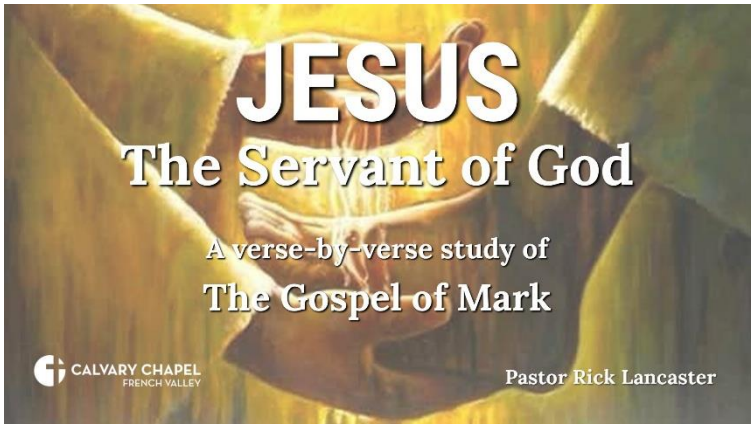

JESUS: The Servant of God

A verse-by-verse study of the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel and Religion

Mark 2:18-28

Message #6

Sermon given on November 2, 2025

CALVARY CHAPEL
FRENCH VALLEY

Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Gospel and Religion

Mark 2:18-28

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Mark 2**
- Today, we begin a series through the gospel of Mark – **JESUS: The Servant of God**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Gospel and Religion**
- Please stand as we read today's text as a sign of reverence for the Word of God.
- **Mark 2:18-28**
- You may be seated.
- There is a danger in our exercise of Christianity that we need to watch out for.
- I just had you stand up as we read the Scriptures.
- I told you it was an expression of reverence for the Word of God.
- But what if I didn't tell you that?
- What if we did it every week, but never told you why?
- Would you question it? Would you want to know why?
- There is a danger that our Christian faith can turn into a faithless religion.
- I have been going through the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 on Thursday nights.
- The very first one, the church of Ephesus, Jesus told them He knew about their good works.
- But then He challenged them. **Revelation 2:4**

4 Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.

- They were doing the right things, but they were not doing it as an expression of their love of God.
- Faithless religion is not pleasing to God.

Religion: the belief in and worship of a superhuman power or powers, especially a God or gods.

- Human nature will lead us to just follow the lead of those in front.
- But that is not what God wants from us.
- He wants us to be fully engaged in the acts of worship. **Matthew 22:37**

37 Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

- We should be thinking about God and examining our heart, attitudes, motives, and understanding as we go through the worship service.
- As someone is praying, do you consciously agree with the prayer and repeat it in your heart to the Lord?
- As the announcements are made, do you ask the Holy Spirit if there is some way He wants you to respond to them?
- Is there something announced that He wants you to get involved with?
- As the music is being played, do you think about the lyrics or repeat them as prayers to God?
- When the offering is taken, do you examine your heart regarding your giving?
- As the message is being given, do you ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart, mind, and understanding about what is being shared?
- Jesus didn't save us to be in a dead, faithless religion, but to be in a living relationship with our loving Father in Heaven.
- In today's text, Jesus is confronted by some guys who were more in love with their religion than they were with the God that religion was mean to lead them to.
- **Mark 2:18**
- These guys come with a question.
- It is not wrong to question the things we do as we are worshipping God.
- We just need to be careful that our heart is right before we do.
- Jesus uses a couple of parables to challenge the hearts these guys.
- The first one…
- **Mark 2:19-20**
- Fasting had become very important for the religious Jews.
- Many of them fasted twice a week.

- The Law of Moses, which they say they are following, only requires one fast per year, on the Day of Atonement.
- Jesus is the bridegroom in this parable.
- His very presence in the world makes fasting inappropriate.
- His presence is a source of joy – fasting is an expression of mourning.
- Once the bridegroom is taken away, then fasting will be appropriate.
- Verse 20 is the first hint of the cross in Mark's gospel.
- The second parable uses two illustrations.
- **Mark 2:21-22**
- Both illustrations point to the incompatibility of the old with the new.
- Jesus was here to do something new. **Luke 22:19-20**

19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it,* and gave *it* to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."

- Jesus didn't come to fix Judaism; He didn't come to fix the Jewish religion. **Hebrews 8:13**

13 In that He says, "*A new covenant*," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

- But He also didn't come to destroy Judaism. **Mark 5:17**

17 Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

- There are two ways to destroy an acorn: you can smash it with a hammer, or you can plant it into the ground.
- If you smash it with a hammer, it is gone – useless.
- If you plant it into the ground it will grow into a mighty oak tree, but the acorn itself is gone.
- In the oak tree the acorn is fulfilled.
- The oak tree owes its existence to the acorn.
- The Law and the prophets were the seed that gave birth to the gospel of grace.
- Jesus is telling them to let go of the old dead, faithless religion and embrace the gospel of grace found in faith in Christ Jesus.
- Mark then records another encounter with the religious guys and Jesus responds by reminding them of their Scriptures.

- And then He will make a radical claim that probably made their religious brains explode.
- **Mark 2:23-24**
- The Sabbath was an important weekly observance of faith for the Jews.
- It still is for many today.
- The Sabbath is a 24-hour period beginning at sundown on Friday and ending at sundown on Saturday.
- It remembers God resting on the seventh day after six days of creation.
- Over hundreds of years, the rules pertaining to the Sabbath, what could and could not be done become more and more burdensome.
- Jesus challenges them with their own Scriptures.
- **Mark 2:25-26**
- You can find this account in 1 Samuel 21.
- Jesus is differentiating between the Law and grace.
- Wherever the law and grace conflict, grace should always win. **David L. McKenna**

The sacredness of the Sabbath is built upon the moral principle of grace rather than the religious regulation of the Law.

- One of the main lessons of the book of Romans is that the Law cannot save us; it has saved no one, ever. **Ephesians 2:8**

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God…

- Jesus then makes a statement the Pharisees would have bristled at.
- **Mark 2:27**
- God gave the Sabbath to be a blessing to man.
- It was meant to meet his physical need of rest.
- It also pointed to his spiritual need to rest in God.
- Religion turned God's blessing into a burden and drove people from God's rest.
- Religion always does that; it turns God's good into something heavy and hard to carry.
- Jesus then challenges them regarding who has the authority to interpret the meaning and purpose of the Sabbath.

- **Mark 2:28**
- Son of Man is Jesus' favorite title for Himself.
- It points to His identification as a human man.
- It is also a title associated with the Messiah in the Old Testament.
- By saying He is Lord of the Sabbath, He is not saying He can violate it.
- He is saying that because He created it, He is the One with the authority to interpret how it is to be observed.
- This is another claim to be equal with God; Jesus is saying He is God.
- The Pharisees were stuck in their religion.
- God in the flesh is standing in front of them and their religion won't let them see Him.
- Turn to **Luke 10**
- Here at Calvary Chapel French Valley, we are doing our best to love Jesus with our heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- And as we study through the letters to the churches in Revelation, it reminds me, we need to regularly examine ourselves to make sure we aren't drifting toward faithless religion.
- We should be checking ourselves for grace-centered, faith-filled relationship with Jesus.
- Here in Luke 10, we find four things we ought to examine.
- **Luke 10:25-28**
- Examine heart, soul, strength, and mind.
- **Examine Your Heart**
- Is there love there? **1 John 4:8**

8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

- If you don't love God and others – then your faith might not be real.
- This is one of ways I know I am saved - God changed my heart. E**zekiel 11:19**

19 I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh.

- It is a sign of being a new creation = new heart – love.
- **Examine your Soul**
- The soul is part of you that relates to God – immortal.
- God is holy – do you care about holiness? **1 Peter 1:14-16**

[14] as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; [15] but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, [16] because it is written, *"Be holy, for I am holy."*

- New creation cares about holiness.
- **<u>Examine your Strength</u>**
- This is what we do in our lives. **John 13:15**

I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

- Do the doings of your life resemble Jesus?
- New creation starts to take on the image of Jesus; we resemble Him.
- **<u>Examine your Mind</u>**
- What you think matters to God.
- What you think determines what you do. **Colossians 3:1-2**

[1] If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. [2] Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

- New creation – mind on eternal things **Romans 12:2**

[2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- Bible teaches that our transformation is gradual.
- But we should be able to see evidence of it.
- If we don't see progress in our faith, our faith may be in wineskins that have gotten old and brittle; not able to respond to the Holy Spirit.
- The solution is just like Jesus told the church in Ephesus in **Revelation 2:5**

[5] Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works…

- Jesus didn't come to start a new religion.
- He came to make a way for us all to be in an intimate, communion fellowship with our loving Father.
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us to examine our heart and make sure our wineskins are not drying out.
- **<u>Pray – Last Song</u>**