Jesus Christ the Perfect Servant of Jehovah as Seen in Mark's Gospel: A Radio Message

Louis T. Talbot
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Mark's Gospel

A RADIO MESSAGE

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In our study of Matthew's gospel, we have seen the Lord Jesus presented as the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, and as the Heir to David's throne and the covenant Heir to Abraham's land.

This morning we are to make a study of the Gospel according to Mark, which presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect Servant of Jehovah. In Zech. 3:8 we find this prophecy of Him: "Behold, I will bring forth MY SERVANT the Branch." Here in this Gospel, we find this portrait of Jesus Christ as the humble, perfect Servant of Jehovah, going

* A radio message by Louis T. Talbot, who speaks over Radio Station KMPC, every morning, Tuesday to Friday, 11 to 11:30 A.M.
about His Master's business. He is also portrayed as Servant in the second of the living ones that are seen in the midst of the throne in Rev. 4:7. There we read: "And the first living one was like a lion, and the second living one like an ox, and the third living one had a face like a man, and the fourth living one was like a flying eagle." These living ones set forth a complete portrait of the character of Jesus. The lion, of course, speaks of Him as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the King of Israel; the aspect which Matthew presents. The ox is the beast of burden and represents Jesus as we find Him portrayed in Mark's Gospel, humbly and devotedly serving man. The third living one had a face as a man. This corresponds with the third Gospel, where we have the Lord's perfect humanity in view. The fourth living one was like a flying eagle. The eagle is the bird that soars the highest, making its home in the heavens and symbolizes the character in which John's Gospel presents Christ, portraying Him as the Son of the eternal God.

This at once explains why it is that there are things recorded in one Gospel that are omitted in the others. For instance, in Mark we find no genealogy of Christ. The genealogy of a servant is of little consequence. It was essential that His genealogy should be recorded in Matthew, because He is there presented as the legal Heir to David's throne. In Mark, only once is the Lord Jesus called "the Son of David," and on that occasion He was given that name in derision. On the other hand, Matthew speaks of Him often as "the Son of David." These are only a few of the omissions in the Gospel according to Mark that have a prominent place in the Gospel according to Matthew.

It is in Mark where we find that perplexing statement made by the Lord concerning the time of His return to the earth: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32). Modernists have used this verse in an attempt to prove that Jesus is not Deity, for omniscience is one of the attributes of Deity. Jesus here seems to disclaim omniscience. But this verse is perfectly clear when one bears in mind what the purpose of Mark's Gospel is. Jesus says in John 15:15, "For the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth." How significant then it is that Mark, which presents Jesus as the perfect Servant, should record this statement about the hour of the Lord's return. In the aspect of His ministry as a Servant, our Lord made a voluntary surrender of certain knowledge, in order that He might walk the walk of faith and thus be an object lesson to all believers. While He ever remained the eternal Son of God, coequal and coeternal with the Father, as a Servant, He chose a limitation of His knowledge bounded by the Father's will. In like manner, we
may trust God with perfect confidence, however
dark and mysterious the way may be.
We shall now consider the kind of a Servant
Jesus was. All the exhortations that are given in
the New Testament in regard to service are fully
exemplified in Him, the perfect Servant of Jehovah.
These examples are recorded in order that we may
have a perfect pattern for our service.

He Was An Obedient Servant

Forty-three times we find recorded the words
“forthwith,” “straightway,” “immediately.” Turn in
your Bibles to the following passages and consider
the frequent use of these words. “And straightway
coming up out of the water” (1:10). “And imme-
diately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness”
(1:12). “And straightway he called them (1:20).
“And straightway on the sabbath day” (1:21). “And
forthwith, when they were come out of the syna-
gogue” (1:29). “And immediately the fever left
her” (1:30). “And forthwith sent him away”
(1:43). These are only a few of the many occu-
rences of these words “immediately,” “straightway,”
“forthwith.”

It is worthy of note that the word immediately
is used in four connections in the Gospel according
to Mark. Christ is said to have done things imme-
diately when He “was in the house,” “in the way,”
“in the temple,” and “with the disciples.” In this
use of the word, we see obedience in the four de-
partments of life: “In the house” denotes our home
life; “in the way,” our public life; “in the temple,”
our church life; “with the disciples,” our Christian
fellowship and intercourse. What an example our
Lord has set before us in this regard! If the Lord
tells you to do a thing, do it immediately and let
it be done without reserve. In the matter of their
service, few Christians, alas, have reached the point
of implicit obedience. Failing to obey promptly
and fully, many of them lack any experience of real
joy. If you do not obey Christ’s commands imme-
diately, if you shirk your duty, you certainly cannot
expect to have the joy of the Lord filling your life.

This same thought in regard to the confident
obedience of the Son of God is set forth in the fre-
cquent use of the word “and.” As we know, “and” is
a conjunction, and in the Gospel of Mark it links
Jesus, the perfect Servant, with the service that God
gave Him to do. Will you please turn to your
Bibles and note the number of chapters which begin
in this way? You will find that chapters 2, 3, 4,
5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16 all begin with
“and.” Out of the sixteen chapters in Mark, twelve
of them begin with this word. What was the pur-
pose of the Spirit of God in so using this word?
Is it not with a view of setting forth the Lord Jesus
as the One who served continuously and not intermittently?

We are exhorted to "be instant in season, out of season," and not to grow "weary in well doing." These exhortations, as already shown, you find fully exemplified in the perfect Servant of Jehovah. I wonder if I am speaking to any Sunday school teachers who are discouraged, any pastors who are feeling the stress of the battle, or to any other individuals whom the devil is tempting to abandon the work that God has intrusted to them? If this is your position, my brother, my sister, gaze with me this morning at the perfect Servant of Jehovah. He immediately, and without question, put into execution the commands of His Master, never asking any reason for so doing. He was ever on the alert, in season, out of season. What a wonderful lesson there is in this for all of us who claim to be servants of the Lord Jesus, and what an antidote for discouragement and defeat.

**He Was A Tender-Hearted Servant**

Then, too, the Lord Jesus Christ is seen as a tender-hearted Servant. How often we find recorded in the Gospel according to Mark such expressions as "and he touched him," "and he laid his hand on him!" How eloquent are these words, and how full of significance they are! The leper came and

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upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly" (8:22-25). “Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up" (9:27).

With the same thought in mind, note the frequent use of the word compassion and its equivalent, love. “And Jesus, moved with compassion” (1:41). “And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion” (6:34). “I have compassion on the multitude” (8:2). “And Jesus beholding him loved him” (10:21).

Love and compassion are essential elements of power in all Christian work. Without these attributes, one could have no vital influence for God. Mr. Moody has well said, “A man may be a successful physician and not love his patients, a successful lawyer and not love his clients, a successful merchant and not love his customers, but he cannot be a successful worker for God and not love humanity.” The ultimate purpose of all Christian service is to reach the hearts of men with the gospel, and love is the only means by which that gospel may enter the human heart. We are living in a day when great emphasis is placed upon human intellect and human culture. The trained mind and the skilled hand are looked upon as prime requisites for successful service. Brother, it is not art but heart that counts.

When I was a student in the Moody Bible Institute, I had the privilege of reading the life of that great soul-winner, Robert Murray McCheyne, who died when he was but twenty-nine years old, and for whom all of Scotland wept. An American minister some years ago was supplying the pulpit of that historic church in Dundee where McCheyne ministered long ago. He inquired if there were any of the old parishioners living. It seemed as if all had passed on, but finally, he heard of an old man who had known the Scotch preacher. On visiting him, the American found that he had often heard McCheyne and knew him quite well. “Can you remember any of his texts?” he inquired. “No,” said the old man, “I cannot.” “Can you remember anything that he said in any of his sermons?” But the old man could not remember anything that the preacher had said. “But there is one thing I remember,” said the old man. “One thing I shall never forget. I was just a boy on the road-side when Robert Murray McCheyne came along one day. He came to where I was standing and he said, ‘Jamie, I am going to your home to see your wee sister. She is dying and I want to point her to Christ, and, Jamie, I want you to know Christ, too. I cannot allow you to go on outside of the Kingdom.’ He had his hand on my head and I have never forgotten the trembling of his fingers in my hair.” My friends; men and women, boys and girls, are still waiting
at the road-side for that human, yet very divine touch.

He Was A Humble Servant

Christ served with humility. How Mark emphasizes this fact! The Lord did not seek publicity; in fact, He avoided it. Please turn to Mark 1:36-38 and note the answer that the Lord Jesus gave to those that followed Him: "And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns." Note also the charge that He gave to the leper: "See thou say nothing to any man" (1:44). Still another time it is recorded that "He sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town" (8:26). Did Jesus ever advertise Himself? Was He seeking show and ostentation? The instructions given in the verses just quoted are an answer to these questions. How unlike their Master, the perfect Servant of Jehovah, many Christians are! Many a man casts the shadow of disgusting pride and egotism over his ministry. Moses, like many another of the Lord's servants, had to learn humility. It has been well said that Moses spent the first forty years of his life trying to be somebody, the next forty years learning that he was nobody, and the last forty discovering what God could do with one who had learned this lesson. The lifelong refrain of a servant whose life is patterned after Christ, the perfect Servant, is this:

"Less of self and more of Thee,
None of self, and all of Thee."

He Was A Praying Servant

This message is really only a brief sketch of Mark's portrait of Jesus as the perfect Servant. But any outline would be incomplete without a mention of the prayer life of this perfect Servant. Please turn to Mark 1:35 and read what follows: "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Matthew does not record this incident, nor does Luke, nor John. How significant it is that this reference should appear only in Mark, and be recorded in connection with the beginning of Christ's ministry. His service was invariably preceded by prayer. Is this the case with you? Is it not true that the reason there is so little burden for souls, so little conviction of sin felt in meetings conducted for the purpose of the conversion of sinners, so little response to appeals made for funds for God's work in home and foreign fields, is that we pray so little? We sing about prayer, we preach
about it, we talk about it, but do we pray? Let each of us answer this question. If you cannot answer it in the affirmative, you need look no further for the explanation of spiritual barrenness in your life and the lack of power in your service. You cannot be an effective servant, my brother, my sister, unless you know experimentally what the ministry of intercession involves.

One other word: Please note the way Mark’s Gospel comes to a close. “And they—the apostles—went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (16:20). What a wonderful conclusion this is! We, as His servants, are sent forth to serve. And in Mark’s Gospel, which presents Jesus as the perfect Servant, He is represented as working in the midst of His servants and working with them. Count on His presence, my brother, whenever you are sent by the Holy Ghost to serve in a difficult field. Please remember that you are not alone, for the perfect Servant of Jehovah is with you. Is He directing you to Africa, India, China, the Isles of the Sea or Japan? If He sends you, you will not be lonely there, for the Lord will abide at your side.

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