

4. More than meets the eye

Mark 2:18-3:6

Introduction

At times we all probably have underestimated something or someone. Perhaps we were making something for dinner, but we didn't allow enough time. Maybe we underestimated how much something was going to cost, and we went horribly over budget. There are also other times when we underestimate what someone might be able to do or how what we might say or do might affect someone. What things have you underestimate?

While ministering in Galilee the Lord Jesus came under a lot of criticism from people who did not have his measure. They underestimated who he was and what he came to do. There were some people who criticised him because he wasn't fasting like the Pharisees and the disciples of John. There were others who criticised him because he wasn't keeping the Sabbath like they thought he should have been. What these critics failed to realise was there was a lot more to Jesus than meets the eye. Please read from verse 28 of chapter 2 to verse 6 to chapter 3 to discover what these people failed to appreciate about who the Lord Jesus was and what he came to do.

The bridegroom

The Lord Jesus was firstly criticised over the issue of fasting¹. Please read verses 18 to 20 to hear the complaint that was made and what the Lord had to say.

1. Why did some people question the Lord over the issue of fasting?

2. What explanation did the Lord give as to why his disciples were not fasting?

Think about it

Unlike today it was the bridegroom in the ancient world who was the central figure in a wedding. Everyone waited for his appearance for when he arrived the wedding would begin and when he left the wedding was all over. The Lord Jesus is clearly referring to himself as the bridegroom.

¹ It was customary for the Pharisees to fast at least twice a week on Monday and Thursday. We don't know much about the fasting of the disciples of John. Presumably it would have been about preparing for the coming kingdom.

By referring to himself as the bridegroom what was the Lord saying about himself?

Even though the bridegroom had arrived, life for the Pharisees and the disciples seemed to be going on as it had been. Why was this inappropriate? What had they failed to appreciate?

The new wine or patch

The second thing that the Lord highlights about himself is that he is like new wine or a new patch of cloth. Please read 21 to 22 of chapter 2.

3. What is the point that the Lord makes by comparing himself to new wine or a new patch?

Think about it

The Lord Jesus hadn't come to fill the old wine skins but to completely replace what was there with himself. His critics completely underestimated his significance. They couldn't just add him on to what was already there.

How do people make this same sort of mistake today?

What old ways of life are now obsolete for us?

The Lord of the Sabbath

The reason why our lives must change with the coming of the Lord Jesus is because of who he is. The Pharisees were critical of the Lord Jesus because he was not keeping the Sabbath as they thought he ought to have been. However, they would not have been arguing with him about the Sabbath if they had understood who they were arguing with. Please read Mark 2:23 to 28 where it becomes very clear that their criticism was totally inappropriate.

4. Why were the Pharisees complaining about the disciples of Jesus?

5. What story did the Lord highlight and what was its relevance to the situation?

6. What does Jesus declare the Sabbath to be about?

Think about it

Why is the Lord Jesus the best one to tell us what the Sabbath is all about?

What does it mean for the Sabbath to be for man and not man for the Sabbath?

The Lord not only told people what the Sabbath was about he also demonstrated it. Please read verses 1 to 6 of chapter 3 where the Lord showed the Pharisees what he was talking about.

7. Why were the Pharisees watching Jesus on the Sabbath?

8. How does Jesus show everyone what the Sabbath was all about?

9. Why was Jesus distressed with what he saw?

Think about it

Who were the ones who were really doing what was unlawful on the Sabbath?

What does Jesus reveal about what he had come to do?

Conclusion

The Lord Jesus was largely criticised because people would not accept who he was and what he had come to do. He is the bridegroom that everyone has been waiting for. He is the new wine that can't be poured into the old skins. He is the Lord of the Sabbath who tells us and shows us what the Sabbath is all about. We are to listen to him rather than tell him what he should or shouldn't be doing.

Think about it

What was the ultimate response of those who were not willing to listen?

What ought to be our response?