds in parables, Mark records but few. Matthew portrays Christ as the Son of David, Mark delineates Him as the humble but perfect Servant of Jehovah. Matthew is designed particularly (not exclusively) for the Jew, whereas Mark is specially appropriate for Christian workers. Matthew sets forth the Kingly dignity and authority of Christ, Mark views Him in His lowliness and meekness. Matthew depicts Him as testing Israel, Mark shows Him ministering to the Chosen People. This is one reason why, no doubt, that Mark's Gospel is the second book in the New Testament--like Matthew's, it views Him in connection with the Old Testament people of God. Luke's Gospel, has a wider scope, looking at Christ in relation to the human race. While in John, He is shown to be the Son of God, spiritually related to the household of faith.

In turning now to look at the contents of this second Gospel in some detail, we would notice,

I. THINGS OMITTED FROM MARK'S GOSPEL.

1. Just as the skill of a master artist is discovered in the objects which he leaves out of his picture (the amateur crowding in everything on to the canvass for which he can find room), so the discerning eye at once detects the handiwork of the Holy Spirit in the various things which are included and omitted from different parts of the Word. Notably is this the case with Mark's Gospel. Here we find no Genealogy at the commencement, as in Matthew; the miraculous Conception is omitted, and there is no mention made of His birth.

Fancy a whole Gospel written and yet no reference to the Saviour's birth in it! At first glance this is puzzling, but a little reflection assures one of the Divine wisdom which directed Mark to say nothing about it. Once we see what is the special design of each separate Gospel, we are the better enabled to appreciate their individual perfections. The birth of Christ did not fall within the compass of this second Gospel, nor did the record of His genealogy. Mark is presenting Christ as the Servant of Jehovah, and in connection with a servant a genealogy or particulars of birth are scarcely points of interest or importance.

But how this demonstrates the Divine Authorship of the books of the Bible! Suppose the Genealogy had been omitted by Matthew, and inserted by Mark, then, the unity of each Gospel would have been destroyed. But just as the Creator placed each organ of the body in the wisest possible place, so the Holy Spirit guided in the placing of each book in the Bible (each member in this Living Organism), and each detail of each book. For the same reason as the Genealogy is omitted, nothing is said by Mark of the visit of the wise men, for a "servant" is not one that receives homage!

Mark also passes over what Luke tells us of Christ as a boy of twelve in the temple of Jerusalem, and His subsequent return to Nazareth, where He continued in subjection to His parents, for, while these are points of interest in connection with His humanity, they were irrelevant to a setting forth of His Servanthood. 2. In Mark's Gospel we find no Sermon on the Mount. Matthew devotes three whole chapters to it, but Mark records it not, though some of its teachings are found in other connections in this second Gospel.

Why, then, we may ask, is this important utterance of Christ omitted by Mark? The answer must be sought in the character and design of the "Sermon." As we have pointed out, the Sermon on the Mount contains the King's Manifesto. It sets forth the laws of His Kingdom, and describes the character of those who are to be its subjects. But Mark is presenting Christ as the perfect Workman of God, and a servant has no "Kingdom," and frames no "laws." Hence the appropriateness of the "Sermon" in Matthew, and the Divine wisdom in its exclusion from Mark. 3.

Mark records fewer Parables than Matthew. In Mark there are but four all told, whereas in Matthew there are at least fourteen. Mark says nothing about the Householder hiring laborers for His vineyard, claiming the right to do as He wills with that which is His own; for, as God's Servant, He is seen in the place of the Laborer, instead of in the position where He hires others. Mark omits all reference to the parable of the Marriage of the King's Son, at the close of which He is seen giving orders for the man without the wedding-garment to be bound and cast into the outer darkness - such is not the prerogative of a Servant.

All reference to the parable of the Talents is omitted by Mark, for as God's Servant He neither gives talents nor rewards for the use of them. Each of these parables, and many others all found in Matthew, are excluded by Mark, and their omission only serves to bring out the minute perfections of each Gospel. 4. In Mark nothing whatever is said of Christ's command over angels, and His right to send them forth to do His bidding; instead we find here "the angels ministered unto Him" (1:13). 5.

Here there is no arraignment of Israel, and no sentence is passed upon Jerusalem as in the other Gospels. Again, in Matthew 23 the "Son of David" utters a most solemn sevenfold "Woe"--"Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," "Woe unto you, ye blind guides" etc., He says there; but not a word of this is found in Mark. The reason for this is obvious. It is not the part of the Servant to pass judgment on others, but "to be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient" (2 Tim. 2:24).

We have another striking illustration of this same characteristic in connection with our Lord cleansing the Temple. In Matthew 21:12 we read, "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves," and immediately following this we are told, "And He left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and He lodged there" (21:17). But in Mark it is simply said, "And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when He had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, He went out unto Bethany with the twelve" (11:11).

Mark is clearly writing of the same incident. He refers to the Lord entering the temple, but says nothing about Him casting out those who bought and sold there, nor of Him overthrowing the tables. How striking is this omission. As the Messiah and King it was fitting that He should cleanse the defiled Temple, but in His character of Servant it would have been incongruous! 6. The omission of so many of the Divine titles from this second Gospel is most significant. In Mark, He is never owned as "King" save in derision.

In Mark, we do not read, as in Matthew, "They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us," and only once is He here termed "the Son of David." It is very striking to observe how the Holy Spirit has avoided this in the second Gospel. In connection with the "Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem," when recording the acclamations of the people, Matthew says, "And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (21:9).

But in Mark's account we read, "And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest" (11:9,10). Thus it will be seen that the Servant of God was not hailed here as "the Son of David." Side by side with this, should be placed the words used by our Lord when announcing, a week beforehand, His "transfiguration."

In Matthew's account, we read that He told His disciples, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." But, here in Mark, we are told that He said to the disciples, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power" (9:1). How significant this is! Here it is simply the "Kingdom of God" that is spoken of, instead of Christ's own Kingdom!

But that which is most noteworthy here in connection with the titles of Christ, is the fact that He is so frequently addressed as "Master," when, in the parallel passages in the other Gospels, He is owned as "Lord." For example: in Matthew 8:25 we read, "And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying Lord, save us; we perish;" but in Mark, "And they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" (4:38). Following the announcement of His coming death, Matthew tells us, "Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee" (16:22).

But in Mark it reads, "And Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him" (8:32), and there it stops. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (17:4); but Mark says, "And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here" (9:5). When the Saviour announced that one of the Twelve would betray Him, Matthew tells us, "And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?" (26:22); but Mark tells us, "And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto Him, one by one, 'Is it I?'" (14:19).

These are but a few of the examples which might be adduced, but sufficient have been given to bring out this striking and most appropriate feature of Mark's Gospel. 7. It is deeply interesting and instructive to note the various circumstances and events connected with our Lord's sufferings which are omitted from Mark. Here, as He entered the awful darkness of Gethsemane, He says to the three disciples, "Tarry ye here, and watch" (14:34), not "watch with Me," as in Matthew, for as the Servant He turns only to God for comfort; and here, nothing is said at the close, of an angel from Heaven appearing and "strengthening" Him, for as Servant He draws strength from God alone.

No mention is made by Mark of Pilate's "I find no fault in Him," nor are we told of Pilate's wife counseling her husband to have nothing to do with "this Just Man," nor do we read here of Judas returning to the priests, and saying, "I have betrayed innocent blood;" all of these are omitted by Mark, for the Servant must look to God alone for vindication. Nothing is said in Mark of the women following Christ as He was led to the place of execution, "bemoaning and lamenting Him" (Luke 23:27), for sometimes the suffering Servant of God is denied the sympathy of others.

The words of the dying thief, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom" are here omitted, for in this Gospel, Christ is neither presented as "Lord" nor as One having a "Kingdom." The Saviour's triumphant cry from the Cross, "It is finished" is also omitted. At first sight this seems strange, but a little reflection will discover the Divine wisdom for its exclusion. It is not for the Servant to say when his work is finished - that is for God to decide! We pass on now to notice II. THINGS WHICH ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF MARK.

1. Mark's Gospel opens in a manner quite different from the others. In Matthew, Luke and John, there is what may be termed a lengthy Introduction, but in Mark it is quite otherwise. Matthew records Christ's genealogy, His birth, the visit and homage of the wise men, the flight into Egypt, and subsequent return and sojourn in Nazareth; describes at length both His baptism and temptation, and not till we reach the end of the fourth chapter do we arrive at His public ministry. Luke opens with some interesting details concerning the parentage of John the Baptist, describes at length the interview between the angel and the Saviour's mother previous to His birth, records her beautiful Song, tells of the angelic visitation to the Bethlehem shepherds at Christ's birth, pictures the presentation of the Child in the temple, and refers to many other things; and not until we reach the fourth chapter do we come to the public ministry of the Redeemer.

So, too, in John. There is first a lengthy Prologue, in which is set forth the Divine glories of the One who became flesh; then follows the testimony of His forerunner to the Divine dignity of the One he had come to herald; then we have described a visit to John of a delegation sent from Jerusalem to inquire as to who he was; finally, there is the witness of the Baptist to Christ as the Lamb of God: and all this before we here read of Him calling His first disciples. But how entirely different is the opening of the second Gospel.

Here there is but a brief notice of the Baptist and his testimony, a few words concerning Christ's baptism and His temptation, and then, in the fourteenth verse of the first chapter we read, "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God." The first thirty years of His life here on earth are passed over in silence, and Mark at once introduces Christ at the beginning of His public ministry. Mark presents Christ actually serving. 2.

The opening verse of Mark is very striking: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Observe, it is not here "the Gospel of the Kingdom" (as in Matthew), but "the Gospel of Jesus Christ." How significant that it is added "the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Thus has the Holy Spirit guarded His Divine glory in the very place where His lowliness as the "Servant" is set forth. It is also to be remarked that this word "Gospel" is found much more frequently in Mark than in any of the other Gospels.

The term "Gospel" occurs twelve times in all in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and no less than eight of these are found in Mark, so that the word "Gospel" is found twice as often in Mark as in the other three added together! The reason for this is obvious: as the Servant of Jehovah, the Lord Jesus was the Bearer of good news, the Herald of glad tidings! What a lesson to be taken to heart by all of the servants of God to-day! 3. Another characteristic term which occurs with even greater frequency in this second Gospel is the Greek word "Eutheos," which is variously translated "forthwith, straightway, immediately" etc.

Notice a few of the occurrences of this word in the first chapter alone: "And straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him" (v. 10). "And immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness" (v. 12). "And when He had gone a little further thence, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets, And straightway He called them" (vv. 19,20). "And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day He entered into the synagogue, and taught" (v. 21).

"And forthwith when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon" (v. 29). "And He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her" (v. 31). "And He straightly charged him, and forthwith sent him away" (v. 43). In all, this word is found no less than forty times in Mark's Gospel. It is a most suggestive and expressive term, bringing out the perfections of God's Servant by showing us how He served. There was no tardiness about Christ's service, but "straightway" He was ever about His "Father's business."

There was no delay, but "forthwith" He performed the work given Him to do. This word tells of the promptitude of His service and the urgency of His mission. There was no holding back, no reluctance, no slackness, but a blessed "immediateness" about all His work. Well may we learn from this perfect example which He has left us. 4. The way in which so many of the chapters open in this second Gospel is worthy of our close attention. Turn to the first verse of chapter 2, "And again He entered into Capernaum after some days."

Again, the first verse of chapter 3, "And He entered again into the synagogue." So in 4:1, "And He began again to teach by the seaside." So in 5:1, "And they came over unto the other side of the sea." This is seemingly a trivial point, and yet, how unique! It is now more than ten years since the writer first observed this feature of Mark's Gospel, and since then, many hundreds of books, of various sorts, have been read by him, but never once has he seen a single book of human authorship which had in it one chapter that commenced with the word "And."

Test this, reader, by your own library. Yet here in Mark's Gospel no less than twelve of its chapters begun with "And"! "And," as we know, is a conjunction joining together two other parts of speech; it is that which links two or more things together. The service of Christ, then, was characterized by that which "And" signifies. In other words, His service was one complete and perfect whole, with no breaks in it. Ah, how unlike ours! Yours and mine is so disjointed. We serve God for a time, and then there comes a slackening up, a pause, a break, which is followed by a period of inactivity, before we begin again.

But not so with Christ. His service was a series of perfect acts, fitly joined together, without a break or blemish. "And," then as characterizing the service of Christ, tells of ceaseless activity. It speaks of the continuity of His labors. It shows us how He was "instant in season and out of season." It reveals how He never grew weary of well doing. May God's grace cause the "And" to have a more prominent place in our service for Him. 5. In the former section we have pointed out how that Mark records fewer parables than Matthew, and we may add, fewer than Luke too.

But, on the other hand, Mark describes more miracles. This, also, is in keeping with the design and scope of this second Gospel. Parables contained our Lord's teachings, whereas the miracles were a part of His active ministry. Service consists more of deeds than teaching, doing rather than speaking. How often our service is more with our lips than our hands. We are big talkers and little doers! Mark records just four parables, and it is a most significant thing that each of them has to do, directly, with service.

The first is the parable of the Sower, and this views the Saviour as going forth with the Word (4:3-20). The second parable is that of the Seed cast into the ground, which sprang up and grew, and brought forth first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, and finally was harvested (4:26-29). The third parable is that of the Mustard-seed (4:30-32). The fourth is that of the Wicked Husbandmen who mistreated the Owner's servants, and ended by killing His well-beloved Son (12:1-9).

Thus it will be seen, that each has to do with ministry or service: the first three with sowing Seed, and the last with the Servant going forth "that He might receive of the husbandman of the fruit of the vineyard." 6. In Mark's Gospel, the hand of Christ is frequently mentioned, and this is peculiarly appropriate in the Gospel which treats of His service. It might well be termed, the Ministry of the Hand. How prominent this feature is here may be seen by consulting the following passages.

"And He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her" (1:31). "And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean" (1:41). "And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi: which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise" (5:41). "And they bring unto Him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech Him to put His hand upon him" (7:32).

How beautiful is this. Divinely enlightened, these people had learned of the tenderness and virtue of His hand. Again we read, "And He cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto Him, and besought Him to touch him" (8:22). They, too, had discovered the blessedness and power of His touch. "And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town. After that He put His hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly" (8:23,25).

Once more we read, "But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose" (9:27). How blessed for every believer to know that he is safely held in that same blessed Hand (John 10:28). 7. The Holy Spirit has also called special attention in this Gospel to the eyes of the perfect Servant. "And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts" (3:5). How

those Holy eyes must have flashed upon those who would condemn Him for healing on the Sabbath day the man with the withered hand!

"And He looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and My mother" (3:34,35). This time the Saviour's eyes turned upon His disciples, and what love must have appeared in them as He turned and beheld those who had forsaken all to follow Him! "But when He had turned about and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind Me, Satan" (8:33).

What a touch in the picture is this--before He rebuked Peter, He, first, turned, and "looked" on His disciples! Concerning the rich young ruler who came to Him, we read here (and here only)," Then Jesus beholding him, loved him" (10:21). What Divine pity and compassion must have shone in His eyes at that moment! So again in 11:11 we read, "And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple, and when He had looked round upon all things, and now the eventide was come, He went out into Bethany with the twelve."

How those eyes must have blazed with righteous indignation, as He beheld the desecration of the Father's house! These passages which mention the Saviour "looking" and "beholding", tell us of His thoughtfulness, His attention to detail, His thoroughness. Next we will notice, III. THE MANNER IN WHICH CHRIST SERVED.

In order to discover the manner in which Christ served, we must examine closely the details of what the Holy Spirit has recorded here for our learning and profit, and for the benefit of our readers we shall classify those under suitable headings. 1. Christ served with marked Unostentation. "And Simon and they that were with him followed after Him. And when they had found Him, they said unto Him, All men seek for Thee. And He said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth" (Mark 1:36-38).

This incident occurred near the beginning of our Lord's public ministry. He had wrought some mighty works, many of the sick had been healed, and His fame had gone abroad. In consequence, great throngs of people sought for Him. He was, for a brief season, the popular Idol of the hour. But what was His response? Instead of remaining where He was to receive the plaudits of a fickle crowd, He moves away to preach in other towns. How unlike many of us today! When we are well received, when we become the center of an admiring crowd, our desire is to remain there.

Such a reception is pleasing to the flesh; it panders to our pride. We like to boast of the crowds that attend our ministry. But the perfect Servant of God never courted popularity, He shunned it! And when His disciples came and told Him--no doubt with pleasurable pride--"All men seek for Thee," His immediate response was, "Let us go"! At the close of Mark 1 we read of a leper being cleansed by the great Physician, and, dismissing him, He said, "See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."

How utterly unlike many of His servants to day, who spare no pains or expense to advertise themselves! How entirely different we are from the One who said, "I receive not honor from men" (John 5:41)! No; He ever wrought with an eye single to God's glory. Notice, farther, how this comes out again in the sequel to the above miracle. The healed leper heeded not the admonition of his Benefactor, instead, we read, "But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter."

How gratifying this would have been to most of us! But not so with Him who sought only the Father's glory. Instead of following the man who had been healed, to become the Object of the admiring gaze and flattering remarks of the leper's friends and neighbors, we read, that "Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places"! Are we not to learn from this, that when people begin to "blaze abroad" what God has wrought through us, it is time for us to move on, lest we receive the honor and glory which is due Him alone!

In full harmony with what has just been before us in the closing verses of Mark 1, we read in the first verses of the next chapter, "And again He entered into Capernaum, after some days, and it was noised that He was in the house," for, evidently, the healed leper belonged to that highly favored town. Hence it was that we here find Him seeking the privacy and quietude of the "house." So again in 3:19 we read, "And they (Christ and the apostles) went into an house." His reason for doing this, here, was to escape from the crowd, as is evident from the words which immediately follow, "And the multitude cometh together again."

Again in 7:17 we are told, "And when He was entered into the house from the people." His life was not lived before the footlights, but quietly and unobtrusively He went about doing the Father's will. What a word is this - "And when He was entered into the house from the people"! And how different from some of His servants today, whose one great aim seems to be the seeking of the patronage of "the people," and the soliciting of their favors! So, again in 9:28 we read, "And when He was come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him out?" (9:28).

And once more in 9:33, we read "And He came to Capernaum: and being in the house He asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" Mark, we may add, is the only one of the four Evangelists that makes this repeated reference to "the house." It is just one of the smaller lines in the picture that serves to bring out the Unostentation of the perfect Servant. In the closing verses of Mark 7 we have recorded the miracle of Christ restoring one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech.

And in chapter eight is recorded the healing of the blind man, who, at the first touch of the Lord's hands saw men as trees walking, but who, at the second touch, "saw every man clearly." Mark is the only one that records either of these miracles. One reason for their inclusion here, is seen in a feature that is common to them both. In 7:36 we are told, "And He charged them that they should tell no man: but the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it."

Concerning the latter we read, "And He sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town" (8:26). What a lesson for all of us: perfect service is rendered to God alone, and often is unseen, unappreciated, unthanked by man. The Servant of Jehovah threw a veil over His gracious acts. 2. Christ served with great Tenderness. This comes out so often in this second Gospel. We single out four examples, and the better to appreciate them, we quote first the parallel references in the other Gospels, before noticing Mark's account.

"And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought Him for her. And He stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her; and immediately she arose and ministered unto them" (Luke 4:38,39). "But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell Him of her. And He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them" (Mark 1:30,31). What a beautiful line in the picture is this!

How it shows us that Christ's service was no mere perfunctory one, performed with mechanical indifference, but that He came near to those to whom He ministered and entered, sympathetically, into their condition. In Luke 9 we read of the father who sought out the Lord Jesus on behalf of his demon-possessed son, and in healing him we read, "And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father" (9:42). But Mark brings into his picture a characteristic line which Luke omitted, "But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose" (9:27).

There was no aloofness about the perfect Servant. How this rebukes the assumed self-superiority of those who think it beneath their dignity to shake hands with those to whom they have ministered the Word! To take some people "by the hand" is to get nearer their hearts. Let us seek to serve as Christ did. In Matthew 18:2 we read, "And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them; and when He had taken him in His arms, He said unto them" (9:36). Again, in Matthew 19:13-15 we are told, "Then were there brought unto Him little children, that He should put His hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And He laid His hands on them, and departed thence." But once more we may observe how that Mark adds a line all his own, "And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them" (10:13-16). What tenderness do these acts display! And what an example He has left us! 3. Christ served encountering great Opposition. Here we shall take a rapid review of Mark's reference to this feature of his theme, instead of commenting on each passage, though a remark here and there will, perhaps, not be out of place.

"But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts (there are usually a few such in most congregations), Why does this man thus speak blasphemies?" (2:6,7). "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?" (2:16). "And the Pharisees said unto Him, behold why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?" (2:24). The servant of God must expect to be mis-understood and encounter criticism and opposition.

"And they watched Him whether He would heal him on the sabbath day" (3:2). And the servant of God is still watched by unfriendly eyes! "And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him" (3:6). Every faction of the peoples was "against" Him. "And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the demons casteth He out demons" (3:22). The servant may expect to be called hard names.

"And they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts" (5:17). Christ was not wanted. His testimony condemned His hearers. So will it be now with every servant of God that is faithful. "And they laughed Him to scorn" (5:40). To be sneered and jeered at, then, is nothing new: sufficient for the disciple to suffer what his Master did before him. "And they were offended at Him" (6:3). The Christ of God did not suit everybody; far from it. But let us see to it that we give none other occasion for "offense" than He did!

"And He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them" (6:5). The servant of God will come to some places which are unfavorable for effective ministry, and where the unbelief of the professed people of the Lord will hinder the Spirit of God. "Then came together unto Him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault" (7:1,2).

Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus declined to respect their "traditions," refusing to allow His disciples to be brought into bondage thus. Well for God's servants now if they disregard the "touch not, taste not, handle not" of men, yet must they be prepared to be "found fault" with as the result. "And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with Him, seeking of Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him" (8:11). So, too, will the emissaries of the Enemy seek now to entangle and ensnare the servants of God.

Compare Mark 10:2. "And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy Him: for they feared Him, because all the people was astonished at His doctrine" (11:18). They were jealous of His influence. And human nature has not changed since then! "And they come again to Jerusalem: and as He was walking in the temple, there came to Him the chief priests and the scribes, and the elders. And say unto Him, By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority?" (11:27,28).

How history repeats itself! From what College have you graduated? and in which Seminary were you trained? are the modern form of this query. "And they sent unto Him certain of the Pharisees, and of the Herodians, to catch Him in His words" (12:13). And some of their descendants still survive, and woe be to the man who fails to pronounce their shiboleths! What a list this is! and we have by no means exhausted it; see further 12:18; 12:28; 14:1, etc. All the way through, the perfect Servant of God was dogged by His enemies; at every step He encountered opposition and persecution in some form.

And these things are all recorded for our instruction. The Enemy is not dead. God's servants today are called to tread a similar path. 4. Christ Served with much Self-Sacrifice. "And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread" (3:20). So thoroughly was He at the disposal of others. How completely did He know what it was to spend and be spent! "And the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over into the other side.

And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him, even as He was into the ship" (4:35,36). How touching is this! A study of the context, with the parallel passages in the other Gospel, shows this evening here was the close of a busy and crowded day. From early morn till sunset, the Master had been ministering to others, and now He is so weary and worn from His labors He had to be "taken" --led and lifted--into the ship! "Even as He was"--how much do these words cover?

Ah, Christian worker, next time you come to the close of a full day of service for God, and your mind is tired and your nerves are quivering, remember that thy Lord, before thee, knew what it was to lay down (see 4:38) so tired that even the storm awoke Him not! "And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had NO leisure so much as to eat" (6:31). That is how the perfect Workman of God served.

Ever intent in being about His Father's business: no rest, no leisure, at times so thronged that He went without His meals. Christ's service cost Him something. Note how this comes out in the next quotations. "And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts" (3:5). He was no frigid Stoic. "And looking up to heaven He sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened" (7:34). Christ's service was not rendered formally and perfunctorily; but He entered,

sympathetically, into the condition of the sufferer.

"And He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign?" (8:12). Thus did He take to heart the sad unbelief of those to whom He ministered. He suffered inwardly as well as outwardly. "And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when His friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on Him: for they said, He is beside Himself" (3:20,21). So incapable were they of entering into the thoughts of God.

They sought to check Him in the accomplishing of God's will. Their purpose was well meant, no doubt, but it was a zeal "without knowledge." What a warning is this for all of God's servants. Watch out for well intentioned "friends" who, lacking in discernment, may seek to hinder the one who is completely yielded to God, and who, like the apostle Paul, "counts not his life dear unto himself" (Acts 20:24). 5. Christ Served in an Orderly manner. This comes out, in an incidental way, in several statements which are found only in Mark.

We single out but two. In 6:7 we read, "And He called unto Him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two." Again; when about to feed the hungering multitude, we are told, "And He commanded them to make them all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties" (6:39,40). What attention to details was this! And how it rebukes much of our slipshod work! If Scripture enjoins, "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," then, surely our service for God calls for our most careful and prayerful attention!

God is never the author of "confusion," as Christ's example here plainly shows. 6. Christ's Service was prompted by Love. "And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him. (the leper), and said unto him, I will; be thou clean" (1:41). "And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things" (6:34). "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat" (8:1).

Mark is the only one of the Evangelists that brings this lovely and touching line into the picture. And O how it rebukes the writer for his hardness of heart, and cold indifference to the perishing all around! How little real "compassion" one finds today! "Then Jesus beholding him (the rich young man) loved him" (Mark 10:21). Mark is the only one who tells us this, as though to show that without "love" service is barren. 7. Christ's Service was preceded by Prayer. "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (1:35).

Mark is the only one that records this. And how significant that this statement is placed in his first chapter, as though to let us into the secret of the uniqueness and perfectness of Christ's service! There is much more that is peculiar to this second Gospel which we now pass over. In closing here we would call attention to the manner in which Mark concludes:--"And they (the apostles) went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following.

Amen" (16:20). How significant and appropriate! The last view we have here of God's perfect Servant, He is still "working," now, not alone, but "with them" His servants. Our study of this lovely view of Christ will have been in vain, unless it has brought home to our hearts with new power the admonition of God through His apostle, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

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