About Food

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[0:00] All right, we are in the Gospel of Mark. And I'm really hoping that you are taking this to heart you're probably a normal human being.

But if you did, outstanding! That's fantastic! I read Mark chapter 2 this week. And at first I was like, I had no clue.
I mean, there's three different stories. And who here knows what a Bible story is, right? A Bible story is a historically accurate record of real events, not a made-up tale.
Unless it's possibly a parable, right? But these are actual events that happen. And there's three distinct events that wrap up verses 12 through 28 in the Gospel of Mark.
And I was scratching my head. And then I realized, then it came to me. They're all about food! Isn't that great?
[1:26] There's a common theme in there. They're all about you. And just to be honest, food is one of my favorite subjects. Can I get an amen? Right? You know, food is wonderful. Then, as I started digging into it, and I'm looking at this.

Oh, yeah, that's all about. Then I realized there is another theme in there that I'm going to pull out. And that's the drum I'm going to bang today.
And it deals with self-righteousness. So if you've got your Bible open to Mark 2, we're going to read that today.
But the key idea, the only righteousness, only the righteousness of God matters. Only God's righteousness.
Only God's righteousness. Let's take a look at Mark 2. Let's start, and we're going to read the first... I'm not going to read all of it.
[2:33] I'm going to read each section as we go through it. So we're going to read verses 13 through 17. He went out again... Oh, wait. Who's he? Jesus.

Whew. I was worried there. He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphas.
Alpheus? Alpheus? He saw Levi, the tax collector. All right? Sitting at a tax booth. And he said to him, Follow me.
And he, which he is this, Levi, Levi, rose and followed him, Jesus. And as he, Jesus, reclined at the table in his, Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.
And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?
[3:48] And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

And so, as we get into this, the first story is, eating with sinners. We got food.
All right? It's great. And we've got a couple of interesting characters in here. Jesus and his disciples, as well as Levi and his fellow tax collectors, and the scribes of the Pharisees.
Okay? Now, Levi and his tax collectors, well, let's be honest. Unless you're married to one, nobody likes a tax collector.
I mean, if I was the parent of someone who grew up to be a tax collector, right? Right? I'm not real happy about that. And if I was the child of a tax collector, I'd probably get the crap beat out of me every day in school.
[4:54] Nobody likes the tax collector. And it was even worse in Jerusalem at this time, and in the area of Judea, because they weren't collecting taxes for the temple, but for the Romans.

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They were collaborators with the enemy. So, so the tax collectors, mm, they're the sort of people you'd like, just like to beat the snot out of, because they've turned their back on their people, and they're taking advantage, and it's just bad.
And on the other side, we have the scribes of the Pharisees. The Pharisees were great men of God. Air quotes.
At least they strove to be. Great men of God. And their scribes, oftentimes you'd have a Pharisee, and he would have scribes under him, and they would follow the same practices, but the scribes would go out, and they would teach the people what the Word of God says.
The Pharisees were really, really righteous. They did great in following the Word of Moses. There's an account of Jesus, and he tells about the Pharisee who went to pray, and the sinner, and the sinner stood far off and beat his breast, and God have mercy on me, a sinner.
[6:23] And the Pharisee's like, hey God, good to be with you. Aren't you glad I'm not that guy? I'm awesome. And Jesus said, which one of them went back to God? Right? And it's the sinner because of his humility.

Pharisees were self-righteous. All right. So, first of all, tax collectors, they're not sinners because they collect taxes.
They are sinners because they descend from Adam. I think it's Romans 5, verse 19, for the sins of one man led many to death.
The righteous deeds of Christ lead many to salvation. You see, all have sinned because we descend from sinners. So, the tax collector, yeah, okay, he's a bad guy.
He's collecting taxes. But he's a sinner just because he's a son of Adam. Just like you and I. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. What did David say?
[7:26] In sin, was I conceived and born? Yeah, don't get me wrong. We do our own sinning.

Can I get an amen on that? We all struggle with sin. But we're sinners because we're born into sin.
But the Pharisees and their scribes, when they saw Jesus eating with the tax collectors and the sinners, they didn't go, look at that mission movement.
They're out there reaching the lost. No, that wasn't what they were saying. The scribes and the Pharisees were more concerned about remaining ceremonially clean than the fact that tax collectors and sinners are destined for hell.
You see, they were concerned about staying righteous, about following the right steps and doing the right things and maintaining their righteousness.
A different way of saying that is they were concerned about being self-righteous. They made certain that they followed the law. They made certain they did this. They would not just tithe, but they would go out into their garden and tithe the garden herbs.
[8:41] They didn't just fast once a week or once, they fasted twice a week. They were incredibly self-righteous. But they missed the point.

They missed the fact that people were dying and going to hell and it was their job to reach them. In direct contrast to the Pharisees' self-righteousness, which, let me explain self-righteousness to you in a way that when you were striving to be self-righteous, do you know what you're doing?
Is you're taking, you're trying to take your soul through the car wash and get it cleaned up. You're trying to, you're trying to scrub all your mistakes off and you're trying to keep it clean.
You know how it is after, as soon as you wash your car, what's the next thing that's going to happen? It's going to rain, right? Yeah. And when you, when you try and keep your soul clean by running it through the car wash, you know what the next thing is going to happen?
Is some guy's going to cut you off. Yeah. But Christ is not self-righteous.
[9:59] He is righteous. He never had to take his soul through the car wash because he is righteous.

It's amazing. He is so righteous that when Christ touched that which was unclean, it became clean.
When you and I, or when any other human being goes out and touches something that's unclean, that uncleanness comes upon us and contaminates us.
But Christ is righteous. And when he touches that which is unclean, it becomes clean. When he touches the leper, they're healed.
When he touches the woman that had a bleed, she was healed. Jesus Christ is righteous. And Jesus Christ cared about sinners.

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Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but the sinners.
[11:13] He cares. Now, before we go on, I want to talk about eating with sinners for just a second.

Here's Jesus walking down the road and he sees Levi and says, hey Levi, come follow me. And the next thing you know, Levi's throwing a feast for Jesus. Okay? I like that idea. Yeah.
We as a culture have lost this. You and I have failed in this. It is very, very much less common today to have people into our houses to eat than it used to be.
It used to be if you moved into a neighborhood, you could expect somebody to show up with a housewarming gift and invitations to their house. It used to be common practice for people to come over and have a barbecue, sit down and spend the afternoon getting to know one another.
It used to be that way. But we have come into this culture that is isolated from everybody else. And our home has become our impregnable castle.
[12:26] And we feel uncomfortable stepping out of it and eating and being with other people. Especially with people we don't know. When was the last time you invited someone to your house just to get to know them?

I know what's going through your head. I've had this person from the church over or I've been over to that person from the churches. But I'm talking about people outside the church. You see, that's what Christ did.
And there's other ways you could do it. You could go hunting. You could go fishing. You could... I don't know. Go to Hobby Lobby if you're into that sort of stuff.
I'd much rather have people over to my house for chow. It's a nice, easy way to get to know people and when the food's gone, they leave. But it is a good way to get to know people.
And we see this time and again where Jesus sits down and eats with people. And I encourage you. Talk to God. Look around.
[13:46] Are there people you can invite over? Are there people you can invite out? It's something to think about. All right. All right. So number one, we've got eating with sinners and the self-righteous Pharisees are like, hey, what's going on?

So let's take a look at story number two. We'll pick it up in verse 18. Now, John's disciples... Who's John?
John the Baptist. That's a standard answer. Can somebody give me a better answer who John was? The blank of Jesus.
Brother. Not brother. Not brother. The cousin of Jesus. Right? The slightly older cousin of Jesus. The one who came to prepare the way. Right? Now, John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting.
Not saying that they were in a perpetual fast, but that as they went through their ministry, they would spend time in fasting. Now, John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, and people came and said to him, him in this case is?
[14:54] Jesus, why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but why don't your disciples fast? And Jesus said to them, can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?

As long as they can have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.
No one sews a piece of unshrunken cloth on an old garment, and if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins.
If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins. All right.
Again, what do we see here? Food, fasting, wine skins, all this stuff, right? And so let's take a look at this. This is eating with the Savior.
[15:59] I was going to go with eating with the bridegroom, but I'm really working to get my sermon points to match up, you know, eating with sinners, eating with the Savior.

I wonder what the next one is going to be. Will it have an E and an S in it? Yes. All right. Eating with the Savior. Number one. The question that was asked highlights the righteousness of the Pharisees while judging Jesus and His disciples.

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Can you see them coming up and talking? Why is it that you aren't fasting? The truly spiritual people fast.
Why aren't you fasting? Even John's disciples fast. Why aren't your disciples fasting? It is a subtle slight, and not so subtle slight, to Jesus.
Because if Jesus was a really good teacher, He would be disciplining His disciples into fasting so that they could be more spiritual. That's the point of fasting.
[17:03] We live in a society today where people do intermittent fasting, but they're doing that for weight loss, which, by the way, works for some of us, but not as well as we'd like. But they would fast so that they would get to know God.

At least eight years ago, at least eight years ago, I was standing in the back over there on Easter morning, and somebody called my name, and I turned my head and popped my neck. And the very tip of my thumb went numb.
I have no idea why. I never went to a doctor about it, but I had this thumb that was numb from just the tip from there, right? And I can still feel it a little bit today.
It was bothersome, you know? Because everything you touch, it feels weird. And, you know, so you spend your days going like this, yeah, it is weird.
But then I decided, every time I touched that, I would pray for my mom. And it changed an annoyance into a reminder to pray for my mom.
[18:20] And when you fast, do you know what happens? I know what happens when I fast. There is this nasty roar that begins to happen right around here, and I can, you know, I'm walking along and there's this grumble.

And when we're fasting, that is supposed to be a reminder for us to look to the Lord. Because you're walking down the street and you smell, you know, Burger King or McDonald's or whatever it is, and you go, oh, wait, wait, wait, today, today we're taking time to know the Lord.
That's what fasting is supposed to be about. We'll look at a passage later on. But anyways, they're challenging Jesus, Jesus was a way of judging Jesus and his disciples.
But then Jesus does something amazing. This is totally cool. He very subtly talks of his deity.
Look at this. Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.
[19:43] Who's the great bridegroom? Christ. Jesus. He's just letting it out. What was the purpose of fasting?

To focus on our relationship with God, right? And Jesus is saying, my disciples don't need to fast because they're hanging out with me.
If you want to know God, you don't need to go over in a corner and fast. You need to come over and hang out with me. And we'll go down to the 7-11 and have Big Gulp together.
You know, you want to know Jesus, he's right here. Just hang out with him. There's a day coming when he's going to be gone and then it's going to be appropriate for you to fast.
But I am here now. And if you want to get close to God now, hang out with me. See how subtle it is? He's like the bridegroom is here.
[20:48] keep a mark in Mark chapter 2. But I want to turn over to Isaiah really quickly because this is interesting.

Isaiah chapter 58. The whole chapter is about fasting. The whole chapter is about fasting. But I just want to read the first eight verses of Isaiah 58.
Cry aloud and do not hold back. Lift up your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins. Now, understand, God is condemning the people. God is saying, look, you guys are off target. You guys are doing the wrong things. You guys are screwing it up and you need to pay attention. Then look what he says in verse 2. What?
Verse 1, they're totally doing everything wrong. Verse 2 is they're seeking me. It explains. They seek me daily and delight to know my ways as if they were a nation who did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God.
[22:06] They are studying and they are seeking God so that they can know about it, but it's not guiding their life. It's all head knowledge. It doesn't change how they live.

They ask me for righteous judgments. They delight to draw near to God. Why have we fasted and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves and you have taken no knowledge of it?

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Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure and oppress all your workers. Can you imagine having a boss that's fasting to know the Lord but because they're fasting they're unhappy and so they take it out on the workers?
That's what he's talking about. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high.
Is such a fast that I choose a day for a person? Is such the fast that I choose? No. A day for a person to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a reed and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?
[23:16] Will you call this a fast? A day acceptable to the Lord? This is the idea. I'm fasting look at me oh woe is me I'm hungry because I'm fasting no no look at me stop looking over there look at me I'm fasting who's being pointed to?

Me or God? Am I honoring God or am I honoring myself? And that's what these people were doing. Is not this the fast that I choose?
To loose the bonds of wickedness? To undo the straps of the yoke? To let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and to bring the homeless poor into your house when you see the naked to cover him and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?
Then shall your light break forth like the dawn and your healing shall spring up speedily your righteousness shall go before you the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard the purpose of a fast is for us to draw near to God not to shine the light on ourselves the purpose of a fast is for us to care for others I know this doesn't apply to anybody in this room is guilty of going out and buying Starbucks coffee at $35 a half ounce right but if you're a regular doer of that you know what you could do is you could say hey God today that money that I would spend on my double frappuccino extra double shot whatever I'm going to give to somebody that needs it do you see that
I'm not going to complain I'm not going to make a big deal about it God this is to honor you instead of instead of spending this time serving myself I'm going to spend this time helping somebody else that's the fast that God desires now let me let me do this when was the last time that you sought God through fasting newsflash the bridegroom is gone he's sitting at the right hand of the father in heaven today is the day for us to choose to fast something to think about something for you to consider okay let's move on to the third and the final story eating on the sabbath yeah all right so here we go chapter 2 book of mark verse 23 one sabbath he
[26:30] Christ was going through the grain fields and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck the heads of grain and the Pharisees were saying to him look what are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath and he said to them have you never read what David did when he was in need and was hungry he and those who were with him how he entered the house of God in the time of Abathar the high priest and ate the bread of the presence which is not lawful for any but the priest to eat and he also gave it to those who were with him you have no idea how stunning that story is okay it's amazing that David who at that time was really you know he was everybody kind of knew him but he was nobody comes in and the high priest gave him who's not even a Levite much less one who's authorized to be gives him the bread of the presence this is the bread that is set before the

Lord this is the bread that we set before God as an offering to him and this is God's bread and you're going to eat it mind blowing but who's David a great king!
right? And he said to them the! was made for man not man for the Sabbath so the son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath I have to be honest this is let's just work our way through obviously again their self righteousness is just on full display how come they're doing much wrong because they think that what we do can get us in right position before God but that self righteous whatever we do to earn our it's self righteousness and there's nobody that is righteous enough in and of themselves to get to glory so I don't care how good you are even the great and glorious Mrs.
James burnt! toast once you could be perfect in every way and still not be good enough your self righteousness isn't there it's not good enough but Jesus does this amazing thing by bringing up David this hero he puts self righteousness to the test because let's talk about who King David was what was his early job he was a shepherd boy right who ended into the service of Saul and ended up killing Goliath and ended up being a man after God's own heart anointed by the prophet and set upon the throne who led the nation of Israel towards the Lord and he David was the standard by which every king of Judah and Israel and throughout the world is judged to be a king like

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David there's no higher praise for a king well as long as you overlook the fact that he had sex with his wife's friend and then had his friend murdered so that he could keep doing it I mean David's a great guy except for the fact that he was so bloody in battle and so covered with death because of his military might that God wouldn't let him build a temple the highest ideal of the kings of Israel and his self-righteousness was not enough I love the fact that David was not executed for his adultery but rather went before the Lord and said God against you and you alone have I sinned he humbled himself before the
[30:54] Lord and he based his relationship with God not on himself but upon the glory of God and God rescued him from that this is amazing you see the Sabbath and all of the law is not to be a burden which we oppress people with but rather it is to be our blessing and that is something that is foreign to most minds we see a law and we think it's oppressive but God loves us and he has given us the gift of his word of the law so that we know this is bad don't do this okay men and some ladies you're all getting a brand new car today and I'm going to make a suggestion not to put sugar in the gas tank okay I'm just going to make that a law brand new car for you no sugar in the gas tank exactly dang it how did you I want to do that you know because if you put sugar in the gas tank bad things happen right

God looks at us and he says I'm going to give you this body and I'm going to give you this life and these are the things that you shouldn't do you shouldn't pour sin into the gas tank you should follow after me you should serve the Lord with gladness the idea is God has given us this blessing the Sabbath the Sabbath is a great blessing it is designed by God for us to have rest in I know you know this anybody know who Jeremy Clarkson is okay Jeremy Clarkson world famous automotive dude who for decades worked at the BBC who's done all these sort of automotive things and he was really kind of a not nice guy but he got old and retired and bought a farm and it was really cool watching him go from being this automotive to being a farmer who realizes whoa really changed his perspective on things but a couple years ago they were having a bad summer and it was rain and it was rain and it was rain and he and his farm steward or whatever they'd go out and it was harvest time but the crop has to be at a certain humidity or a certain wetness otherwise they can't harvest it so they'd go out there and they'd test it and it's too wet they'd test it and it's too wet they had a window of about 36 hours that they could harvest when it finally was dry enough and immediately after that they had two more weeks of rain which would have destroyed the crop what do you think they did in 36 hours they harvest like you wouldn't
I mean they're out there day and night what if you were a Jew and one of those days was the Sabbath would you harvest on that day no work on the Sabbath but it's the only time in a month that you could have harvested the food what are you going to do what are you going to do remember the Sabbath and all the law is not to be a burden but a blessing think about it you've just had two weeks of sitting on your tush because it's wet and you're looking ahead to another month of sitting on your tush because it's going to be raining this is the only time in a month and a half what are you going to do is your faith legalism or do you have the freedom see this is a real hard question
I can absolutely see people who are like oh I have it's the Sabbath I can't do it I just can't do it I can see people saying that and that's okay the problem is what we read in Mark chapter 2 where they begin judging others you see for freedom Christ has set us free we have freedom in Christ David wasn't killed for sleeping with Bathsheba even though the only the only thing that the law says about those who commit adultery is they are to be stoned right but David received grace if you were to go out on the Sabbath as a Jew and it's the only time in two months that you can get the harvest in and you get the harvest in and you say thank you God for giving you this time I know it's the day of the
Sabbath but I've had plenty of Sabbath there and I've had plenty of Sabbath coming thank you for the time to harvest I see no problem with that the question is are you judgmental of others are you condemning them because they're not meeting your interpretation this is a real challenge the first couple of points fairly easy but this question of legalism this is where the faith really hits the grindstone are you able to honor the Lord in your own life without condemning people in theirs are you able to encourage others to live faithfully without being self-righteous that's the challenge that faces us so I asked you three questions today question number one I didn't write it down sorry when was the last time you invited someone over to your house to share dinner and just to get to know them question number two when was the last time you sought

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[37:28] God through fasting and question number three is your role is your life is your faith legalistic or do you have the freedom that Christ died to give us I can't answer those questions and I'm not going to answer those questions but as I was reading this week and as I was studying this chapter I was challenged dear God let me not be self-righteous dear God let me be a man who cares for the lost let me be somebody who earnestly seeks you and Lord thank you for the freedom that you have granted us in salvation Father you are a great and a good God and we thank you for all that you have done Lord as I consider this passage of scripture I truly am challenged

I thank you for all that you have done I thank you for all that you have promised and Lord for each of us that are here today let your spirit speak and guide us we pray this in Jesus name amen

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