

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God

Part II: The Perfect Service Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 1:1-10:52

L. Christ's Work Of Holding An Edifying View About Responses To His Ministry (Mark 3:20-4:20)

I. Introduction

- A. We learned in our first lesson in this series that Mark's Gospel presents the perfect service of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, with Mark's focus of having rebounded unto upright Christian service from personal failure.
- B. At times, such failure rises from disillusionment at the responses one gets from his ministry, but Mark 3:20-4:20 reveals Jesus' example of holding an edifying realistic view of ministry responses (as follows):

II. Christ's Work Of Holding An Edifying View About Responses To His Ministry, Mk. 3:20-4:20.

- A. John Mark's decision to abandon the mission field in Acts 13:13 came under some negative pressure(s), even possibly disillusionment at the resistance the sorcerer Elymas had shown to Paul's ministry, Acts 13:6-11.
- B. Writing of God's Perfect Servant, Jesus, in his rebound to productive service (Col. 4:10 with 2 Tim. 4:11), Mark reported how Jesus held an edifying, realistic view about responses to His ministry in Mark 3:20-4:20:
 - 1. Jesus had just faced a variety of ministry reactions from family, the scribes and His disciples, Mk. 3:20-35:
 - a. His ministry had led to His missing meals as He healed the throngs, so Jesus' family had arrived to take custody of Him, thinking He was a "religious fanatic," Mark 3:20-21, 31-32. (B. K. C., N. T., p. 117)
 - b. The scribes attributed to Satan the Holy Spirit's power by which Jesus cast out demons, so He countered the charge was illogical, and said this slander against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven, Mk. 3:22-30.
 - c. Conversely, Jesus had noted the close fellowship He had with those who did God's will, Mark 3:33-35.
 - 2. Christ handled this wide variety of responses to His ministry by teaching His godly view of it, a realistic view that edifies all God's servants who apply it in their ministry of His Word (as follows), Mark 4:1-20:
 - a. Against the setting of this variety of responses to His ministry, and having launched out in a boat onto the Sea of Galilee to address the people, Jesus began to teach the throngs in parables, Mark 4:1-2.
 - b. His first parable, that of a sower (Mark 4:3-9), noted the variety of ways that seed sown was treated by the different grounds upon which the seed would land: (1) the seed sown on hard ground lay accessible to birds so they could fly down and devour it without the seed ever sprouting, Mark 4:3-4. (2) The seed sown on stony ground led to its initial germination, but then to the plant's death when it was exposed to the hot sun as it had no root, Mark 4:5-6. (3) The seed sown among thorns sprouted and grew, but was choked by the weeds unto yielding no produce, Mark 4:7. (4) The seed sown on good ground could sprout and increase, but, due to varying degrees of (implied respective) freedom from hardness, rocks and weeds, it yielded thirty, sixty or an hundred fold yield, Mark 4:8. (5) Jesus did not explain this parable to the crowds, but simply said that it was for "him that hath ears to hear" to understand and to use, Mark 4:9.
 - c. Jesus' close followers later privately asked Him to explain the parable, and He said He would, but that to outside unbelievers like the crowd He would speak in veiled parables in divine judgment, Mark 4:10-12.
 - d. Thus, Jesus explained the Parable of the Sower as a parable about various responses to His ministry, Mark 4:13-20: (1) Christ as the Sower sows God's Word, but some, represented in the hard ground like the scribes, did not heed it, so Satan came and removed it from their heart, Mark 4:3-4, 13-15. (2) God's Word sown by Christ on stony ground applied to hearers who are shallow in that what impact the Word initially has disappears when trials offend them and they reject the truth, Mark 4:5-6, 16-17. (3) The Word sown by Christ among thorns applies to those whose worldly cares and lusts choke it, leaving it unproductive, Mark 4:7, 18-19. (4) The Word Christ sows on good ground applies to believers, and, depending on their degree of victory over hardness, shallowness or worldliness, they yield thirty, as in the case of His earthly family with their response, or sixty or, as in the case of His closest disciples, an hundredfold, Mark 4:8; 20.

Lesson: *Jesus was not emotionally or mentally affected either negatively or positively by the variety of responses to His ministry of the Word, but He explained them as rising out of the varying heart attitudes of His hearers.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Jesus as the true Messenger and Savior from God, Mark 1:1, 15. (2) May we repent of any spiritual hardness, shallowness or worldliness that keeps God's Word sown unto us from bearing an hundredfold in our hearts. Then, (3) may we keep a realistic view of the responses we get due to our ministry of the Word, resisting both discouragement and pride, knowing the receptivity of human hearts determines their yield.*