

Mark 1:35-39; 2:1-11: Authority to Forgive; What is a Pharisee?

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[0 : 00] All right, let's jump back into the Scriptures. We have been in the book of Mark, and we finished up chapter 1 just last week in speaking primarily about the healing ministry of Jesus and what His healing ministry was all about, why did He heal people.

But there was one little passage that we kind of skipped over because I just wanted to focus on that one topic looking at His healing ministry. And so we're going to start there. We'll finish up with that in chapter 1, and then we will jump over to chapter 2.

So we're going to look this morning at Jesus going off by Himself to pray. We actually see that several times throughout the Scriptures, but Jesus going off to go pray in solitude.

And then we're going to see an account where a paralytic, someone who was paralyzed, came to Jesus to be healed, and where this whole idea of whether Jesus has the authority to forgive people is first, kind of comes up.

And then we'll see the very first entrance of a group of people called the scribes and the Pharisees. So we'll start here with Mark chapter 1 and verse 35.

[1 : 27] Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, he went out and departed to a solitary place. And there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him.

When they found him, they said to him, everyone's looking for you. But he said to them, let us go into the next towns that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth. And he was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and he was casting out demons. So if you remember kind of what happened before this, and you can just look up at the verses above, but Jesus was ministering at Peter's home.

It seems it was Peter's home. And that all these sick people were being brought to him to be healed. And so Jesus' healing ministry was really truly in force.

People were hearing about him. All kinds of people were coming to be healed by him. As you can imagine, you hear that there's a miracle worker bringing healing, and there's plenty of people who would love to be healed.

[2 : 39] And so they came to him. But it says that the next morning, it says again in verse 35, now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, he went out and he departed to a solitary place, and there he prayed.

And so Jesus, we see throughout his ministry, we see him praying both in public, in public prayers. He would pray publicly with his disciples or even with other people in his hearing.

But then also he would go and pray in private. And why would he do that? Why would he go off by himself to pray, to just talk to the Lord?

I mean, Jesus is God the Son. Didn't he just have kind of a direct line to the Father? Why would he go off for a specific time period to spend time with the Lord?

Well, I think this is an indication of Jesus' condescension. You know, he prayed just like we pray. He related to the Father in a similar way that we do.

[3 : 54] We go to the Lord in prayer. Jesus went to the Lord in prayer. And this was an opportunity, I think, for Jesus to kind of have a, kind of recharge his batteries, if you will.

I think we use that term. And it's kind of appropriate here. A spiritual recharge, to go to the Father. And so in bringing this up, this is something that we as Christians, as believers, ought to do as well. We should, you know, Jesus prayed and his disciples saw him pray. And there's actually a point in scripture where his disciples asked the Lord, will you teach us how to pray?

And he did. He taught them how they ought to pray. And so it's appropriate for us as Christians to pray both publicly, in public with others who are hearing, and then also in private.

But, you know, when you pray publicly, there's a little bit more pressure, right? In fact, for some people, it's kind of a little bit nerve-wracking when you pray in public.

[5 : 06] What if I say the wrong thing, right? What if I don't know what to say and I just kind of stammer? You know, prayer can be difficult, especially if you're a new Christian, you're not familiar with praying and talking to the Lord.

And so, you know, praying in public might be something that is difficult and even a little bit scary. You know, when we pray in public, actually, even though we're talking to God, there is a benefit to those who are listening to us pray, isn't there?

And so that's one of the benefits of public prayer is that we can be, it can be instructive to others who are listening. When people heard Jesus pray, it was instructive.

When we read in the scriptures the prayers of Jesus, it's instructive to us. It can also be encouraging to others when you pray publicly.

And public prayer, a lot of times, is we're all praying together. You know, we have prayer meetings Wednesday night here at the church, and people kind of get around a table and talk about what's going on in the world, what's going on in our community, what's going on in our church, and talk about things that we should consider praying for and about.

[6 : 31] And usually one, you know, people will kind of take turns praying, but everybody is, you know, standing together in those prayers, agreeing with one another. So public prayer is great, but I think it's important in the life of any Christian to also have a private prayer life.

One of the benefits of private prayer is nobody's listening but God. Right? You don't have to worry about saying the right words.

You can stammer and mumble and mess up your words. And do you think the Lord minds? I don't think he does at all. He loves it when we come and we talk to him.

And I think it's especially special, if I could say that, and especially dear to him when we do that privately. You know, I think about my kids, and there are times when, you know, the house is busy and everybody's kind of around and somebody will ask me a question or talk to me or something like that.

And that's great and wonderful. But it's especially dear to me when I'm alone and one of my kids comes and they just want to talk to me privately. There's something private that they want to discuss or talk about.

[7 : 43] I love that. That's so wonderful. And I think the Lord really loves that too when we come to him in private and take opportunities to just talk to him.

We don't have to be concerned about impressing people with how grand or spiritual our prayers are when we talk to the Lord.

You know, that's kind of a, how do I, maybe a temptation. When we're praying in public, we want to try to impress people, right? Jesus actually talked about that with the scribes and Pharisees, try to impress people with their big words or something like that.

You know, hopefully we don't fall to that kind of a temptation when we pray publicly, but none of that's even a thing, right? When we're just talking to the Lord in private.

We can be, I think, more vulnerable and kind of bear our weaknesses to the Lord more easily when it's just us and the Lord. We can pray about things that have to do with areas that we're struggling in, things that we may not be comfortable talking to the Lord about in a public setting.

[8 : 58] If you turn to Psalm 38, you know, many of the Psalms are really just prayers that are turned into songs. This is one that I found that I think shows the intimacy and vulnerability of prayer.

In Psalm 38, my Bible says, this is a Psalm of David to bring to remembrance. And I'll just read a few verses here.

He says, Oh Lord, do not rebuke me in your wrath, nor chasten me in your hot displeasure. For your arrows pierce me deeply, and your hand presses me down. There is no soundness in my flesh because of your anger, nor any health in my bones because of my sin.

For my iniquities have gone over my head like a heavy burden. They are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness. I am troubled.

I am bowed down greatly. I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are full of inflammation, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and severely broken. I groan because of the turmoil

of my heart.

[10:17] You know, we talked this morning in our Sunday school class about the sin of David when he sinned with Bathsheba. And that was a great sin.

Not only adultery, but also trying to cover it up. He murdered Bathsheba's husband to try to cover up the adultery that he committed.

But this is a case where he's showing sorrow for his sin. And, you know, that's a vulnerable thing to do.

And when we pray to God privately, that's an opportunity for us to do that same thing. You know, how do we look for opportunities, times for private prayer?

We could, like Jesus, get up at 5 a.m. and go out into the woods or out into, you know, some private place and just find that time to talk to the Lord privately.

[11:24] But we don't have to do that. One, it doesn't have to be the morning, though that might be the most opportune time for some people when things are quiet around the house. For some people, some people experience lots of quiet in their life.

For others, quiet is a rare commodity. You know, if you have young children in the house, you can testify to the truth of that.

I think of especially young mothers who have little kids running around. And finding that quiet time to spend with the Lord can be really, really difficult. So maybe waking up before dawn, maybe just late at night after everybody's gone to bed, in your room by yourself, take some time to talk to the Lord.

Maybe it's just while you're on the go. Sometimes we have an opportunity to drive somewhere and we're alone in the car. What a great opportunity to talk to the Lord. So, and what kinds of things do we pray about when we're talking to the Lord in private?

Private one, we could ask God for things. We can ask him to help in areas where we're failing, where we have flaws in our life, character issues, sins that we're working to overcome.

[12:53] We might have relationship problems. Anybody ever have a relationship problem before? Relationships can be hard. And ask for the Lord's help in relationships.

Ask him for his help in understanding the scriptures. God, I don't know as much as I should or as much as I want. Lord, can you help me to grow in understanding?

We can use time to just thank the Lord. Say, thanks God. Thank you Lord for creating me. For giving me life.

Sometimes I think we forget about the most obvious things. Aren't you grateful for your life? I am. The Lord didn't have to create us. He didn't have to create the world, but he did.

We can tell him that we're thankful for that. Thank him for being good. God, you're so good. Thank you for being so good to us. Thank him for loving us so much.

[13:57] Thank him for the cross. Thank him for eternal life. Just take an opportunity to say, Lord, I love you. I love you.

You first loved me, and I love you back. Take the opportunity to express our faith. Our faith in his promises that he's made.

For counting us as righteous. Do you know that's one of the promises of God? That if we trust in him, he will count us as righteous. Even when we don't act righteous.

We can go to the Lord and say, thank you Lord for counting me as righteous. Take the opportunity, if you don't on a regular basis, to go to the Lord, whether it's a regular time or just these little opportune times that you find throughout the day to talk to the Lord.

One of the interesting things here after, so I guess Jesus didn't tell anybody where he was going. He just kind of disappeared overnight, and so his disciples were looking for him.

[15:12] And they said, hey, where'd you go? And everybody's looking for you. But what did he say? He said, all right, well, we'll just go wherever, you know, the people want me to show up.

No, he said, you know what? Let's move on. We've got to go to the next town, because this is the reason that God sent me. You know, Jesus' mission was to preach the gospel of the kingdom and to prove that his message was true and accurate through the miracles and healings that he did.

Jesus didn't want to stay too long in one place, because he had to get the word out. But it wasn't just the people in Capernaum or even just Galilee that needed to hear the message.

It was people all over Israel. And so he needed to move around and continue to reach as many people as he could. He only had, what, three years to get the word out to accomplish his ministry.

You know, when we have ministries, whether it's a missionary or just a ministry in a church, however we serve the Lord in different ways, we don't have just a short three-year period to accomplish what we need to accomplish.

[16:31] We have our whole lives. And so, and also, we don't necessarily need to get the word out. We don't need to travel the globe, even though some people may do that.

For many of us, we might just serve the Lord in our small little community, in our church, for many, many years. And that's totally fine.

What a great way to serve the Lord. Well, we'll move on here. We'll go ahead and move on to chapter 2. And we're going to look at this story of a man who was paralyzed.

We'll read this. Mark chapter 2, verse 1 through 12, we'll read. And again, he entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that he was in the house. Now, why does it say the house, the house?

It doesn't say a house or someone's house. It says the house. We'll talk about that in a second. Immediately, many gathered together so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door.

[17:37] And he preached the word to them. Then they came to him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was.

So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, Son, your sins are forgiven you.

And some of the scribes were sitting there, and they reasoned in their hearts. Why does this man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?

But immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, he said to them, Why do you reason about these things in your heart? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, Your sins are forgiven you?

Or to say, Arise, take up your bed and walk. But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. He said to the paralytic, I say to you, Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.

[18:42] And immediately he rose, took up his bed, and went in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, We never saw anything like this.

Incredible. This is an amazing, amazing story here. A man who was, it seems, we don't know how long he was paralyzed or afflicted with this affliction, but was not able to walk.

And, in short order, ended up walking right out the door. So, going back here to verse 1, he entered to Capernaum again, so he had been in Capernaum.

That's actually where Peter was from. Peter and his brother Andrew. In fact, that's where Jesus first did many of his healings. At Peter and Andrew's house, where, remember, his mother-in-law was sick, and he healed her.

And so, it seems, based on the text here, that this is probably where he went back. It's probably Peter's house, because it says here, that they heard that he was in the house.

[19:53] The house. I imagine this was probably the house that he usually went to when he was in Capernaum. That same one, that was the home of Peter and Andrew, and probably their extended family since his mother-in-law.

lived there as well. One of the things, one of the other things to point out here in this story is these, these four men, and the paralytic that they brought, probably a friend of theirs, they came, and they were, they were determined.

We heard that there's this guy, Jesus, he's healing people, we're going to take him, and see if maybe our friend can be healed. Now, as far as like the technicalities of lowering him from the roof, you know, we have roofs today where that would be really an impossibility, right, unless you took an axe to it.

But back then, they had roofs that were more accessible. A lot of times, you would go up on the roof actually to, to hang out to, especially in the cool, cool parts of the day, and you could go outside, and there was a walking area, but then there were parts of the, of the home, and, you know, each home was different, where there might just be a thatched part of the roof, like just some kind of, temporary covering.

And so, that's likely kind of what the case was here, and so there was a part that was somewhat, that they could, they could, they could fairly easily remove, and they were determined, right, there was no room to get through the door.

[21 : 25] It was just way too crowded. There were so many people. And so, they were determined, and they're going to go up the stairs, and down through the roof. And what does it say that Jesus saw?

It says, when he saw their faith, when he saw their faith, what does that mean? What, what was it that he saw in them? And really, this is a question that I'm not sure I fully, can answer, or understand myself.

I mean, one, they were very determined, that's, there's definitely a faith in that, right? They were convinced that Jesus was able to do, he was able to heal their friend, otherwise, they wouldn't have gone to any of the trouble, much less all that trouble of going up into the roof.

So, maybe, possibly, that's what Jesus meant by seeing that their faith, it was their determination, and their, they were convinced that Jesus could actually heal.

Maybe there was some additional faith faith that Jesus could see in them, faith that he was the Messiah, the one who was to come, or even that they had, or at least the man, had faith to have his sins forgiven.

[22 : 43] I'm not exactly sure, maybe at the end, when there's time for questions and comments, if anybody has any ideas, you can, you can bring that up.

But here's the interesting thing, the man came for what? What does it seem like he came for? To be healed. What did Jesus say, when he saw their faith?

Did he say, be healed? No, no, he said, your sins are forgiven. Why would he say that? It didn't seem, it doesn't say anywhere, that the man was asking for his sins, to be forgiven.

Maybe that was something that was on his heart, and it's just not, it's just not talked about. But regardless of kind of those details, details, Jesus told him, that your sins are forgiven you.

Why did he say that? Because ultimately, he did heal a man, right? Why did he say that? Well, he tells, these scribes and Pharisees, who were a bit offended, at the whole, at the whole thing.

[24 : 00] And he said, I did this, so that you would know, so that you would know, the authority, that I have.

That I have the authority, to forgive sins. And so this was an opportunity, to show, who he was. Now you can imagine, if there was some, just crazy person, that was going around, and telling everybody, all of your sins are forgiven.

Just some crazy nut, right? All of your sins, he's just going around, to people telling them, your sins are forgiven, all your sins are forgiven. And there might be, some people that do that.

And what would you do? You would just say, oh, he's a nut. I'm not going to pay, any attention. But now you have someone, who says, your sins are forgiven you.

And then he says, rise up and walk. And the man does. And now, this isn't just some crazy nut anymore. This is somebody, who it seems, has authority.

[25 : 08] His words have authority, to do something, that I can see with my eyes. to raise a man, from lameness, to paralysis, to being able to walk again.

And now the words that he says, all of your sins are forgiven you. Something that you can't see. You can't see someone's sins forgiven, can you? You can't see it. But you see that this man, has authority, to raise somebody up, from paralysis.

And this is pretty clear evidence, that he also has the authority, to do what he said, to forgive sins. Now, these, scribes and Pharisees, they say, and let me look it up again.

It says, some of the scribes, verse 6, Mark 2, verse 6, and some of the scribes, were sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, why does this man, speak blasphemies like this?

Who can forgive sins, but God alone? Well, first of all, what is a blasphemy anyway? Why does this man, speak blasphemies? A blasphemy is just a slander, against someone.

[26 : 24] And typically, a blasphemy is a slander, against the Lord, against God. And so, you can imagine, if somebody's claiming, that they can do something, that only is within the authority, or power, of our creator, that would be a slam, a slander, against God.

Pretending to be, somebody that you're not, pretending to have authority, that only God has. And so, why does this man, speak blasphemies like this?

Who can forgive sins, but God alone? Now, is it true that God, it's only God, that can forgive? I mean, on the face of it, that's not true, right?

Can't we forgive, as well? Sure, but it's a little bit different, right? Because, we only have the authority, to forgive those, who sin against us, right?

If someone offends me, then I can release them, of that debt. If somebody owes me money, then I can say, you know what?

[27 : 31] It's all forgiven. Don't worry about it. Don't worry about paying me back. But what about, if somebody owes, my neighbor money? Can I just go to, my friend and say, I know you, I know you owe, Billy over here, you know, \$10,000.

You know what? It's all forgiven. Is that within our authority? Absolutely not. And Billy would be pretty upset, wouldn't he? Right?

But God has a different kind of authority. Every sin that we commit, is not just a sin against someone else, but it's a sin against God. In fact, again, back to our Bible study this morning, that was one of the things that David said, when he sinned with Bathsheba.

He said, God, it's against you and you alone that I have sinned. Now, that is, I think, hyperbole, because he actually did sin against Uriah, and there were other people involved.

But really, when it comes right down to it, who's the most important offended party? It's the Lord himself. And so, we don't have the authority to forgive everyone all their sins.

[28 : 48] If they have a few that are against us, we can forgive that, but we can't forgive anyone all their sins. But this is what Jesus did. And so, it would be blasphemy.

And so, these Pharisees, these scribes, were correct in kind of how they were thinking. only God can forgive sins.

But, here's the mistake that they made. Jesus proves the authority that he has through the miracle that he accomplished. And did that change their mind?

It seems, and if you are familiar with the story of the Gospels, that it did not. And so, this is interesting, because this is the first time, in the book of Mark, really in the Gospels, that we see this group of people called the Pharisees, the scribes, and the Pharisees.

It says, when we read this same passage, or this same account, in the book of Luke, here's what it says. It says in Luke 5, 17, Now, it happened on a certain day, as he was teaching, again, this is talking about Jesus teaching in Capernaum, at this house in Capernaum, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law, sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem.

[30 : 14] So, Jesus' fame was spreading abroad, and people were hearing about him, and so, these groups of people, these scribes and Pharisees, came to hear and to see what was going on.

And when they see him say something about your sins being forgiven, in their hearts, they didn't say it out loud, they're just kind of testing the waters, but in their hearts, they're saying, wait a second, who is this guy?

Anyway, the scribes and Pharisees, were teachers of the law, and, in the Gospels, you can consider them like in a novel, they're the, you have the protagonist, and the antagonist, right? You have like the hero, and then you have the villain. And if you're familiar with the Gospels, are the Pharisees the heroes? No.

They're the villains. They're the ones that are constantly coming against Jesus. And that might make you think, well, the Pharisees, they were these, these very, godless type people, who, you know, seemed to not have any reverence, or love for the Lord.

[31 : 36] But really, the Pharisees were a group of people, that were the ones, who at least, in appearances, seemed to be the ones, who loved God's law, who loved the Scriptures, who defended the Scriptures.

In fact, there was another group called the Sadducees, that were kind of, these were like two different parties. You had the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And it was the Pharisees who defended the Scriptures, and the things that the prophets said.

They were like the conservatives, you know? They were the ones that were faithful, it seemed, to the Bible, to the Scriptures. But, let me ask this question.

If, somebody today, in our day and age, called you a Pharisee, would that be a compliment? I'm seeing, shaking heads, no.

And why is that? Why is being called a Pharisee, not a compliment? It's because, what we see in the Scriptures, of the attitude, of the Pharisees.

[32 : 46] I want to give three examples, from the Scriptures, so we'll look at different places, of the wrong attitude, that these Pharisees had. In Luke, chapter 18, verse 9 through 14.

Luke, chapter 18. Jesus speaks, about these Pharisees. Luke 18, verse 9.

Also, he spoke this parable, to some who trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and that despised others. Two men went up to the temple, to pray.

One, a Pharisee, and the other, a tax collector. Now, is a tax collector, like a good guy, or a bad guy? Bad guy.

Is it any, is it any different today? Like, who wants to be an IRS agent, right? Are IRS agents, the good guys, or the bad guys? And so, there's a Pharisee, and then you have a tax collector.

[33 : 54] They went up to the temple, to pray. Verse 11. The Pharisee stood, and he prayed thus, within himself, God, I thank you, that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

I fast twice a week, I give tithes, of all that I possess, and the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much, as raise his eyes, to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

And so, Jesus went on to say, you know what? The attitude that I'm looking for, is not the Pharisee. It's the one from this tax collector. And it's not like, you know, humility is in the heart of every tax collector.

But in this one in particular, he knew that he, he was a sinner. He had cheated people. He had taken money. He had probably, you know, like the mafia does.

Sometimes, doesn't it seem like the IRS is like the mafia sometimes? You know, pay us your money, and we'll provide you protection. Right? But knew the things that he had done to hurt, intimidate others.

[35 : 08] And so, this goes back to pride. There was a self-righteousness and a pride that was in the heart of these Pharisees. Another account that will show what's in the heart of the Pharisees is in the book of Matthew, chapter 23.

This is a, I call it the woe chapter. There's lots of woes in here. If you see the word woe in the Bible, it's not a good word.

It's not like what you tell a horse. Whoa. Whoa. Whoa. Whoa in the Bible is like, look out. You're in big trouble. Whoa unto you.

Matthew chapter 23. We'll start with the first verse. Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying, the scribes and the Pharisees, they sit in Moses' seat. Therefore, whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do.

But, do not do according to their works. For they say and they do not do. And what is this speaking to? There's a big word.

[36 : 16] Everybody knows it starts with the letter H. There are a bunch of hypocrites, these Pharisees. And then he goes on to list all these things. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and they lay them on men's shoulders.

But they themselves will not move them with one of their little fingers. But all their works they do to be seen of men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

So they put the, you know, hang little scriptures on their clothes and, you know, maybe even on their hair, their head. All these little things to be seen by men.

But what was in their hearts? If we skip down to verse 13. But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men.

For you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers.

[37 : 20] Therefore, you will receive greater condemnation. And he goes on and on and on. The Pharisees were hypocrites.

They were proud and self-righteous. And they were hypocritical. They preached one thing but did something else altogether themselves. One more thing that they did, Mark chapter 7.

If you go back to the book of Mark, chapter 7, we'll look at just a couple of verses. We'll start with verse 5.

Then the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but they eat bread with unwashed hands?

Saying, hey Jesus, you know, we all, we all wash our hands before we eat. And your disciples, they just, like a bunch of heathen, just eat without washing their hands.

[38 : 26] And he answered and he said to them, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, hypocrites, as it is written, the people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me and in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

Is there somewhere in the Bible in the law of Moses that these Jews have been taught that they have to wash their hands before they eat? No, not anywhere. But this was a tradition of the elders. They had built an edifice of holiness, of being a good Jew. And if you're going to be a good Jew, well, us, people who know better than everybody, we're going to create our own commandments and our own traditions.

And if you want to be a really good Jew, you'll do these things that we tell you to do. They're not in the scriptures. We've just kind of created them ourselves. If God can create some commandments, hey, so can we.

And then in verse 8, he says, for laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, the washing of pitchers and cups and many other such things you do.

[39 : 43] He said to them, all too well, you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your tradition. And then he says, for Moses said, honor your father and mother and he who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.

But you say, you say, if a man says to his, again, sorry, this is, you know, some people are like, put a kid to death for disobeying his parents. This is talking about grown children who are abusing their parents, basically.

But you say, if a man says to his father or mother, whatever profit you might have received from me as korban, that is a gift of God, then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down.

And many such things you do. This one's a little bit confusing, but basically they're giving a way out. Hey, you know, as children, you know, it's good and right that when your parents are elderly, you take care of them.

But, hey, if we do this tradition that the Pharisees came up with, then we don't have to take care of our parents. We can basically just let them, let them deal, you know, deal with life themselves in their older age.

[41 : 00] I mean, you know, I don't want to have to give up any of my time or resources to help my parents. And so, the first thing we looked at was their pride and self-righteousness.

The second thing was their hypocrisy. And the third is taking traditions of men, commandments of men, and putting them over the word of God.

So, we're going to, we'll kind of end with this whole section here in Mark chapter 2. but one thing to finish up with before we, before we take some questions or comments is, is it possible for us as Christians, believers, to be like the Pharisees?

I mean, the Pharisees, they rejected Jesus, right? The Pharisees rejected Jesus for the most part, not all of them. In fact, some of them actually became Christians. Paul was a Pharisee, wasn't he? But many of them rejected Jesus Christ. So, we might think, well, I'm a Christian, I love the Lord. So, there's no way in which I could be like the Pharisees, right?

[42 : 18] And of course, we should never, never think like that. As Christians, even though God has loved us and saved us and we put our faith and trust in Him, we can still fail in so many different ways.

And so, how is it that we can act in a self-righteous manner?

Can we kind of look at those who have, you know, maybe not grown in Christ as much as we have and think, oh, well, I'm better than them.

You know, one of the interesting things about our salvation what does it say in Ephesians 2, 8, and 9? For we are saved by grace, not through our works, not because we did something good, but just because God offered a free gift.

And there's a reason why. Why does it say our salvation is by faith alone and not from works, lest any man should boast. Is there any reason that we have to boast and how good we are?

[43 : 32] No. Our salvation, God saved us, not because of anything good that we've done, but because of his free gift alone.

There is no reason for us to boast, and we need to always keep that in mind. Can Christians be hypocrites? Is that possible? I'm sure other Christians can be hypocrites.

That's probably one of the most painful things is to see hypocrisy in your own life. Hypocrisy is intensely destructive, especially for, you know, children.

Children who see their parents as hypocrites. I used to work for a guy, or worked with a guy who was my boss, and he was not a Christian, and I talked to him about the Lord and the gospel and different things, and one of the things he told me, he says, you know, my dad, he was an elder at our church, and he acted one way in church, and at home it was completely different.

And that messed him up, big time. God forbid that we would ever be hypocrites, but is it true that we can be hypocritical at times?

[44 : 52] I think as Christians, when we are hypocritical, which will probably happen, how do we deal with that?

What do we do? Do we dig in and just like, well, you know, I have a right to talk this way or act this way, or maybe we try to keep it hidden so that nobody will find out that we're, you know, even though we hold up this standard of, you know, for example, pornography.

Pornography is evil and wicked and it's destroyed so many families, but how many people seem to be sucked in over and over? I'll just keep it hidden and I won't tell anybody.

But I'm going to live a life of hypocrisy. You know, humbly admitting when we fail to the Lord and then when it's appropriate, sometimes to others. You know what?

I was a hypocrite. This is what the Bible teaches. This is how I ought to live, but I'm not doing that.

[46 : 01] Sometimes we need to ask people for their forgiveness. I didn't act, I'm not acting like I should. And then the last way in which we can act like Pharisees is by putting traditions, institutions, other things above the Word of God.

You know, the Pharisees, they had built this whole infrastructure, this institution, they had built a power base in which they had a lot of power, religious power, power, and sometimes they would kind of just look the other way when something was happening that shouldn't.

Because, you know, you have to protect your power, and hey, we're going to use this power, this religious power that we have, we're going to use it for good. And so, if somebody finds out that there's sin in the camp, that there's some hypocrisy going on, then that might impact the power that we have to do good things.

Do you see that today at all in the Christian church? You know, there was a scandal that happened a few years ago, a popular ministry, a guy named Ravi Zacharias.

Anybody remember Ravi Zacharias? And there were some accusations that came out that he had been acting inappropriately with women, several.

[47 : 36] And people had gone to the ministry and had shared what had happened to them or what they knew about. The ministry kind of just, you know, you're just a crazy nut.

You know, you're just trying to, you know, harm the Lord's work in some way. But the evidence kind of started to mount. And it wasn't until Ravi Zacharias passed away, I think it was from cancer, that it really came out that all of these things were very much true and very much the case.

And the people that ran the ministry, which, I mean, this was a ministry that had tens of millions of dollars. I mean, it was huge and had impacted the world in a tremendous way in pointing people towards the Lord, towards Jesus Christ, towards the gospel.

It was a lot of fruit. But kind of after a while it came out, some of the people who ran that ministry said, you know what?

We were wrong. We looked the other way. We didn't investigate things that we should have. We didn't take these accusations seriously that we should have.

[49 : 00] And ultimately they were protecting their power, their traditions that they had built up. And this happens not just in ministries, it happens in churches, it happens in families sometimes.

Well, we have to protect our family. We don't want anybody to find out about what's going in our family. So we're going to keep these things secret, keep these things hidden. But God's word, God's righteousness, God's goodness, God's expectations for how we ought to live should trump all of the traditions of men, all of the institutions that we've built.

And so we should put his word, his righteousness, his authority above all of those things. And you know what? If our little ministry falls apart because of that, it's okay, right?

I mean, it's not okay. It shouldn't have happened, but God can use plenty of other people. Are there other ministries besides Ravi Zacharias ministries that can get the gospel out there, that can defend the faith?

Of course there are. So we need to resist these temptations, to really act like the Pharisees through pride, through hypocrisy, and then lifting up traditions, man-made institutions above God's word.

[50 : 29] Amen? All right. Any thoughts or questions before we get a... All right. All right.

Right up here. Raise your hand again, John. There you go. In a way, Jesus backhandedly said, yeah, I'm God, and I'm going to prove it to you.

This is, you know, I'm not only going to forgive his sins, I'm going to make him walk. You know, a lot of people question whether he ever said he was God, but basically that's what he was saying right here.

Yeah. He did. Yeah. There are actually no words in the Bible where Jesus says, I am God, right?

And so some people run with that, and they...

But there are lots of ways in which... We did a whole message on that, you know, months ago, on ways in which Jesus presented his deity to others.

[51 : 34] But yeah, this right here. Any others? Right here. Only thing with how did Jesus know that these men had faith?

Faith is believing. Yeah. And they've seen these miracles that he did in the message, and they believed it enough that they took action. Faith without... Believing without action.

They had the faith that they took action. They did, yeah. Yet they took the action. They went through a lot to get him through that roof. And that was compelling evidence that they believed that Jesus could do something.

Anyone else? All right in the back. This is a little bit different, but Jim Caviezel, that played Jesus in the Passion, he is in a movie called Sound of Freedom.

They are trying to get it released, and the powers to be in the media. Hollywood have been preventing it. But he was on Steve Bannon's War Room last week, and they are selling tickets.

[52 : 55] I guess if they sell two million tickets, it will be showed in the theaters somewhere around July 4th or July 4th. talk about hypocrites. They show what they want to show, but they don't want to see the real thing.

And it's based on a true story, the Underground Railroad with a guy, I forget his name now. Yeah, it exposes trafficking, sex trafficking. trafficking. And man, it's hard to believe, sometimes it's hard to believe how common that is.

And I've seen some of the interviews and the previews to that, and they expose just how common it is. And yeah, there are powers that be that don't want that to be brought to light.

So, thanks. All right, anything else before we wrap it up? All right, let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we want to take from your word, you know, we don't want to be like these Pharisees, and God forbid that we ever would be acting in a self-righteous or prideful way or be hypocrites.

But Father, if we ever do, Father, don't let us go another day without turning to you and turning to those maybe who we've heard or caused distrust and turn from it.

[54 : 19] Show us how we can be more like you each and every day. We are grateful that you have made us righteous positionally. You have counted us as righteous just by our faith alone.

We also want to live and be like you. Help us each and every day to do that more and more. In Jesus' name, amen.