

# The Pages of Heaven are Turning

## *Part Three . Mark Chapter Three*

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**T**his morning the song came to mind, *“I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, **no turning back.**”* I like that last line. Well let’s go to the gospel of John Mark, the third chapter. Jesus talked about new wine skins, old patches of cloth being sewn onto new and new onto old. There has to be a change and change sometimes happens suddenly. What the Lord was saying to us today was that we should hold onto our seats because it can get pretty rough, *“no turning back.”*

I wish I could just be a bystander sometimes. Let’s just watch TV and look at Christianity and see it happen out there somewhere. However when God called the disciples, it didn’t happen that way. As soon as Jesus turned the water into wine, He knew there was *“no turning back.”* It was going to be a roller coaster like no one had ever seen before! Mark chapter three emphasizes that whole concept. There is a new day dawning. In that power and time period there was a compression of time like no one has ever seen. It was not just a reformation. It was a *total and complete* revolution in human thought. Before this time, they didn’t *know* God. And now, God was in their midst!

How much more significant can that be? It is not going to be “good” because a lot of things are going to be broken, when the building block, the cornerstone that was rejected became the cornerstone of a whole new world! Much of what we take for granted today, whether we are Christian or not, came from this time period. People don’t realize this. They don’t know because they just accept some of the principles they have been walking by all this time. For instance, individual rights, that did not exist before Jesus came to earth. The individual was not important. But Jesus left the ninety-nine for the one little sheep. Now everyone is important: New Wine Skins.

I like the analogy of a new coach taking over a football team. There is a new “play-book.” Right? A new play-book means one may not even be using the same kind of screen to show the players what they are going to be doing in the next inning.

But there is a new play-book today. . . **a new page has turned!** I like the song, *“Does it seem like the whole world is going the wrong way?”* Yes it does but we have the power of Christ within us. There is unbelievable power inside of us that we have yet to tap to its full potential that Jesus wanted us to tap into. A lot of the problems we face today were faced then. The problems that they faced there amongst the Jewish congregations and their society, was the power of the Law.

If you didn't follow the Law, you were in trouble. And if you broke one of them, you should make things right again. You could pay for indulgences so to speak. You would bring two swallows to the altar and sacrifice them or a copper coin. You could take a lamb and sacrifice it. There was time when you could feel "clean" again when the priest sacrificed an animal for you, for your sins. The Catholic Church picked up on that right away. They said to themselves, "*Okay, we are going to sell indulgences,*" making it alright to sin as long as you paid the price. Light a candle, whatever it might be. The Law seems to want to take over; the *power* of it was to take over.

So even if we do what is right in the eyes of the Law we might be missing something. The Lord wants us to be **free**, because in this roller coaster ride that we are now on you and I had better be free. You had better have your hand on the seat belt because you might have to jump out and start on another track, get on another train, a place where you haven't been before.

That's what it was like for the disciples. You can imagine just being a Christian watching life go by knowing what the Roman soldiers are doing, knowing what the priests and scribes are doing, the Pharisees, etc. What is the problem? We'll just get enough fish for tomorrow. But, don't fall asleep! It is not what God called *you* to do. In this day and in this hour a lot of Christians want to be there in that scenario. But the Lord then calls you out. Once He has called you (just like when He turned the water into wine) there is no turning back. Now there is something burning in your bones that will never go out!

Interestingly in Matthew chapter five Jesus says:

*<sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*

What on earth does that mean? Since in the gospel of Mark there were clearly things that were not taken into account. Clearly the Pharisees and Scribes had something to say.

### ***Healing on the Sabbath***

He was healing on the Sabbath which is the fourth commandment. This wasn't just in the Levitical Law; this was a commandment. Keep the Sabbath and keep it holy! That meant a person HAD to rest. The whole idea of Sabbath rest wasn't just a law where you wouldn't do anything, but you would know and understand something about the heart of God which He was even speaking to us this morning, being in the rest of God. So while you are on this roller coaster ride you need to know the rest of God. When you are in place where you say, "*I don't have any way out,*" you need to know the rest of God. When you are in the valley where there is the shadow of death saying, "*What am I doing here? I don't want to be here.*" You need to know the Sabbath rest of God.

You may not want to hear this but one day after I had just finished my third autopsy at my job (in one day) I smelled like blood. I didn't want to be

there . . . but the power of the Sabbath rest was there. In the shadow of death where others were afraid to go, I had to go. I wasn't remiss because I knew the power of God was within me. There are a lot of people that face doing worse things than this. In this day and in this hour I can only imagine what the ravages of war does. The evil that men do are before us always.

Well Jesus took His disciples, the poor guys who didn't know what they were getting into.

*Mark 3:<sup>1</sup> And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. <sup>2</sup> So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. <sup>3</sup> And He said to the man who had the withered hand, "Step forward."*

Jesus is actually provoking them. Do you see that? He isn't afraid of confrontation. You might be but He is not. You might not even want to share the gospel with your relatives. But that does not bother our Lord not one single bit.

*<sup>4</sup> Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" . . .*

Look, our Lord is all about life NOT death. He is about peace not agitation. He just asked a simple question. There seemed an obvious answer. "*Do you want life or death?*"

*. . . But they kept silent.*

At this point His disciples just had to watch all of this going on; they did not have to partake, just watch.

*<sup>5</sup> And when He had looked around at them **with anger**, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, . . .*

I never saw that before. I never thought of the Lord getting angry. But it says here while looking around at them with anger, He was grieved by the hardness of their hearts. So there is a place where our Lord can be angry! Would you want to follow an angry man? I don't think so. I wouldn't want to be there even if it was the Lord. The Lord said to me while I was preparing this sermon, "*Yeah. You do. There is no turning back.*" His disciples said, "*There is no turning back. We are following You.*" They don't even know what He's going to say or do next! "*We may all be killed because of this!*" But there is no turning back.

They left their fishing lines and nets behind. No turning back.

*. . . He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. <sup>6</sup> Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.*

The whole idea of the death of Jesus was born on the Jewish understanding of the Sabbath rest of God. Jesus broke the fourth commandment *deliberately* to show them that it wasn't about the commandment. It was about doing

the will of God. Wow. In the previous chapters it says the Sabbath rest was made for man not man for it. There is an idea and an understanding that we need of the nature of God that we need to know in order to be at peace with the Lord in the things that we do. Jesus is the Sabbath rest of God, not a list of laws of do's and don'ts. The Law and the *power* of the Law (the Law has *power*) over you if you want to let it. But you do not want that power over you. Throw it away; it doesn't belong to you. You have a power that is much greater than the power of the Law!

### ***A Great Multitude Follows Jesus***

<sup>7</sup> *But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea<sup>8</sup> and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him.*

People were going crazy. They didn't have any other choice. They knew Jesus had a power they had never seen before for healing, casting out demons, for making things whole again. Maybe they saw some of the rest of God.

<sup>9</sup> *So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him.*

So we see that Jesus was concerned about His own physical safety, people crushing in on Him. I saw a video just recently of an altar call in Ethiopia and they were calling forth people who wanted to get saved. They came running, stampeding towards the center of the altar.

<sup>10</sup> *For He healed many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to touch Him.*

Touching the Lord with a human *touch* was a very important thing. You cannot get that on "Zoom." Human touch is a very important thing. When a study was done on "touch," one question was when a cashier would check people out, what did the purchaser think of the cashier. Good, bad or indifferent? They found that if the cashier just accidentally touched them, one would give a more favorable rating towards them. Isn't that interesting, just a casual, by accident touch.

That happened to the Lord in the next chapter but we won't go there now. The touch, the human touch. They just wanted to touch *God*.

<sup>11</sup> *And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God."* <sup>12</sup> *But He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.*

Jesus seems to be saying, "No. I don't want to turn back but don't make this so public that more people will crush Me." Jesus was concerned about His ministry. So we see that Mark is not afraid of talking about human things in this context. This is all too real. As I am reading through this gospel I'm saying, "I don't know if I want to know this Jesus. I'd rather have a Jesus that is a little farther away by at least a couple of feet." Jesus is pressing in on you this day.

## ***The Twelve Apostles, The Chosen***

<sup>13</sup> *And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. <sup>14</sup> Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,*

So the first disciples (apostles) were chosen to be with Him and be sent out to preach. That was their mission; perhaps not too well but they did.

<sup>15</sup> *and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:*

We see He didn't want to keep this power within Himself, hoarding it away but He wanted to *give it away* so that mankind would know the *power of God*. They were:

<sup>16</sup> *Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter; <sup>17</sup> James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; <sup>18</sup> Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite; <sup>19</sup> and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.*

## ***A House Divided Cannot Stand***

So they went to the synagogue where the Jewish people met; it doesn't matter where. They were already plotting to kill Him. And He goes into a house. Here's another principle. A house cannot stand divided against itself.

<sup>20</sup> *Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. <sup>21</sup> But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."*

<sup>22</sup> *And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons."*

Now things are going to get really hot. Jesus continues, often teaching in parables (metaphors) since it is really impossible to explain all the mysteries of God in a language. It is something you have to know in the Spirit before you can even begin to understand in a language whether it be Greek, Aramaic or English.

<sup>23</sup> *So He called them to Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? <sup>24</sup> If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. <sup>25</sup> And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. <sup>26</sup> And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. <sup>27</sup> No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.*

## ***The Unpardonable Sin***

Do not ignore this parable. Satan cannot stand against himself. So, if you see somebody casting out demons, it is not Satan. Remember what Jesus' disci-

ples said, “*Look. They are doing the same things we are doing. They are baptizing! Should we call down lightening from heaven?*” Jesus replied, “*You don’t know what spirit you are of.*” Be careful.

<sup>28</sup> “*Assuredly, I say to you, **all** sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; <sup>29</sup> but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is **subject** to eternal condemnation*”—<sup>30</sup> *because they said, “He has an unclean spirit.”*”

They were saying Jesus has an unclean spirit! Now in this day and in this hour there are few if anyone I have ever heard say that about our Lord. They might say they don’t believe in Him or you are “nuts” to follow Him, whatever. But nobody has stated that He is a demon. That’s what blaspheming against the Holy Spirit is, saying that what is of God is really the devil. So, be careful. Don’t just condemn people especially if they are casting out demons.

Here’s another commandment Jesus has a problem with.

### ***A New Definition of the Fifth Commandment***

<sup>31</sup> *Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. <sup>32</sup> And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.”*

<sup>33</sup> *But He answered them, saying, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” <sup>34</sup> And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! <sup>35</sup> For **whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.**”*

What is going on here? The fifth commandment, if you remember, is to honor your father and your mother. They were so concerned if He were truly doing that. There is a transition of what is going on here, a new “play-book.” In John it says that we are not born of earthly parents. You are born of the Spirit of God. I know you love your mom and dad as much as I do. They are gone now to Heaven. I appreciate what they did for me, what they taught me, the example they set before me. They fought in WW II after all! But now there is a new definition, a new play-book, a new cornerstone that is being set before us today. And, you have decided to follow Jesus not the Law. You have to abandoned the whole concept of who your mom and dad are. There is another mom and dad and you need to start understanding who your “blood relatives” are in the Spirit.

I might say I’d much rather just be a spectator and just *watch* and see what is going to happen here in this Church. Well, we don’t have that choice!

### ***Summary***

*Exodus 20:<sup>12</sup> “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.*

The next commandments transition from God to your fellow man.

- 1) <sup>3</sup> “*You shall have no other gods before Me.*”
- 2) <sup>4</sup> “*You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; <sup>5</sup> you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup> but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*”
- 3) <sup>7</sup> “*You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.*”
- 4) <sup>8</sup> “*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*”

These are all about God the Father, Him, He alone, the Creator. It would be nice to just stay there. But then the next six commandments talks about man and how we should behave with them.

- 5) <sup>12</sup> “*Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.*”

Well, Jesus has just said there is a different aspect to that commandment now.

- 6) <sup>13</sup> “*You shall not murder.*”
- 7) <sup>14</sup> “*You shall not commit adultery.*”
- 8) <sup>15</sup> “*You shall not steal.*”
- 9) <sup>16</sup> “*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*”
- 10) <sup>17</sup> “*You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.*”

Let me emphasize that the **power of the Law** is what we want to break here today. If you feel that you are under the power of Law and the constrictions of it, there is another play-book for you. The Holy Spirit within you is going to bring out the Law within your heart! *For out of Zion shall come forth the Law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3)*. That is an Old Testament scripture. However, the New Testament concept is Zion as a place of worship, a place of praise, a place of prophetic words, a place of sharing, teaching and loving one another.

## ***Garden Time***

Out of *that place* will come forth the Law. That is what the Lord wants for you specifically, to follow Him on your day-to-day walk. You cannot somehow not go to the “garden” today to pray. You NEED to go to the garden and pray. You need the peace of God just to start the day! If you are starting with the anxiousness of men, you are already doomed. If you are starting with the constraints of just a list of “do’s and don’t,” you are in trouble.

As I was preparing this text, I was thinking I didn't want to teach this topic. Sometimes I don't even know if I really want to follow Him. It is going to take me down some roads that are really dangerous. . . distasteful at least. Maybe God wants you, yourself in that distasteful place to bring forth the light of God. *Not maybe. Yes. Yes, He does.* He wants *you* to be the source of the light of the Kingdom of God.

*Romans 13:<sup>8</sup> Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the Law.<sup>9</sup> For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

These are Laws from the Old Testament governing your relationship with men. He sums it all up by saying, *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* He didn't even say, *"You shall love your neighbor as I have loved you."* He didn't even say that but He went right back to Exodus.

*<sup>10</sup> Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

Jesus says I am the fulfillment of the Law. God is love! Jesus is God. Jesus is love. He wants that love inside you so that every part of the Law will be fulfilled even without obeying the text and the rules that generate from it.

I don't throw away the Ten Commandments. I don't throw away many of the concepts of the Law when I read the Old Testament. But, I know they are not *bondage* for me. They cannot and were never intended to be a bondage for God's people, for we walk in the footsteps of Christ. You may not want to go where He is going, maybe a place of suffering, maybe a place of martyrdom for many Christians today and in this hour, but we do not have a choice in anymore. The roller coaster is already moving.

I cannot even imagine what those poor disciples might have been thinking, *"Wow, what did I do?! A day of fishing was never this bad. Look at the way those people are hating us. Look at all the people who don't understand what is going on. Nevermind that, I don't think I understand."* Somebody asked me the other day about the Trinity. The more you try to define something like that the further away from the truth you become. There are mysteries of Heaven not definable by words and Trinity is one of them. We worship one God and yet we know specifically when the Holy Spirit is with us, or when the Lord is walking beside us, or when our Father in Heaven is there, His complete presence, Holy, believing, in us! They are there through us when the power goes forth from our prayer, our prophecy, our teaching, whatever we might be doing.

But remember the enemy wants to keep us down. True? He wants you to see the valley of the shadow of death sharply, so much so that you will be afraid. What does it say? *"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I*



*will fear no evil. (Psalm 23:4) " What casts out evil and fear? **Love.** Love casts out fear. Without love you have no power but with it you are ready for the Kingdom of God!*

*So Father, we thank You for this day, for this hour that you have created us for. There is a new play-book. The pages of Heaven are turning fast! Faster each day it seems. I'm sure that is what they felt at the beginning of WW II. Things were moving fast; the armies were on the ground. People were being killed. Whole cities would be leveled. Countries would be made low. In this hour it seems like the whole world is in trouble. It isn't even the trouble they may be thinking it is! It is not climate change. It is not anything but their own stupidity of not embracing Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior.*

*They don't need another plan. We need to have the plan of the Kingdom of God. They don't need another play-book other than what is presented here in the New Testament. This is Christ, our Lord Jesus, Ruler, King of the universe. He who no one can stop. No one can stand before Him. No one can stand before God! Who can separate us from the love of God? Not one thing. Not one demon. If you have a demon this morning that is harassing you I want you to say to him, "Get away from me, in Jesus' name." If there is an illness or disease, I don't want a day to go by in which you don't say, "Get away from me. I don't need you in my life any more!" We have decided to follow Jesus. There is no turning back.*

*Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. Amen*

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